

112th Session of the International Labour Conference, 2024

Transcript of the discussion of the Reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body (including the special sitting of 6 June 2024 on the appendix to the report of the Director-General concerning the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories)

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► Tuesday, 4 June 2024

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Please be seated. We are starting our session. I kindly ask all delegates to be seated so we can start our session. Thank you. Dear colleagues, good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to declare open the second sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Today we shall begin the general discussion on three reports: the Director-General's report on the ILO programme implementation for the year 2022-2023, which comes under Report I (A); the Director-General's thematic report entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract', published as Report I (B); and the Report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body for 2023-2024, Report I (C). At this point I would like to remind you that, according to the arrangements approved at our opening sitting yesterday with regards to the modalities for the special sitting on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories, the appendix to the Director-General's report on the topic will be discussed at a special sitting on Thursday, June 6th. I shall therefore encourage you to please focus your interventions on the first three reports which I have just mentioned. For the rest of the plenary programme over the days to come, including the adoption of the committee outcomes in the plenary, you will find full details in the Conference tentative programme in the daily programme published online and in the ILO events app. Before I open our discussion I would like briefly to remind you of the principle governing our plenary discussions. Firstly on the use of parliamentary language. I wish to call on all those who will speak in the plenary to do so with both the openness and the dignity that are appropriate to the highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters. Freedom of expression is a vital feature of the International Labour Organization. To exercise this freedom in a spirit of mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates respect and accept the procedure, use parliamentary language, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising any questions foreign to these matters. The respect of this principle is necessary if we want to work to be effective and successful. Secondly, on the plenary starting times, there is a firm agreement on the part of the officers to begin our sittings strictly on time. Only in this manner will we manage to complete debates within the time scheduled. I am counting on you all to make this possible. Thirdly, I must refer to the length of the plenary speeches. As you may already know, the duration of speeches is limited by the standing orders of the Conference to five minutes only. Five minutes only. This time limit will be strictly applied. It is therefore strongly recommended that all delegates reduce courtesies to a minimum. Timekeeping is a collective responsibility. For the sake of transparency, a countdown will be displayed on the screen for all interventions. I shall point out that this strict limit does not apply to the statements of the Employer and Worker spokespersons as they open the general debate within the group statements. Lastly, I would like to address the points of order and rights of reply. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order or request the right of reply in the plenary do not need to interrupt the proceedings. Instead, they should simply raise their flag. A member of the staff will then approach them in the room and attend to their request. In the case of a right of reply, I ask you that you clearly inform that member of staff the intervention in respect to which the right of reply is sought. Please be reminded that a right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes, and it should be delivered in

respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice in our organization to allow the right to reply to a reply. I hope that that was clear on these rules, and I hope that we will follow them strictly. May I take it that these arrangements are agreeable to the Conference? Perfect. Thank you. Without further ado, we shall now open the discussion on the reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body. We will be following the speakers list as displayed in the room and published in the daily programme. Now I am pleased to welcome all of today's distinguished speakers and invite the Chairpersons of the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Conference to deliver their opening statements. They will put forward their groups' views on these three reports and the work ahead. We shall begin with the Employers' group. Mrs Hornung-Draus, you have the floor, madam.

Ms Renate Hornung-Draus

Chairperson, Employers' group

Thank you very much, Chair, and let me begin by thanking the Director-General and also the Chair of the Governing Body for presenting their reports, on behalf of the Employers' group. The Director-General's report in particular, which is called 'Towards a renewed social contract', is a good opportunity to reflect, innovate and advance towards achieving social justice. And I am very happy to make a couple of comments on this, which I already made some comments in my opening statement. And I would like to underline that this report and the heading of the report, which is of course also inspired by the discussions taking place in the United Nations and with the preparatory work leading up to the Social Summit by the UN held next year, is an excellent opportunity and an excellent basis for achieving a very strong message from the ILO towards the whole UN system. And I will say once again, the mandate and the mission of the ILO have not changed since the Philadelphia Declaration. Advancing social justice through decent work and with a human-centred approach means that we have to look at three basic pillars in our policies. Governance, which is very much about standard setting, about the principles, let me highlight here the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which are now under the topic under the recurrent discussion, and of course a very important principle of governance, the social dialogue and the tripartite principle of consultation and tripartite action as when it comes to labour market and employment. The second pillar is linked to delivering on shared prosperity, and here we have to go beyond standard setting. We have to look at an enabling environment for small and medium-sized enterprises. We have to address the issue of having enterprises being able to move out of informality and also workers to be able to move out of informality. We have to address the issue of improving the skills of workers to improve productivity. And last not least, an employment-friendly macro policy, and this is all the more important because all these are preconditions for delivering on decent work, which is one of the key objectives and the mission of the International Labour Organization. And finally the third pillar, which again has not changed since the Philadelphia Declaration, solidarity, social protection but also non-discrimination. All these elements have to be applied to today's challenges, and today's challenges are quite substantive. We know that the measures which were taken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic have actually disrupted our world of work. But at the same time they have accelerated the application of new technologies, of the development of artificial intelligence, of digitization. And this has to play also an important part in reflecting on how the ILO can contribute to advancing decent work. The ILO's response should be concrete, strategic and not on an abstract level but really

very, very concrete, focusing on the real economy, focusing on the lives of enterprises and workers. Concerning the central role for employers and worker organizations and social dialogue, let me highlight that these organizations are anchored in the real economy, and we as social partners provide first-hand expertise on the realities of work. Engaging with representative social partners through social dialogue contributes to societal cohesion and is crucial for the well-functioning and the productivity of the economy. This should therefore be a key element in restoring or strengthening the social contract. Second point, the effective labour market governance. The report rightly outlines that trust in public institutions is key to ensuring a shared prosperity and lasting peace. We call for effective governance for fighting corruption, for ensuring equitable and sustainability labour markets. And this relies, of course, on effective, flexible and modern national regulations with institutions that adapt to the new realities of work, that are open to new realities of work and that are based also on social dialogue. Let me come to the next point, which is creating a conducive environment for sustainable enterprises. I am very pleased that in your report, Director-General, you recognized that sustainable enterprises “require an enabling environment to fulfil their role in driving economic growth and decent job creation.” This point needs further elaboration because we see that in many parts of the world informality has actually been increasing over the last years and not decreasing. And where there is informality, there cannot be sustainable enterprises, there cannot be decent work. That is why we need to make sure that the standards, regulations but also the policies are conducive for people being able to work in the formal economy without being overburdened by regulation, without being overburdened by taxes or social contributions. And that is an issue which needs to be discussed very, very seriously also with the financial institutions, with the finance ministers. It goes far beyond labour market or employment policies. But these policies and all these aspects need to be integrated. We also need to look at how we can support entrepreneurship, how to reduce bureaucratic hurdles. Very often when governments say, “We want to reduce bureaucracy,” they produce another law, so they combat bureaucracy by producing even more bureaucracy. That cannot be the solution. We have to look for simpler regulation for less bureaucracy and also less reporting or due diligence and all sorts of obligations which do not contribute to productivity and they do not add any value. An important point which the ILO has been focusing on in the last years, and I am very pleased about this development, is the focus on skills. The report could do with a stronger focus on the skills agenda which we agreed upon in the Centenary Declaration in 2019 and also in the 2021 discussion of this International Labour Conference to position the ILO as a global skills leader. Nobel laureate Arthur Lewis said, “The fundamental cure for poverty is not really money but it is knowledge.” And it is our responsibility to make sure that education, which is the bedrock of any thriving society, is promoted and access to education for everybody is promoted. Let me say a couple of words about productivity growth. We are convinced that productivity growth is a driver for social justice, so the ILO needs to make every effort to incorporate productivity in a proper strategy for its promotion. Indeed, again the Centenary Declaration recognized that improving productivity creates employment opportunities and improves living standards. A robust productivity agenda is therefore essential for a renewed social contract and goes beyond simply sharing productivity gains. But these gains have to be produced first of all before they can be shared. It includes reskilling, investing, improving regulations, reducing informality and strengthening institutions which will create high quality jobs and elevate living standards for all. Lastly, reforming social protection systems. One of the main barriers to formality, to transition from informality to formality, is precisely that this transition is accompanied by too-high burdens on companies. And every development economist will tell you that watching

this is actually a very important key to promoting the transition from informality to formality. So when we look at social protection, also in the ILO, we should not only look at those who receive social protection but we also look at those who finance the social protection. Because if we produce a crowding out from social protection financing sides, this will actually make the social situation worse and it will reduce the potential for social protection and for extending social protection. And of course our common objective, our common mission is to have universal social protection. But this has to be financed and this has to be put on a sustainable basis so that all companies, all actors in society can contribute to this social protection without being pushed into informality. Dear colleagues, the report rightly addresses social challenges brought on by climate change and calls for action to enhance new job opportunities. But we need to focus our attention as the ILO, and we are unique in this, on potential adverse effects of climate policies which do not take into account employment effects. It is the ILO which has to draw the attention of the other organizations on the need for climate policies to be designed in a way that they do not destroy employment, that they do not make social cohesion a problem, that they do not increase inequalities. And this is a very, very important point when it gets to very concrete measures of social policy when it is in the context of climate change and green deals and whatever you call them. So the renewed social contract, as it was labelled by the Director-General, I think, to sum up, is that we move away from what was the old social contract. The old social contract was based on the industrial age, of mass production, on standard setting, on regulation. The renewed social contract has to focus on the much more complex realities of our economies, of our world of work. It has to focus on SMEs, on innovation, on informality, improving productivity, because all these are bases for achieving decent work. Let me finish by saying we discussed this in a very dynamic context at the international level, which contains many challenges but also many opportunities. The task we have as this International Labour Conference is precisely to seize these opportunities and shape them in a way that promotes the objectives pursued by the ILO. And they have been pursued by the ILO for the last hundred years and will probably remain the same, but the realities on the ground have to change and we have to adapt the ways to achieve this mission in looking at what is exactly happening and how can we really address the current challenges. So with this, I would like to thank you again for this report, and I would like to finish my speech. Thank you very much.

Ms Catelene Passchier

Chairperson, Workers' group

President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary-General of the Conference, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I thank the Director-General of the ILO for his report to this International Labour Conference, providing us with a solid basis for this important and timely discussion. We have a unique opportunity at the second UN social development summit next year to develop our vision on a renewed social contract for the world that would better equip global, regional and national governance institutions to deal with the challenges of our times; reverse the growing sense of disenfranchisement, isolation and desperation among working people and their families; rebuild global solidarity; and provide hope for a better future for all on a socially and environmentally sustainable planet. On the concept of a social contract, we welcome the report's focus on the mandate of the ILO as per its Constitution and the Philadelphia Declaration to work towards a world where "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their

spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity". To achieve this objective, indeed, we need to renew our social contract, reconfirming our respective roles and responsibilities. Yesterday I commented on the state of the world with poverty and inequality on the rise almost everywhere. The ambitions of the Copenhagen summit in 1995 have not been realised and we are clearly not on a path to achieve the SDGs any time soon. Therefore, a new or renewed social contract needs to be stronger and its implementation measures more effective, with a particular focus on tackling the inequalities within and between countries that hamper social development for all. Our common leadership should ensure that future development policies deliver on social justice, freedom, dignity, economic security, gender equality and equal opportunity to all as prerequisites for lasting peace. And we thank the DG for his ideas and will elaborate on a few. We agree that any future social contract must build upon the existing ones, starting with the ILO Constitution. This initial social contract was premised on the recognition of the principle of freedom of association. It was freedom of association that enabled tripartite governance to emerge in order to address the exploitative working conditions, depravation and industrial unrest at the start of the 20th century. Today we must recognize that the very core of our social contract is under attack. Democracy at work and beyond can only flourish with full respect for and universal ratification of Conventions 87 and 98. The centrepiece of any new social contract must be to ensure an enabling environment for social dialogue with freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining at its heart. We must all, all of us, recognize our respective responsibilities in the promotion of these enabling rights in law and in practice as preconditions for social justice, democracy and a sustainable future. Following the 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen and the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Singapore in 1996, the ILO adopted in 1998 the Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work to safeguard and promote respect for basic workers' rights in a globalized economy. We fully support the Director-General when he suggests seizing the opportunity of next year's Social Summit to construct a stronger labour protection floor that encompasses the full spectrum of human rights at work. For us, this also requires a renewed emphasis on non-discrimination on any grounds. In addition to occupational safety and health, two more constitutional fundamental workers' rights are more crucial than ever. One is living wages that allow all people to live with dignity. The promotion of statutory negotiated living wages will be key to address poverty and inequality, and we must build on the recent consensus in the ILO on this issue. Second, today, as in 1919, living wage strategies cannot be decoupled from safeguards for the protection of maximum hours of work. This is recognized as a human right already in the ILO Constitution. The seemingly unstoppable flexibilization and precariousization of work is leading for increasing numbers of workers to irregular hours, overtime, or work for several employers to make a living. We need to build a new consensus around working time, insisting on respect for the principles outlined in our very first Convention that enforced a balance between work, rest and leisure. Ladies and gentlemen, while we value the DG's report as an excellent basis for our discussions, we must express some disappointment with the lack of a clear gender perspective. There have been many advances for women in the world of work over the past centenary. However, women continue to lag behind. In recent times, things have become worse in most regions. Women continue to dominate in informal work, involuntary part-time work and other forms of precarious, low-skilled and low-paid jobs, with poor labour and social protection and lack of access to education and training. And this is strongly related to their perceived primary roles as spouses, mothers and carers. Poverty continues to wear a feminine face, and young and migrant women are particularly affected. This is exacerbated by the recent acceleration and the withdrawal of the state from providing

vital public services, including the care services on which women so heavily depend. The promotion of equal sharing of family responsibilities, adequate maternity protection and pay equity have taken a back seat in both public policies and macroeconomic policies. The challenge is how to provide women and men in the rapidly changing world of work and in the context of demographic change a perspective of having a decent job with sufficient income to live a decent life and raise a family while also taking care of sick and elderly relatives. These issues, including a life course approach in social policies, social protection and the organization of work and working time, must be brought together to ensure a genuine gender perspective to the new social contract in which women are fully recognized and their voices heard as equal citizens and participants. So, in our view, the 1998 social floor for globalization needs to be complemented with living wages and maximum working time for all and strengthened with the necessary transformative agenda on gender equality as outlined in the Centenary Declaration. Therefore, we join the Director-General in his call for strengthened annual follow-up to the 1998 Declaration and efforts to work towards universal ratification, and the need for enforcement and accountability both in the public and private sector and also in global supply chains. We emphasize the urgent need for mandatory due diligence regulation as well as using the full potential of the MNE Declaration and its tools. We support the DG's report in stressing the crucial importance of safeguarding other basic human rights such as food, water and sanitation, education and healthcare as a precondition for social development. There is an urgent need to safeguard effective public services to protect the basic necessities to all people and must recognize their key importance for ensuring effective equality in practice to women and girls. In addition to expanding the concept of a social floor consistent with the ILO Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its place at the heart of global economy policies and strategies needs to be strengthened. Too often public and private investment and policy interventions at national and international level have sacrificed basic social and labour rights on the altars of free-market competition and austerity. Further policy coherence and social democratic safeguards should indeed be sought to more effectively protect human rights in the future of work and as a resilient basis for both social and economic development. International financial institutions and global trade policies must effectively protect human and labour rights and ensure that trade partners and their entire populations mutually reap the economic benefits of their contributions. Thirty years after its creation, the WTO is now clearly defunct as it fails to deliver for all. We now need to strengthen the system to protect labour rights and reverse the declining labour income share through decent jobs creation and living wages for all and protect the policy and fiscal space of governments to drive their industrialization and structural transformation towards solid, demand-driven, resilient economies. This is key for the renewed social contract. In our common future, compliance with human and labour rights standards must deliver a return in economic growth and development. Ladies and gentlemen, universal social protection is the single most impactful measure in ending global poverty but will require a shift in approach to public finances. Public policy must focus on the expansion of fiscal space, tax reforms, debt restructuring and relief and financing for social objectives. And these policies should be shielded against inconsistent policy interventions from public and private institutions, including the international financial institutions that are too often insisting on austerity measures at all cost. The ILO, with its standards on social protection, and its social partners should play a crucial role in this regard. The ILO's mandate requires it to monitor the social impact of economic policy. Clearly, its role in the multilateral system needs to be strengthened to do so more effectively vis-à-vis policies and institutions for trade and investment. Full employment remains crucial and the Global Accelerator offers a good

opportunity to translate intentions into action. We must strengthen industrial transformation approaches and use the opportunities for job creation in the green, digital and care economies and ensure that global trade and supply chains do not diminish our collective efforts in this regard. The Director-General has asked us how to deliver pro-employment macroeconomic policies geared towards providing decent work for all. In our view, and as expressed in the Centenary Declaration, a new social contract should apply a human-centred rights-based approach aiming to safeguard the labour protection floor and develop just transition plans towards full employment and universal social protection using the opportunities provided by the environmental, technological and demographic challenges of our times. Ensuring an enabling environment for social dialogue, with full respect of freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and tripartite social dialogue, can deliver national pro-employment macroeconomic policies, responding to the challenges and opportunities of the real economy in countries around the world and help to establish an accountability framework going beyond GDP which indeed takes into account how policies impact on human and labour rights. Ladies and gentlemen, and I am almost at my concluding remarks, we fully agree that our unique selling point, which is our system of international labour standards, must be robust, up to date and fit for purpose when it comes to the current and future challenges in the world of work. We have been faithfully participating in the Standards Review Mechanism exercise, but our group is extremely worried about the direction it is taking, with too much emphasis on a quick abolition of standards deemed outdated and not enough action on replacing those standards with more modern ones nor with filling gaps that we jointly identified. We need a renewed commitment to the fundamental importance of international labour standards for the protection of workers in all forms of work. In such a context, we must also consider the need for new standards and speed up the process to adopt and implement them to deal with new social, environmental and technological challenges, using innovative approaches, including in the broader setting of the United Nations. To conclude, the decisions we will make today will determine whether we are up to the task of establishing social justice and peace for tomorrow. The Summit of the Future in 2024 and the World Social Summit in 2025 are historic opportunities to deliver the required paradigm shift in global governance for social justice, and we cannot miss it. Thank you.

Mr Ioanis Parteniotis

Worker (Bulgaria)

Dear ladies and gentlemen, delegates, on behalf of Bulgarian workers let me congratulate you for the election in such important positions. I would like also to express my firm conviction that, thanks to your presidency, the current 112th Session of the International Labour Conference will catalyse a fruitful discussion on agenda items. In recent years, imbalances all over the world have increased dramatically, with rising poverty levels pushing-up the risk of social exclusions. The richest are getting richer, and poor are getting poorer. In Europe we face more and more challenges. It becomes obvious that to overcome imbalances we urgently need to review our economic, financial and energy policy as well as our education and healthcare systems. One of the most important achievements, providing guarantee to the well-being of the EU citizen, is the European Social Model. Lastly, it was further improved by the adoption of the adequate minimum wages directive. Bulgaria is among the first EU countries which have already legally settled the level of its minimal wage at 50% of medium salary. But the very unstable political situation, several parliamentary elections over the last few years,

does not allow the implementation of any sustainable policy, including social ones. The Bulgarian trade unions have achieved serious success in negotiations with the state regarding the need to adequately update the salaries of public sector workers so that it matches with the growth of salaries in the private sector. But the increase is not enough to compensate for high inflation. As a result, we have organized many protests with demands for better pay. Employees in state administration from the sector of culture, miners, energy, healthcare workers, teachers, university staff and professors as well as from many other economic sectors all joined our actions. The Green Deal dispositions are among the main reasons for the rise of inflation and worsening for the national labour market situation. Some enterprises are forced to close and workers are fired without having any effective programme and measures for the business or for the work. No proposal at all. Last month, due to the pressure from the organized massive protests, several meetings on the future of the energy sector took place. A commitment to find solutions has been taken. Bulgaria's pension system is under huge pressure. The number of working people is decreasing while the number of retired persons is rising. At the same time, individual pensions must be increased to compensate for the growth of prices. To establish sustainability in the national pension system and to adapt to the demographic changes, trade unions are constantly asking to remove the limitation of the maximum insurance income, to change the taxation policy with a progressive income taxation and tax-free minimum. Our proposals are supported by the International Monetary Fund. Due to the neoliberal economic policy implemented during the last two decades, today we register a lack of over 200,000 workers on the labour market, very few investments and depopulation of 23% for our country. In practice, many industries are relying on retired workers. And again the working people are paying the price for all the wrong political decisions. The number of working poor is growing: 11% of all workers. Sadly, after 17 years of EU membership we have achieved meeting in prices but not in wages. Labour insecurity is growing and it is difficult to negotiate and conclude collective agreements with employers, just because the commitment of state institutions is often formal, backed by the political instability. Stress, poor food and life quality are provoking serious mental and health problems to the Bulgarian workers, affecting the quality of their work and their health. In practice, every fourth employed person in Bulgaria is receiving the minimal salary and only 28% of the workers are covered by collective agreements. Honourable President and Vice-Presidents, dear ladies and gentlemen, delegates, social justice is a responsibility for the whole society. Similarly, the proper way to achieve balance and to protect the interests of workers is through social dialogue. Thus, the expansion of collective bargaining and the determination of decent minimal wage must come together with efforts to strengthen the role of national social partners. Our time is to undertake effective actions about the better protection of workers' rights in any way possible. I am wishing you a very fruitful exchange and activities during the present session, and thank you for your kind attention. Thank you very much.

Mr Fassoun Coulibaly

Government (Mali)

Director-General, President of the Governing Body, President of the Conference, members of the bureau, when we adopted the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work in 2019 the essential objective was to make progress on social justice based on fairness and equality of rights. Looking at the report 'Towards a renewed social contract', we are led to the heart of the work of the ILO. As you said in your report, Director-

General, social justice is still an imperative and an essential condition for providing for lasting durable peace. We agree about the challenges facing the world of work. They are characterized by lasting injustice, by insecurity on the labour market, by growing inequalities, alongside multiple crises and a degradation of the social contract. Social dialogue remains an indispensable condition to renew the social contract. The new social contract has to be based on respect for human rights, including fundamental principles and rights at work, and has to guarantee universal access to social protection, the financing of which remains a challenge for our countries. The Global Coalition for Social Justice that we have joined is a unique opportunity to strengthen our action in favour of this cause, and the democratization of the governing structure of the ILO will make a strong contribution to that. As far as employment and vocational training policies are concerned, the Government has signed an agreement with IFAD for financing a second FIER project costing 59 billion CFA francs. 60,000 young people from the countryside aged between 15 and 40 will benefit from vocational training and assistance getting employment. 12,000 activities generating income and 5,000 rural microenterprises will be financed and 40,000 jobs directly created. Apart from that, the Government has started to set up a database on employment for young people coming out of vocational training. It has started working on a national strategy for the digital transformation of the system based on technical teaching, vocational training, development of skills and an entrepreneurship strategy. In Mali the independent committee for follow-up and evaluation of the recommendations emitted by the national dialogue on report has now submitted its second report. That was on the 27th of May 2024. The inter-Malian dialogue for peace and national reconciliation, which took place on the 6th to the 10th of May of this year, has made it possible for the people of Mali to make use of endogenous mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts with a view to finding consensus solutions to the problems affecting our country, and that made more than 300 recommendations. With the commitment of the social partners, the pact for social stability and growth was signed on the 25th of August of 2023 under the presidency of His Excellency Colonel Assimi Goïta, the president of the transition and the head of state. And that was accompanied by an action plan for 2023-2027, evaluated at 105,918,000,000 CFA francs, accompanied by a social truce. One of the priorities remains the organization of elections for union representatives. A national health and safety at work policy is about to be adopted by the Government with a view to assuring the inclusive protection of workers. The implementation of the universal regime for health insurance will make it possible progressively to cover the risk of illness for everyone. The current coverage is around 22% of our 22,395,000 people. The challenge remains extending that to the other 78% of the population working in farming and the informal economy. The project 'PROPEL Adapt Mali', financed by USAID, was launched on the 23rd of May 2024. The idea of that was to increase affiliation of workers to health insurers and to accelerate the provision of universal health coverage in our country. Thank you very much.

Mr Hassan Mohamed Hassan Shehata

Government (Egypt)

Excellency the President of the Conference, the Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, at the outset I would like to address my congratulations to the President of the Conference and the Vice-Presidents for their election at this important session of the International Labour Conference. We fully support you for the success of your business. I would like also to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Director-General

for his report which is entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract', whereby he emphasizes the importance of collective work, cultivating a social dialogue culture and the tripartite commitment among governments, employers and workers around the world to renew the social contract through an integrated system for the respect of the fundamental principles and rights at work and their promotion in an adequate working environment while taking into account the national specificities, the various development rates in the developing and least developed countries, as well as in the labour world and by the workers worldwide. Ladies and gentlemen, the challenges, among which the increased number of the unemployed and the lack of social protection, mentioned in the report makes it incumbent on us to lend great attention to the report and to endeavour to make its recommendations a reality. Egypt is keen in all its policies and legislations to work towards the balance in the labour relationships providing an adequate environment with the participation of all social partners. Under the guidance of the president of the country, Egypt is also keen to bolster its cooperation with the ILO and to continue in the collective work. This has been reflected in a number of development projects targeting the work domains, such as freedom of association, social dialogue, youth employment, gender equality and fighting against the worst forms of child labour. Egypt is committed to continuously renew the social contract and its development. We are also committed to continue the dialogue with work and development partners everywhere. With a view to provide full social protection and decent work for all, we renew our pledge to continue to work in a participatory manner where every partner will undertake and uphold its responsibility. This is one of the main concepts mentioned in the report this year as a prerequisite for going forward towards justice and balance in the labour relationships. Egypt goes forward with steadfast steps, believing that adequate work is one of the main stays of investment and providing a decent life for all citizens. The Supreme Council for Social Dialogue in Egypt embodies these principles and concepts. It continues to work to finalize the draft of the new labour law aiming at the balance among the parties of the work relationship. Moreover, the National Council for Wages has succeeded this year to raise the national minimum wage to mitigate the negative impact of inflation. In the same vein, Egypt is keen to ensure a human-centred development, and it has launched a project called Professional 2030 with the participation of the private sector to develop the skills of the young people and to help them engage in technical and professional work. We also continue to extend social protection for all categories. We will continue also to provide this important social protection for all and to continue the constructive social dialogue towards the social justice we all aspire to. Thank you for listening.

Mr Ahmad Alenezi

Worker (Kuwait)

In the name of God, your Excellency the Director-General, your Excellency Mr Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, your Excellencies, may the peace and grace of God be upon you all. I am taking the floor before you today on behalf of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation and on behalf of the entire working class of Kuwait. It is an honour for me to take the floor at this very important annual meeting which is held under very difficult conditions, very difficult economic, social and political conditions in the world. I hope that you will be able to work in order to achieve all the objectives that you have set forth and that you would like to achieve at the end of this 112th Session. I would like to thank the ILO for the support that it provides to the tripartite constituents. I would like to thank the ILO for the various activities, the training sessions, the workshops that it

has held and that have led to polishing and improving the skills and abilities of our workers and improving the labour environment. We at the Kuwait Trade Union Federation and we in the trade union movement in the State of Kuwait and the entire working class of Kuwait, we work relentlessly in order to defend the rights, the achievements and the interests of the workers in Kuwait in all sectors. We affirm our commitment to overcome all challenges, including the need to abolish the sponsorship system. We also are working relentlessly in order to cope with artificial intelligence, digitization, climate change and the green economy. We have held many workshops and training sessions in order to educate the workers of Kuwait over the past years. We call upon you all in order for us to be able to streamline our vision and our objectives and overcome the challenges that we are witnessing in the region and in the world. We will make every effort in order to enhance the role that we play within this organization. The current difficult context requires that we adopt a strong and unified position to defend the rights and dignity of our peoples. We condemn this continuous war on our people, on our workers in Palestine and in the Gaza Strip. We condemn the systematic destruction of the infrastructure which makes it impossible for the population in the Gaza Strip to live a decent life. We unequivocally refuse any attempt to forcibly displace the local population in Palestine. I think, ladies and gentlemen, that the men, women and children of Palestine, they are waiting to see the conclusions of this conference. Ladies and gentlemen, we in the Gulf States, in the different trade unions there, we are working relentlessly in order to create a Gulf trade union in order to support unions in all Gulf States in order to achieve their interests and in order to be able to implement the various national visions that our countries have put forth. I assure you that we will continue to cooperate and exchange experiences with all the members of this organization. I would like also to thank the secretariat of the Conference for the efforts that the secretariat has made to make this conference a success. My thanks also go to all those who participate in the success of this conference. May the peace and grace of God be upon you. May we be able to live in a world without war, in a world that enables us to live a decent life. Thank you all.

Mr Ahmad Bin Suliman Alrajhi

Government (Saudi Arabia)

President of the Conference, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start by expressing my pleasure in attending this 112th Session of the ILC. And I would like to congratulate you, Chair and Vice-Chair, on your elections. I hope that the work of our conference will be crowned with success. Please allow me also to express my appreciation for the wonderful work done by the DG and his team since the last ILC. I would also like to congratulate the DG on the report provided, especially when it comes to picking the theme 'Towards a renewed social contract', something which is very important, which has highlighted the need to renew the social contract in the face of global challenges. We would also like to reiterate what the DG said in his report when it comes to the importance of social protection, the importance of international cooperation, of reactivating the tripartite structure, and also the strengthening of fundamental labour standards, establishing safe and healthy working conditions, and also combating climate change and other challenges. This requires cooperation at all levels with all partners. President, Saudi Arabia is attached to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the UN. When it comes to the areas in which we work on the international level, we work to strengthen peace and realize the SDGs, which are fully in line with the objectives of the 2030 vision adopted by Saudi Arabia. We would also like

to insist on the need to identify the challenges we are facing and the means to face all of these challenges. Climate change is perhaps one of the most important of those today. In fact, 70% of the global workforce faces health risks due to climate change. We should also mention one of the biggest changes facing the labour market today, and here I am talking about new technologies. Today we see that artificial intelligence could lead to the creation of millions of jobs by 2030. In this regard, Saudi Arabia would like to insist on the need to find a balance between these new technologies and the need to protect workers from all types of exploitation. Ladies and gentlemen, we do need to reactivate the tripartite structure. We need to strengthen international labour standards and social dialogue so that we can meet the needs of all individuals. We need to attach priority to the working environment, making sure that it is safe and healthy. In this regard, Saudi Arabia adopted a national policy in relation to health at work. We have a national council which is responsible for this issue, and this council today has over 23,000 experts and this council will have over 47,000 members by 2025. This council works to reduce accidents at work in Saudi Arabia. Accidents at work have increased quite significantly in recent years. Saudi Arabia has ratified 20 ILO Conventions. The most recent one was 187. Ladies and gentlemen, human rights have always been a priority for Saudi Arabia. Proof of this can be seen in the efforts undertaken by our country to protect human rights and to provide a legality of opportunities in the world of work, fighting against discrimination in work. Saudi Arabia has also ratified a Recommendation supplementing the Convention on forced labour. Efforts are underway in this respect. President, Saudi Arabia has made all efforts in order to realize the objectives of the Protocol of the Convention. We have also tried to face global challenges today. This is why partnership with the ILO, with the World Bank, thanks to that we have organized an international conference on the labour market. This is a conference which took place in Saudi Arabia in December 2023. Over 40 experts took part in the conference. I would also like to invite you, President, I would like to invite all of you to attend the 10th edition of this conference which will take place in 2025 in Saudi Arabia. Once again, I wish you every success in your work. Thank you.

Ms Maryam Mariya

Government (Maldives)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Mr President, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Mr Gilbert Hounbo, honourable delegates, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It is with profound honour and privilege that I address you today as the Minister of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development of the Maldives at this distinguished International Labour Conference. Since joining the International Labour Organization in 2009, the Maldives has consistently demonstrated its commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of workers through the ratification of numerous Conventions. In recent years, the Maldives has undertaken significant legislative reform and institutional strengthening to ensure the protection of workers' rights and the promotion of decent work across our archipelago. The ratification of key Conventions on industrial relations and occupational safety and health signifies our dedication to fostering an environment where workers can thrive and contribute to national development. Our government has proactively engaged with both employers and workers, striving to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders in the labour market. Through constructive dialogue and partnership-building initiatives, we aim to cultivate an environment of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation, ensuring that the rights of workers are upheld and

their voices heard. As we convene here today it is imperative to reaffirm our collective commitment to advancing the cause of social justice and decent work for all. We must draw on the collective knowledge and expertise present in this assembly to address the multifaceted challenges facing our global market and to build a future, a future where every worker can realize their full potential and live a life of dignity and fulfilment. I extend my deepest gratitude to the International Labour Organization for its relentless efforts in promoting social justice and decent work worldwide. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to all partners and stakeholders for their steadfast support and collaboration in our endeavour to create a more just and equitable society. Together we strive to build a world where every worker is valued, respected and empowered to lead a life of dignity and purpose. Thank you.

Mr Grégoire Sébastien Oona

Government (Cameroon)

In presenting the congratulations of Cameroon on your election, I would like to thank you for giving me the floor and congratulate the entirety of your bureau. President of the Conference, ladies and gentlemen, climate change, health and security crises and developments that we have seen, particularly in digital technology over the past few years, have led to a paradigm change which can only be addressed through a renewal of the social contract, which provides the ILO with a key part to play in the multilateral system. For our country, Cameroon, social justice remains an essential precondition to the provision of lasting, durable peace. Given that, stakeholders have to work hard to provide the basis for a new social contract which will provide equality of rights and opportunities for all, developing employment, sustainable development and universal social protection. Looking at the Director-General's analysis in his report, we can see that the social contract, as defined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, taken up by the Philadelphia Declaration, has over the centuries been a factor providing for stability, rights and development for peace and intergenerational solidarity. Thanks to the social contract, over the years societies have been able to work on setting up a balance between individual rights and collective responsibilities. These days, ladies and gentlemen, we have to recognize that, despite the efforts of all parties, social tensions and policies that are imperilling the very bases of the social contract are only getting worse. It thus becomes imperative that we redefine the social contract. This is why, Mr Director-General, Cameroon is committed to working on and supporting the new social contract that you have suggested to us. Apart from the classic factors involved, it needs to be based on decent work. Decent work has to be a central objective to relaunch and reconstruct the economy. Updated standards that are relevant, defining rights and responsibilities have to be elaborated and implemented. Universal social protection, for its part, has to take into account workers in the informal sector, particularly in developing countries. And as far as social dialogue is concerned, that has to be at the centre of all decision-making for shared prosperity. And given that, the Government of Cameroon would like Member States of the ILO to be motivated to ratify all of the fundamental Conventions passed by the tripartite mandate of the ILO. Mr President, for the government of our country, the success of the social contract has to involve all social actors. It has to pass through quality education, social protection for all, including workers in the informal sector. The time has come for the world to address historic injustice and inequality and to construct new social contracts oriented towards greater inclusion and greater sustainability. Mr President, we are faced with climate change and conflicts among the tripartite constituents. We need to work for social development

focused on human beings, the respect for rights and dignities of human beings, thus constructing a consciousness and social cohesion which we cannot do without. Cameroon reiterates its commitment to social justice and wishes to privilege [? 73:55] dialogue at all levels, consultation with all stakeholders and projects able to attract the attention of international financiers. And we need to make these provide the finance to make social justice a pillar of all of their policies and decision-making at a national and international level. Thank you for listening.

Mr Moustafa Bayram

Government (Lebanon)

Ladies and gentlemen, Chairman of the Conference, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. We cannot talk about the Director-General's report without talking about essential facts. I have left my dear country, Lebanon, but I am in spirit with the people in my country who have been subjected to unceasing Israeli aggression for the last eight months, particularly in the south. We have seen more than 37 violations of Lebanese sovereignty over the past few months. This has led to the destruction of hundreds of businesses, and workers and entrepreneurs have been forced to leave their villages and are losing their jobs and their livelihoods. This has affected civilians and thus violated the basic principles of military action. Civilians are targeted with phosphor bombs, which are banned at an international level. We have seen it taking the lives of farmers, women and children. That happens every day, violating the principles set out in the Director-General's report on the right to health, the right to a healthy environment, the right to a decent life. However, the situation does not get in the way of our desire to live and to promote the good of the country of Lebanon. We have had more than 25 tripartite meetings with a view to increasing workers' wages, with a view to strengthening vocational training, strengthening governance and transparency. We have adopted electronic procedures which do not cost anything for the public purse. We have promoted the coordination between the private and the public sector, guaranteeing transparency in their interactions. We are trying to combat corruption through that. That will make it possible for citizens to regain trust in the state and will also make it possible to establish the rule of law. We have strengthened our legislation on the basis of basic principles and human rights. We have strengthened the situation of foreign and domestic workers. We have addressed the actions of the employment agencies responsible for foreign and domestic workers, thus improving the reputation of our country. In a very difficult economic framework we continue to work on this. We are in a dreadful economic situation which is worsened by the presence of Syrian refugees. Syrian refugees are now one-third of the population of Lebanon, a situation we do not see anywhere else in the world. They are mainly in the south of the country, and we have been relying on international assistance to deal with them. We cannot pass over in silence the situation in Gaza. We can watch civilians being killed live on our screens, destruction on an unprecedented scale, hospitals being targeted. This is unprecedented in history and contradicts all the principles set out in the Director-General's report setting out basic rights to life and food. People in Gaza cannot get food. How can they? They are under a blockade. We will not get social justice without humanitarian justice. Mr President, we reaffirm our right to life, our right to a safe life. We have a right to food, to education and to peace, and we will fight for our rights. And I would wind up by telling you about a true story that happened in Gaza today. A child of seven years was found crying. They were asked, "Why are you crying? Why are you crying? Why don't you laugh?" And this child said, "I smiled the last time a month ago. And I said I smiled

because I was taken out of the rubble of our house alive. But that smile only lasted half an hour because I found that my baby brother, my other brothers and sister and my mother had died. And I have also learned that my father was found dead under the rubble of his business. I am sad because my school has been destroyed.” What is happening in Gaza today is a test for our humanity. Thank you.

Mr Malik Tahir Javaid

Employer (Pakistan)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Honourable Chair, respected Director-General of the ILO, dear heads and members of delegations present at the ILC, may the peace and grace of Allah Almighty be with you. On behalf of the members of Pakistan, I express our gratitude to our colleagues within the ILO and the Member States who have worked to make a success of this 112th Session of the ILC. This session takes place against the backdrop of compounding socio-economic and geopolitical challenges and the devastating effects of climate change. These crises often hit the most vulnerable the hardest, raising the question are we truly committed to the universal aspirations for social justice, dignity, economic security and equal opportunities? The challenges we face are immense, requiring a collective effort to address their impacts and repercussions. It is a time for introspection, evaluating our intentions and actions to tackling the injustice, inequalities and insecurities before us today. I compliment the Director-General for presenting his insightful report on renewing the social contract and reshaping the way we work and live. We must collaborate closely to benefit from constructive dialogue with all stakeholders in the public and private sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to work and social life. While the world is on the path of recovery, low-income and middle-income countries have experienced slow recovery rates, exacerbated by ongoing political and economic instability and environmental impacts. Over four to five years Pakistan has faced increasing economic insecurity and skewed outcomes for certain workers, firms and communities, undermining their ability to uphold their part of the social contract. The Director-General's call to prioritize national social contracts is crucial. We must identify the policies and institutions needing renewal to secure social justice. The Employers' Federation of Pakistan was among the first to join the ILO Global Coalition for Social Justice, aligning with our commitment to a new social contract. We are fully committed to supporting the ILO and the Government of Pakistan in implementing an ambitious agenda for social justice, aiming for a sustainable and inclusive future. As social contracts come under pressure, awareness becomes a powerful tool for advocating change. The Employers' Federation has engaged deeply with low-tier communities in our agriculture economy. We have communicated in local languages with landlords, farmers and their families about fundamental rights at work, human rights, the importance of girls' education and the eradication of child labour and domestic work. With the private sector, we promote pay equality, living wage and workplace diversity. We recognize and celebrate companies that contribute to creating inclusive, equitable and decent workplaces. We have partnered with the Government on awareness campaigns about social security benefits for employers. Collaboratively, we advance the ILO Declaration on Social Justice, international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartite cooperation. Our journey is long, and persistence is key to achieving social justice. Closing the gender pay gaps and achieving gender equality are matters of social justice. Universal social protection and environmental justice are also integral to this cause. We now look forward to overcoming rising inequalities and social injustice

through the green and digital economy which have the potential to create new jobs and economic opportunities. However, they are not equally distributed, benefiting some more than others. Environmental injustice where the marginalized groups often face higher levels of environmental risks, impacting their livelihoods. Reskilling and education is essential for the green and digital economy. In Pakistan, characterized by extreme informality, in-work poverty and underemployment, national and global investments must prioritize expanding access to digital technologies, skills development and green economy literacy. Overcoming these challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach. Collaboration among governments, the private sector, workers' organizations, academia, civil society and communities is not only essential but a collective responsibility. The Employers' Federation stands resolute with the International Labour Organization in promoting social justice, international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartite cooperation. With great confidence, the Employer's Federation acknowledges the Director-General's report as a catalyst for transformative social changes in the world of work. The Employers' Federation eagerly looks forward to collaborating with the ILO and our coalition partners to advance the cause of social justice. Thank you very much.

Mr Ali Alabed Alrida Abuazum

Government (Libya)

In the name of God, the most Merciful, the most Gracious, your Excellency President of the Conference, ladies and gentlemen, dear delegates. The Report of the Director-General is especially important as it addresses an important topic, namely a renewed social contract steering away from exclusion and violence and embracing a cultural social structure based on investing in natural and human resources, the development and building of an economy that bolsters the living standards and ensures social development for all. To keep up with the changes and the developments in Libya we have undertaken our role to respond to the needs of the production parties and the institutions in relation to labour matters and the protection of the fundamental rights of the workers. The Government of National Unity is seriously willing to achieve social security and it has established the implementation means in projects aiming at improving and reforming the wage structure, the distribution of added value arising from the production process, the income redistribution, the wage raising and the issuance of the standard salary law and the provision of the basic services in terms of health and education as well as providing a source of income to the jobseekers to integrate them in the labour work and the labour market. Ladies and gentlemen, in a world that knows fast technological and scientific advances, we should talk about biological hazards. The challenges are many in terms of the occupational safety and health. These biological hazards are mostly complex. They include threats such as contagious diseases, natural disasters. And we need to understand them thoroughly and to adopt innovative strategies for prevention and to respond to these challenges in an effective manner and to ensure the protection of our collective safety and security. Ladies and gentlemen, we convene today to discuss two fundamental concepts to achieve welfare and stability in our societies. Decent work and the care economy represent the cornerstone of any prosperous society. This leads to social security and social justice and equal opportunities for all. The care economy is an important system. It provides support and services to those in need in terms of health, education and social care. I would like to stress that we will continue to work together towards well-being and equality for all. I would like also to thank you for listening. I wish all countries of the

world to continue to uphold the principles of social justice and equality. We fully support the activities of the Organization for the reasons and the values it was created for, and I wish you all success. And thank you for all the efforts you have made in preparing for this conference. Thank you.

Mr Farouk Alhadidi

Government (Jordan)

In the name of God, your Excellency the President of the Conference, your Excellencies ladies and gentlemen, may the peace and grace of God be upon you all. It is an honour for me to speak before you today on behalf of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I am taking the floor at this 112th Session of the ILC. During this conference we will be discussing a number of very important topics and we will attempt together to overcome challenges facing work throughout the world. Ladies and gentlemen, we need to strengthen social dialogue in order to be able to overcome together challenges that are imposed by the new forms of labour. We have to be able to overcome these challenges. In order to do so we have to rehabilitate young people. We have to build their skills. We have to polish their abilities and skills, and we need to encourage them to be creative and innovative. We must put forward the necessary measures to protect workers and to improve working conditions in all sectors. We need a constructive and responsible social dialogue. This is a must in this changing world in which we live. This is even more important today than it was ever before. Recent developments in the world force us to deal with many issues, including issues relating to development, issues relating to employment and unemployment. All of these topics have to be discussed within a constructive and responsible and serious dialogue in which the tripartite partners share roles and responsibilities. Ladies and gentlemen, the content and the methods of social dialogue must be developed. They also must be reviewed and updated. We have to enhance this social dialogue. We have to promote this dialogue. We have to enhance its performance based on a renewed vision that moves away from our traditional approach and that responds to the social challenges that are imposed upon us. And that also enables us to overcome the economic challenges that are faced by our enterprises in this highly competitive changing world economy. Ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Jordan believes in the need to keep pace with developments in labour markets. We have to focus on the future of human resources. We have to take into account the technological revolution that we are witnessing. In order to do so, Jordan has launched an Economic Modernization Vision for the period 2022-2033. This vision centres on the slogan of 'A Better Future'. It is based on two strategic pillars. First, to accelerate growth through unleashing Jordan's full economic potential, and the second pillar is to improve the quality of life for everyone. And of course, achieving sustainability is a cornerstone in this future vision. We must empower young people, both males and females. We must provide them with the necessary skills. This is why the Jordanian Government, back in 2019, created the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission. The commission works in order to keep up with developments in the labour market. And in order to improve and enhance the education received by these young people, this commission also helps build a partnership between the Government and the private sector in order to match education to labour market needs. This is also done through the creation of a number of sectorial skills councils. These are specialized sectorial councils in which the private market constitutes 80% of members. The Government is also keen on stimulating the private sector so it generates more job opportunities for young people. The Ministry of

Labour has launched the National Employment Programme which targets people between the ages of 18 and 40. The ministry also provides funds and capital and operational support in order to encourage investors, both foreign and Arab, to invest in Jordan, especially when they want to invest in building factories in Jordan in which would be employed Jordanian citizens, especially in those parts of Jordan which witness high poverty and unemployment levels. Ladies and gentlemen, in order to ensure the rights of workers in the private sector and to provide them with a safe and sound work environment, in order to enhance the protection that is afforded to them and in order to reduce occupational injury and disease and enhance occupational hazard prevention, the ministry in Jordan has developed the occupational health and safety system. This is a comprehensive system that respects the best international standards in this field. We have also enacted a number of legislations in order to keep up with new forms of labour and the technological revolution. We have reviewed and updated a number of laws, including the social protection law, the vocational labour regulation law and the labour law in general. The ministry has also given utmost attention to promoting women. Back in 2006, the ministry created the Woman's Work and Gender Directorate which focuses on issues relating to working and job-seeking women. So, this new directorate, which was created back in 2006, focuses on the promotion of women. At the end of my speech, I would like to thank the ILO for the relentless efforts that it has been making in order to support different countries in the world in order to enable them to enhance and improve relations between the tripartite constituents. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Rogério Araújo Mendonça

Government (Timor-Leste)

President of the Conference, Director-General of the ILO, Gilbert Hounbo, ministers and distinguished delegates, it is a privilege for me to be here to represent the people and the Government of Timor-Leste in the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Since Timor-Leste became a member of the ILO in 2003, the Government of Timor-Leste has been working closely together with the ILO and has adopted a series of legislative measures related to decent work which aim to respond to the challenges associated with efficient and effective management of the labour market. Gradually but firmly we have been contributing to the areas of promotion of employment, guaranteeing of fundamental labour rights, expansion of social protection and promotion of social dialogue. At the moment we are drawing up the first amendment to Timor-Leste's labour code and adopting new legislation addressing domestic work and against violence and harassment in the workplace. In addition, with the recent passing of an act on safety, health and hygiene at work we have further reinforced our commitment to ensuring safe working conditions for everyone. Apart from that, we are still in the process of ratifying Conventions 138, 144, 102, 105 and 190. Mr President, although there has been improvement in the growth of employment and in our economy and an expansion of social protection, this growth is excessively dependant on the public sector and there is still a significant portion of the population that is not actively participating in the labour market or is in a vulnerable situation of employment and often without any kind of social protection. In an economic context where agriculture is the main provision of sustenance and where about 75% of our population lives in rural areas, farmers, in particular women and young people, are the most vulnerable workers along with informal workers in an urban situation. Our country is faced with huge challenges, and to overcome them we are committed to improving our infrastructure, creating decent jobs for our large young population. 70% of our

population is young people. We need to provide our workforce with qualifications and extend social security to all workers. We need to diversify the economy, to promote equal opportunities, to combat child labour in all of its forms and guarantee the health and safety at work of all of our workers. As a result of our efforts, we have been able to modernize our legal system and have been able to expand social coverage. And I am proud to say that today, apart from a universal healthcare system, we have a social security system which is capable of protecting all workers in the event of old age, disability, widowhood and parenthood. Mr President, the Government of Timor-Leste remains completely committed to the Decent Work Agenda and is proud to have been one of the first countries to join the Global Coalition for Social Justice in January of 2024. We are looking forward to working together with the ILO and all of the coalition partners to achieve a greater balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development to significantly reduce inequality and poverty and to provide for the essential needs and opportunities of people around the world. Mr President, promotion of gender equality, social dialogue and the strengthening of institutional capacity are addressed in our national decent work programme and are reflected in both the national employment strategy and the national social protection strategy. To ensure sustainable and inclusive economic and social development in Timor-Leste it is urgent to strengthen the incentives for private sector investment in order to accelerate the diversification of our economy and to provide decent and sustainable employment opportunities for all. Timor-Leste is firmly counting on the support of the ILO and of the other development partners that we have to continue the recent advances and to effectively promote social justice and decent work for all. Thank you.

Mr Abdulghani Bakur Alsayegh

Employer (Saudi Arabia)

President, Vice-Presidents, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, heads and members of delegations, may the grace of God be with you all. I represent the employers' organization of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and it is my pleasure to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of this conference on their elections. I would also like to thank the DG and his entire team. They have made huge efforts when it comes to preparing this report, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. The first chapter of this report sees the DG highlight the importance of clarifying the importance of social contracts. He also established indicators which allow for the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of this new social contract and its contribution to strengthening justice and decent work in order to improve productivity levels. And all of this in order to improve the global labour market and to push it towards continued and sustainable growth. In the report, all of the elements converge around the coalition. This was a promise by the DG during his electoral campaign, and he has kept his word we see in this report. Ladies and gentlemen, 2023 was a very important year for our organization. We realized our dreams by renewing the labour market in Saudi Arabia. In fact, the growth rate in Saudi Arabia reached 108%. We know that small and medium businesses account for those who face the most challenges in the global labour market, and this reflects the importance that we attach, with the Government of Saudi Arabia, to this extremely important sector. Unemployment has been reduced to its lowest level since 2003. We have also achieved targets when it comes to women's employment. They represent 7% of the global labour market in Saudi Arabia, and we have surpassed the goals that we set for 2030. We have strengthened social dialogue. We have also

improved contracts, working to protecting salaries and wages, increasing social protection. All of this work is done on the basis of tripartite or bilateral dialogue between the various stakeholders on the Saudi Arabian labour market. Ladies and gentlemen, the Philadelphia Declaration in Chapter 3 mentions the ILO's commitment to promoting in all countries around the world programmes which aim to ensure protection of workers, right to childhood, ensuring coverage for women, taking care of workers in every regard. In relation to this Declaration, I would also like to mention the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. I am sad to see this reality, with discrimination being faced by workers in Palestine. Today the three social partners in Palestine are being attacked, therefore they cannot talk about taking care of women, children, taking care of the health of workers and ensuring good working conditions in workplaces. Today I would like to ask you to accept Palestine as a member of the ILO. The DG should draft a full report in relation to this matter. The workers in the occupied Arab territories are not worth less than other workers elsewhere. In conclusion, President, I ask the DG to take this message to the CAS. We see this committee combatting against child labour. Children in Palestine are not working. They are dying. What is more important for women or young people? To work or to live? This response needs to be amongst the list of topics being discussed by CAS next year. Thank you.

Mr Leota Laki Lamositele

Government (Samoa)

I bring you peace in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Talofa lava. Mr President, Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, talofa lava and warm Pacific greetings. It is a pleasure to address the Conference on behalf of the Government and people of my country, the independent State of Samoa. I congratulate you, Honourable Alexei Buzu, on your appointment as President of the Conference. I assure you of Samoa's full support of your stewardship, and to ensure a successful outcome of our meeting. As we convene this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference we recall the importance of the fundamental principles and rights at work, as adopted during the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference. It has been 26 years, yet their relevance and importance is absolutely needed to help us navigate today's labour market and economic recovery pathways. Mr President, we commend the Director-General's report emphasizing social justice and decent work as central principles of an effective and sustainable social contract at the national and global levels. These principles are reflected in our own national strategy, the Pathway for the Development of Samoa, which takes a people-centred approach to empowering communities, building resilience and inspiring growth. At the national level, Samoa shares common challenges experienced in the global labour market such as shortages in skills and skills mismatch, stagnant living standards and wages and the rising cost of living and dependence on imports. As a Small Island Developing State, these challenges are exacerbated by the impact of climate change and global events. We continue to pursue strengthening our labour policy framework and call upon the ILO and our partners to support implementation. The second Samoa National Employment Policy provides the strategic framework towards improving employment levels and labour standards. I want to share Samoa's achievements to demonstrate our commitment to provide decent work. Samoa's first Minimum Wage Policy will guide the review of our minimum wage every two years and ensure that wages reflect the cost of living and level of economic growth. Recently enacted labour law reform has introduced important protection for workers and promotes a positive relationship between workers

and employers. As part of our commitment towards the elimination of child labour in all its forms, Samoa became a pathfinder country under the Alliance 8.7 initiative and has commenced implementation of its National Action Plan. I would also like to make special mention of our role as co-chair of the Climate Action for Jobs International Advisory Board. It is vital for the progress of this initiative that the ILO, as secretariat, and Member States continue to put decent jobs and livelihoods at the centre of climate action. Finally, I am pleased to inform that Samoa has deposited its instruments of ratification for Convention 190 on violence and harassment, and Convention 187 Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health. Mr President, at the regional level we had the opportunity to meet as the Blue Pacific at the high-level tripartite forum recently held in Fiji in April of this year. We agreed in that meeting that we look forward to strengthen high-level engagement of the Pacific Ministers of Labour and work with the ILO and partners on the implementation of the 2050 strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent through tripartism. To conclude, Mr President, we convey our appreciation to the ILO Director-General, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for the support in furthering Samoa's work towards inclusive, full and productive employment. We look forward to a continued partnership in ensuring labour policy cohesion across all sectors of the economy as well, elevating the level of implementation and enforcement of Samoa's labour policies and laws towards economic and labour market recovery. I wish you all a productive Conference and meaningful dialogue amongst all constituents. Soifua.

Mr Edil Baisalov

Government (Kyrgyzstan)

Madam Vice-President, Excellencies, let me offer my congratulations to the President of the Conference. Honourable Minister Mr Alexei Buzu, your election is a well-deserved recognition of Moldova's success in leading the social reforms in our region. Congratulations are also due to the team of vice-presidents. We wish you much success in your work in leading this conference. Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to address the 112th International Labour Conference on behalf of the national delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic. Let me offer an unequivocal endorsement of the report 'Towards a renewed social contract' submitted by the Director-General and his team that summarizes the important work carried out by our organization and charts the ambitious programme of work for the years to come. Kyrgyzstan is proud to belong to the family of the International Labour Organization since 1992. We have joined 54 Conventions, and yesterday I had the honour to deposit with our Director-General, Honourable Mr Gilbert Houngbo, the instrument of ratification of Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment. Our commitment to the cause of protecting workers' rights is steadfast and growing stronger. The Kyrgyz Republic, under the leadership of His Excellency President Sadyr Japarov, has declared creating jobs as a top priority for this year and the years to come. As we enter the period of significant economic growth and doubling our economy until 2030, we are dedicated to implementing the principles of all ILO Conventions through comprehensive national strategies that include prevention, protection and enforcement measures. Our government will work closely with employers, workers and their representative organizations to foster a culture of respect and safety in all workplaces. Mr President, the Kyrgyz Republic salutes the upcoming launch of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, a pioneering initiative by the International Labour Organization's Director-General. By fostering international collaboration, this coalition aims to address inequalities and promote fair treatment across all sectors. The Kyrgyz Republic is actively participating in this effort by

implementing progressive labour policies and promoting social inclusion. Our country's dedication to fair wages, safe working conditions and workers' rights aligns with the coalition's objectives. Through our involvement, we aim to contribute to building more inclusive societies where every worker has the opportunity to thrive in dignified and equitable conditions. The advent of artificial intelligence is revolutionizing the world of work, presenting both opportunities and challenges. AI has the potential to enhance productivity, create new industries and transform existing ones. However, it also poses significant risks to traditional job markets, necessitating proactive measures to mitigate displacement. The Kyrgyz Republic is at the forefront of addressing these challenges by investing in education and training programmes that equip our workforce with the skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven economy. Our initiatives in digital literacy and technology adoption are paving the way for a more adaptable and innovative workforce. Ladies and gentlemen, under the visionary leadership of President Sadyr Japarov, the Kyrgyz Republic is at the forefront of promoting sustainable development in mountain regions, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change. President Japarov's initiative to establish a global mountain and climate dialogue at the upcoming COP29 underscores our commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by mountainous regions. We call on all nations to support and endorse this initiative as it seeks to foster international cooperation and share best practices for sustainable mountain development. Together we can ensure that these vital ecosystems are preserved for future generations, contributing to global environmental resilience. In conclusion, I would like to recognize my fellow members of our national delegation, represented by the Deputy Minister of Labour, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the National Confederation of Trade Unions as well as Deputy Chair of the National Chamber of Commerce. It is not always easy, but we are committed to working together as social partners with a comprehensive and balanced approach to solving problems related to labour and safety of our workers. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Soodesh Satkam Callichurn

Government (Mauritius)

Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, let me start by congratulating you, Madam President, and all those who have been elected to steer the work of this conference. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General for his second report to the Conference advocating for a renewed social contract, which undoubtedly paves the way on how best to tackle injustices, inequalities and insecurities. Madam President, Mauritius stands committed to implementing the flagship initiative of the Director-General of the ILO that is the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Conscious of its importance, Mauritius is sparing itself no effort to come up with national policies and is set to accelerate action towards achieving social justice for all. We have already triggered the process in view of our adherence to the coalition. As policymakers, we are fully committed to the need to prioritize social justice in our national development plans, invest in education, skills development and training, strengthen social protection systems and promote gender equality and empowerment of marginalized communities. On this score, Madam President, I can safely affirm that Mauritius has already achieved substantial progress. Let me here refer to a few salient latest measures. With the introduction of the national minimum wage since 2018, recent figures show that the number of private sector workers in the lowest salary band decreased from 34% in 2017 to 7.1% in 2023. Madam President, the Government of Mauritius works to secure greater social inclusiveness of the most vulnerable segment

of our population. In fact, we recently adopted the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act which gives effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international instruments to which Mauritius is a party. Under this piece of legislation, amongst other measures, employers are given fiscal incentives to employ persons with disabilities. Furthermore, Chair, the continued implementation of the Marshall Plan against poverty and targeted social protection programmes for low-income categories and vulnerable groups have also sustained government efforts to ensure social inclusiveness. In fact, due to our efforts to eliminate poverty, the World Bank projects that the poverty rate in Mauritius would have declined from 16% to 7% by 2026. Education is key to success and upward mobility of the vulnerable segments of society. The Mauritian Government therefore strives for an inclusive, equitable and quality education system through free education to all, from pre-primary to tertiary. Madam President, we welcome the item on the care economy on the agenda for this conference. With the ageing population and a growing number of working mothers, the care sector is undoubtedly called upon to expand rapidly. Concrete measures taken by the Government of Mauritius in the care sector include the setting up of a geriatric healthcare unit and an early dementia diagnosis clinic in the public hospitals. Chair, family care is also high on the agenda of the Mauritian Government. Following recent amendments brought to the labour legislation, workers now benefit from the possibility to use their leave entitlement to care for their children, parents and grandparents having healthcare-related issues. Chair, I am also pleased to note that the ILO has included the theme 'Protection against biological hazards' on the agenda of the Conference. If adopted, this new standard will surely help member countries to devise policies, strategies and frameworks in order to take proactive and protective measures against biological hazards. To conclude, Madam President, Mauritius continues to embrace the collaborative partnership of the ILO. Our shared vision is to build a more equal, accessible and resilient world. Let us therefore, with the Global Coalition, join forces to advocate, pursue and work towards equal opportunities for all. On this note, I thank you for your kind attention.

Mr Muhammetseyit Sylapov

Government (Turkmenistan)

Director-General, Madam Vice-President, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to greet you all on behalf of the delegation of Turkmenistan to the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, and thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak in this plenary sitting. Ladies and gentlemen, Turkmenistan confirms its commitment to the ILO's Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and welcomes the DG's report 'Towards a renewed social contract', which highlights the issue of social justice and special attention is paid to the fundamental basis of a fair society in which opportunities and institutions are built to ensure decent work: the social contract. The report seeks the realization of the call for all people, irrespective of race, creed or sex, to have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity, and stimulates discussion of priorities in this area. Undoubtedly, the ILO has all the advantages and opportunities to do this. A social contract involves establishing rules and laws through mutual agreement between the government of the country and its people. This is through social dialogue, which allows us to formulate obligations between the tripartite partners in the area of work and social support for the population which is proclaimed in the Convention on Tripartite Consultation to promote the

implementation of international labour standards. Social dialogue is a precondition for a renewed social contract and the advancement of social justice ahead of participation in the global summit. Social justice allows society and the economy to function more harmoniously and effectively, and the main task of the state is to ensure security, stability and the prosperity of its people, regardless of their ethnicity, skin colour, race, sex, origin, property or professional status, place of residence, language, age, attitude to religion, political convictions and any other factors. We fully recognize that currently there is a need to unite our joint efforts to attain our common goal: social justice. At this stage, there is an increased need to activate tripartism and engage in social dialogue so that priority can be placed on matters related to social justice. Conference participants, colleagues, in conclusion I would like to assure you that Turkmenistan will continue to pay particular attention to matters pertaining to social and economic justice, ensuring people's fundamental rights and freedoms. I thank you for your attention.

Mr Faya François Bourouno

Government (Guinea)

Madam Chair, this conference is taking place in a context in which the question of social protection of workers is at the centre of world concern. Many efforts have already been put into this by the various bodies of the ILO and by all of the players in the international community to set the bases for universal social protection for everyone in the world of work. And given that, I very much welcome the fact that the International Labour Organization has shown the path, through its guidelines on workers' protection, to follow up on the conclusions adopted at the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference last year. Chairman, the Government of Guinea has set itself the objective of giving the country a universal framework for social protection and that it is a priority at the top of its agenda. Given this, specific mechanisms have been put in place to extend the coverage of social systems to improve the conditions of life of our people. A national social provision fund has been created to cover public sector workers. Diagnostic centres have been put in place to improve healthcare for workers in the mixed sector and the private sector. Health insurance for public sector workers is in place, and a programme to extend social coverage to the informal sector is being implemented. Apart from that, work has been ongoing on drawing up a social provision code and revising the labour code and the social security code. Our country is fully committed, in fact, to making sure that every worker has a chance to exercise their rights to decent conditions of work and that every workplace in Guinea is healthy and safe. I would like to welcome the initiatives and the efforts put in by the ILO in supporting strategic policies and strategies with a view to a fair transition of economies and societies in a sustainable fashion. Guinea is engaged to joining in with other member countries to face up to the challenges in sustainable development and remains active in supporting the ILO guaranteeing decent work in a changing world. Looking at social justice, the whole world recognizes there is no peace without it. That is why social justice has to be a central lever in our policies, as set out in our development strategies and in conformity of the Philadelphia Declaration. In Guinea, after acceding to the highest office, the President of the Republic, Mamady Doumbouya, opened consultations with everyone involved to address the concerns of social, economic and political players. And these consultations have led to important progress. To guarantee inclusive growth and reduce poverty, there has been a direct levy placed on mining and other extractive industries and the income has been redistributed to poor people. Various collective conventions have also been initiated to increase the minimum wage, but I also mention the other

instruments. We are in a state of continuous coordination between the social partners and the state, and to support that movement the employers' new federation has set in place its management board, and the workers' movement now also has a single confederation bringing together all of the union organizations in the country. And I would like, on behalf of my country, to express our gratitude towards the International Labour Office for its consistent support, thanks to which the Republic of Guinea has been strengthening social dialogue and, for the first time, has drawn up a national charter for social dialogue, which is a fruit of a consensus between all of the parties concerned. Madam Chair, in this changing world, the implementation of the ambitious programme presented by the Director-General, based on the new social contracts and social justice, requires the efforts of all. We need to orient our work towards policies which are sustainable, inclusive, which respect environmental balance, to preserve the bases of decent work for future generations.

Mr Mohamed Abdelaziz Gobran Abdelhalim

Worker (Egypt)

In the name of God, the most Merciful, the most Gracious. Mr Gilbert Hounbo, the Director-General of the ILO, Mr President of the Conference, ladies and gentlemen, on my behalf and on behalf of the Egyptian working class I am pleased to convey to you the greetings of the workers and the people of Egypt. We wish you all success for this 112th Session of the ILC. We hope that our deliberations will find solutions to the issues of the world of labour and workers and to achieve our aspirations for a better future for all of us. In light of the significant challenges we all face, this current session, ladies and gentlemen, discusses vital issues with direct impact on the world of work and the workers. On this occasion I commend the Director-General of the ILO for his full, comprehensive report taking the issue of social justice as the mainstay for welfare and equal opportunities. There is no full social justice without decent work and without institutions contributing to preserve it. This goal does not come without challenges. Where in the world of today we see a great deal of geopolitical instability and widespread wars in many areas of the world, this has given rise to economic crises and resulted in high inflation rates and food prices in addition to climate change with direct impact on the labour of work. All these challenges together are not comparable to the upcoming artificial intelligence tsunami, as described by the IMF Executive Director. And this tsunami will lead to the loss of millions of job opportunities worldwide. The workers will be the most affected and will pay a heavy price. All the aforementioned challenges make it incumbent on us to coordinate our collective action on all levels. And it also requires aligned international policies and the building of institutional capacities to achieve decent work and to work towards the respect of the fundamental principles and rights at work established by the ILO. The General Federation of Trade Unions of Egypt, the voice that represents the Egyptian worker, continues to exert every effort to improve the working conditions, the occupational safety and health and to raise the wages through working closely with the deputies in the House of Representatives, the Shura Council and the National Authority for Social Insurance. We also continue to work with the civil society organizations, the ILO and the Ministry of Manpower as well as all other relevant ministries. We have taken part in the social dialogue session on the national employment strategy to devise skills development programmes to rehabilitate the human capacities and to train the people and the workers on the skills of the future to meet the work requirements. It also aims at favouring and promoting the participation of women and young people in the sector. Our federation expresses its full solidarity

with the people of Palestine, and we fully condemn the atrocities in Gaza. Out of 193 countries, 147 do recognize Palestine as a State. The occupier kills the children and the women, prevents the food aid and rejects every plan for peace and all calls for a ceasefire, and it stands in full and flagrant violation of the international law. We call for the halting of the war in Gaza without any conditions. There is no full peace in the Middle East without a solution and a fair and permanent solution to the situation of Palestine. Thank you very much.

Mr Ihar Staravoiatou

Government (Belarus)

Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Belarus, allow me to greet the participants of the 112th Session of the ILC. Let me also congratulate the minister from Moldova, Alexei Buzu, on his election to the high and honourable post of President of the Conference. I wish him successful and fruitful work. The discussion on issues of the social dimension within the walls of the ILO has been going on for several years now. Economic crises have become a serious catalyst for the intensification of the search for ways to strengthen the role of the social and labour block, both at the interstate level and in the national policies of Member States. Today it is obvious that issues of fair distribution of resources, creation of equal opportunities for all and strengthening the effectiveness of social mobility are no less important for sustainable development than economic growth and technological progress. In recent decades changes in the social and labour sphere have become particularly acute. With its vast experience and expertise, the ILO is at the forefront of understanding contemporary trends in the world of work. The ILO Centenary Declaration laid a solid ideological foundation for promoting best practices in implementing human-centred policies. It defined the main directions of the movement. These are investments in people and their abilities, the development of effective labour institutions and the creation of decent jobs, ensuring social protection for every person from birth to death, creating a system of universal labour guarantees, ensuring the universal right to vocational training throughout life, and the real achievement of gender equality. These fundamental tasks must become a key part of the universal collective commitment to building a system of social relations based on the principles of social justice. In his report, the Director-General speaks of the need to renew the social contract and provides a clear vision of how we must move forward to achieve this goal. Madam Chair, in Belarus we do not consider social policy as an alternative to economic growth policy. On the contrary, these are two integral parts of one whole. In Belarus great importance is attached to ensuring that the results of economic development have a positive effect on the well-being of all citizens. We are convinced that economic growth in itself is not a guarantee of improving people's quality of life. It is necessary to have appropriate institutions and mechanisms that would ensure a rational and fair distribution of resources. Therefore, many measures of state policy are aimed at implementing solidarity approaches and preventing excessive and unfair stratification in society. The fundamental principle of social justice enshrined in the ILO Constitution is the cornerstone of the ideology of the Belarussian state. Madam Vice-Chair, in June last year at the 111th Session of the ILC, a resolution was adopted on article 33 of the ILO Constitution in relation to Belarus which essentially calls for the isolation of the Belarussian state. We consider this resolution to be unfair and politically motivated. There are no objective reasons for applying restrictive measures to Belarus and revising cooperation relations. The adoption of the resolution was lobbied by the countries of

the Western bloc. The goals they pursue are obvious to us. This is a way to punish our country for its independent sovereign course, to discredit it in the ILO and to use the Organization's mechanisms to support the illegal sanctions policy of Western countries against Belarus. The measures set out in the resolution are contrary to the fundamental principles of the ILO. I am convinced that the existence of such an unfair resolution in relation to a full member of the ILO causes irreparable damage to the credibility of the Organization since it clearly shows the entire whole world community that a separate group of countries has the ability to manipulate the position of the ILO at its own discretion. Tomorrow, June 5, the Committee on the Application of Standards will hold for the first time a special meeting on the situation in Belarus, as provided for in the resolution. I call on the delegates of the Conference who will take part in the work of the said committee to support the Republic of Belarus and not allow further politicization of the activities of the International Labour Organization and its supervisory bodies. Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President.

Mr Mohamed Alisha Janah

Employer (Maldives)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim, the Director-General of the ILO, the President of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, distinguished delegates, guests, observers, ladies and gentlemen. We convene this year at a moment of profound change that continues to transform the future of work. Now, more than ever, our shared efforts are imperative for responding to intersecting challenges. Small Island Developing States such as my own country, the Maldives, stand at the forefront of these plural crises. We know from our experience that a globalized world is deeply interconnected, that shocks in one area continue to have cross-border reverberating effects. We also know that these impacts can generate insecurity and uncertainty. It is how we respond to the challenges of today that can give us the opportunity to create a future where universal and lasting peace is a reality. As we look to the future, towards engineering more resilient economies and societies, our task is not just to diversify and transform the structural basis of our economy. Rather, it is to do so in a manner that is anchored in social justice and in accordance with a just transition. As an archipelago nation, we in the Maldives are clear-eyed about the threats posed by climate change to all workers. Many of our industries, from tourism and fisheries to emerging sectors, including communications and construction are vulnerable to climate change related disruptions. However, the transition towards a more sustainable economy continues to create opportunities for us, unlocking the potential inherent in sustainable practices, conservation and renewal emergencies. With digital transformation in full swing across all sectors, we are effectively leveraging digital technologies and infrastructure to build a more modern, more resilient, more accessible economy and society. These changes and challenges in all their forms are disruptive and transformative. We welcome the Director-General's report with its timely focus on the social contract as the foundation of just societies and the capacity of the social contract to deliver social justice through decent work. Decent work and social justice are essential levers for sustainable development. The report draws attention to the need to reframe our social contract using social dialogue to make it the cornerstone of a human-centred response to transformative change. As the Director-General's report identifies, attention must also be given to those who may at times be on the fringes of existing social contracts. Inclusivity is an essential part of social justice. The Maldives has relied on the significant contributions of migrant workers with the size of our labour force otherwise being

constrained by our demographics. Employers have an important stake in expanding the labour pool and bringing diversity and much needed skills, especially in sectors and industries where it is difficult to retain or access local talent. Equally, investment in training and upskilling the local labour force remains essential. Careful consideration must continue to be given to addressing the social contract in this context with a view to ensuring that migration policy benefits all stakeholders and contributes to sustainable development and upholds social justice. The ILO, with its unique tripartite structure, embodies the potential for multilateralism. To work together towards these worthy objectives, social partners including employers' organizations such as the National Federation of Maldivian Employers, remain as critical collaborators and drivers of change and collective efforts. We remain committed to revitalizing tripartism as a key avenue for renewing the social contract. Over the past century the ILO has relied on this essential tool of social dialogue to address collective challenges. This tool remains as relevant today as it did over a hundred years ago. Against a backdrop of turbulence and transformation, a reaffirmed commitment to inclusive social dialogue remains at the very core of our shared ability to address the shared challenges of today. Thank you very much.

Mr Justin Viard

Government (Haiti)

Director-General, Ms Vice-President, it is an honour to speak on behalf of the Government of the Francophone who celebrate this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. The group takes note of the Director-General's report on the new social contract and the need to have a social contract based on the respect for human rights, social justice, sustainable economy, equality of chance, effective governance and a fair transition. In a world faced with multiple crises and unprecedented changes, the foundations are faced with a lot of tests. The social contracts are being made more fragile by developments in the economy and increasing inequality. Apart from that, we have the digital transition which is providing lots of challenges. Apart from that, commitments taken through the programme for sustainable development with a view to 2030 to overcome the challenges, particularly in employment, are making slow progress. Given that worrying situation, the Francophone group calls for strengthening of tripartism and social dialogue in employment policies. It invites countries that have not yet done that to ratify all of the relevant Conventions, in particular 122 on employment policies which establish work as a human right and a right to full employment freely chosen. The group encourages the effective implementation of the commitments entered into through the Declaration of the ILO on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 2018 and in 2022 which guarantee a safe and healthy workplace as a fifth fundamental right and principle at work. Education and quality apprenticeships are key to the development of skills for opportunities to decent work, and the Francophone group calls for all involved to work to strengthen guarantees in this sense. We welcome the work in the OIF to promote education, training and higher education and research, in particular through its Dakar Institute. To increase young people's opportunities in the French-speaking countries to have access to decent work, the OIF is strengthening numerical skills by the D-CLIC, train yourself in digital technology. Thousands of young people from 14 different countries have trained through that. The group is pleased to see the official launching of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and invites all players involved to join in with that initiative. It also notes with interest the large number of partners that have come from different places that are

joining in this initiative, which demonstrates its relevance. The group welcomes the implementation of the setting up of a tripartite group on the new social contract for our shared programme, which will undoubtedly make a contribution to renewing the social contract and giving a boost to initiatives for decent work and making it possible to make it happen. We support the 2025 Summit for Sustainable Development. We hope that the effective work of the ILO, that this work will make it possible to have a fairer distribution of the wealth of the world and more effective rights to have decent and freely chosen work. The world of work is in perpetual evolution. That needs to be taken into account. Finally, we emphasize the importance of multilingualism and cultural diversity within our UN actions, and we therefore encourage the ILO in its efforts to achieve its objectives in that area. Thank you very much.

Mr Wayne Prins

World Organisation of Workers

Chair, Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, human flourishing can take many forms, yet one of the hallmarks of a thriving society is the ability, the willingness and the imperative to care for the vulnerable. From child care to elder care, from support services to education to healthcare, care workers are essential to meeting the physical and psychological needs of people of all ages. We depend on them to sustain human, social and economic development on every level. The ILO's publication 'Decent Work and the Care Economy' reports that the care economy constitutes 381 million jobs globally, about 11.5% of total employment. In healthcare, 70% of these paid care workers are women. Yet much too often care workers, those who dedicate their lives and careers to caring for others, are vulnerable themselves. They are underpaid, overextended and overwhelmed. Too often they do not have enough hands or enough resources. Too often they are victims of workplace violence. Too often they cannot adequately provide for themselves or their families. And too often they do not receive the gratitude they deserve for caring for us, our children and our parents. As president of the World Organisation of Workers, I submit to you that we must do better and we can do better. Exacerbating the plight of those working in the care economy is the problem of systemic labour shortages. This growing global concern is experienced by almost all developed economies. It is leading to profound challenges for workers and employers in all economic sectors, but it is felt most acutely by workers in the care economy. The main contributing factor to systemic labour shortages are ageing populations, the creation of more jobs through economic growth, insufficient domestic birth rates in industrialized countries and the devaluing of care work. Solutions include immigration to bring in new workers, optimizing the available workforce through greater participation and improved productivity, leveraging technology to assist with human labour and training new workers to join the workforce. WOW and its member affiliates represent some 1.3 million workers worldwide, hundreds of thousands of whom work in the care economy, primarily in Africa, Asia and the Americas. The realities care workers face around the globe are not all the same, and the solutions will need to be different too. That is why your wisdom as worker representatives is so important. As leaders in the field of labour, we are uniquely placed to offer solutions to improve the lives of those working in the care economy around the world. Working together, we can use our collective voice to advocate for policies and practices that make it easier for women to have both families of their own and rewarding careers. We can encourage governments to provide adequate resources for front-line caregivers who often bear the brunt of worker shortages while being paid the least. We can encourage the

participation of more men in the care economy, in both paid and unpaid care. We can facilitate the training and education of care workers to ensure they are equipped with in-demand skills. We can insist that care workers have a seat at the table when governments grapple with the issues that affect them. We can advocate for labour policies that allow for better representation and easier access to collective bargaining. We can increase public awareness and support for the indispensable contributions care workers make to the well-being of all of us. I come to you not with despair but to share hope and to encourage you all in the work to be done to improve the lives of those working in the care economy. We have the privilege, the opportunity and the responsibility to speak to their challenges and provide solutions. Regardless of our differences, we have much that brings us together, most importantly our continued focus on the dignity of every worker and the pursuit of decent work for all of us. This is our noble calling and purpose. And it is this pursuit that keeps us motivated in our efforts to help not only care workers but workers everywhere to do safe, meaningful work and to provide for themselves and their families. Thank you.

Mr Seong-Kyu Kang

International Commission on Occupational Health

Decent work is the most important value of the ILO. The goal of decent work cannot be achieved without ensuring healthy workers in the workplace. In 2022, with this concept in mind, the ILO defined occupational safety and health as one of the fundamental principles and rights at work. Each year it is estimated that 2.9 million workers die due to work-related incidents caused by traditional and emerging hazards in the workplace. Every day, 8,000 workers, more than double the number of ILO employees, die from work-related causes. ICOH has estimated the economic loss to be 6% of GDP. Occupational hazards have two aspects: physical factors which are visible risks and social factors which are not visible. Physical factors include dust, noise, radiation, heavy metals, solvents, gases, vapours, and biological hazards, which is one of topics in this ILC's 112th Session. Social factors include job stress, long working hours, shift work, workplace violence and harassment. These hazards cause and aggravate cardiovascular disease, stroke, back pain and mental illnesses as well as traditional occupational diseases such as pneumoconiosis and chemical poisoning. In addition, workers with lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and hyperlipidaemia are more vulnerable to work-related diseases. Furthermore, socio-economic factors can influence the development and exacerbation of work-related diseases. I was born in a low-income country, raised in a middle-income country and now live in a high-income country. These countries are the same: the Republic of Korea. The occupational risk in Korea today is different compared to when I started working in occupational health 35 years ago. The hazards that disappeared from my sight exist somewhere around the world. We continue to face the exposure of workers to various occupational hazards every day. Occupational health is not just a problem within one country or region. It is time to embrace the idea of global responsibility for workers' health. Social inequality itself is one of the most significant occupational risks today. Incomplete social security systems affect work-related conditions in many low and middle-income countries. ICOH, International Commission on Occupational Health, based in Rome, Italy, is an ILO-recognized international non-governmental organization comprising 2,000 individual professionals from over 100 countries as well as group members, public institutes, societies and associations in various countries and regions. ICOH has been hosting triennial congresses for 120 years, since its establishment in 1906 following the historic

event of saving workers' lives during the construction of a Swiss tunnel. Last April ICOH held its 34th International Congress in Marrakesh, Morocco, and announced the ICOH Marrakesh Declaration after a week-long discussion at the Congress. In the Declaration, ICOH calls for support from the ILO to revitalize the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health. ICOH has urged the ILO to request its Member States to ratify ILO Convention 161 as well as 187 and 155. To achieve this, ICOH commits to providing all possible support to the ILO in its highly valued efforts on global responsibility for workers' health. Dear delegates from trade unions, employers' associations and governments of Member States, let us come together to save the workers' lives and protect one of the fundamental human rights: a safe and healthy working environment. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr John Ofori Nyantakye

International Young Christian Workers

Thank you, Madam Chair, and permit me to follow the protocol that has already been established. I thank you for the comprehensive report that shows clearly how in most countries our systems are taking a huge step back in terms of social justice and decent work. In the IYCW we reaffirm the analysis of the report with the following testimonies. "I work in a supermarket for 12 hours, in peak season for 15 hours work a day, with only half an hour lunch or rest with a very low salary. I was forced to stop my education to help my family to meet our daily needs." This is young workers from Egypt. "The minimum wage is not even \$4 per month. Therefore, if they pay us \$80 per month in a store, they already believe that they have the authority to pressure us to do more work. So we have to get used to it. And if we don't like it, they throw us away." Young workers from Venezuela. "My parents died recently, and I am an orphan. Now my dream was to work in the IT field but without my parents and with no income I shifted my studies into mechanics, and I work in a band in weddings, which is seasonal, to afford my needs." Young workers from India. Like these testimonies and millions of others, young workers and young people are struggling to have a glimpse of dignity with all the social injustices we must endure every day. We see that most countries are being led by right-conservative parties. They are part of those small groups who are winning through the crises and changes in the world of work, while the bigger part of the world is suffering without job security, no education, no access to services and social protection, no decent income, having insecurity for their future and just trying to survive each day of their life. Therefore, we call to go further than handing out band-aid solutions to those who are suffering from the changes but create measures that drive real change towards a universal human right, equal access to opportunities, fair distribution and just transitions. In the IYCW, we reaffirm our commitment in advancing social justice through renewed social contracts. Therefore, the social contract needs to include the voice of young workers in the decision-making to advance democracy at work. It is crucial to create a more inclusive and equitable world of work by recognizing the efforts of those unrecognized or underrepresented workers' organizations and include them in the social dialogue. We need a social contract that will secure safe and healthy working environments, access to social protection regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds that includes access to health, essential benefits and quality education for young workers. Most important is that the social contract needs to ensure the labour protection of all workers by guaranteeing the freedom of association, including migrants, refugees, domestic workers, rural workers and informal workers, providing decent living incomes and social benefits. In the IYCW in its almost 100 years of existence

we believe that we need to continue our fight through our actions towards a new society which is based on solidarity, peace and justice where human dignity is at the centre of the economy. I thank you for your attention.

Ms Béatrice Lestic

Worker Vice-President (France)

Thank you. This brings us to the end of the list of speakers for this sitting. Thank you very much for your contributions to today's work. The sitting is ended.

► Wednesday, 5 June 2024

Mr July Moyo

Government Vice-President (Zimbabwe)

Good morning. May I have your attention, and good morning. Good morning, distinguished delegates. I am honoured to declare open the third sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. As this is the first time that I am addressing this assembly in my capacity as Government Vice-President of this session for the Conference, I would like to thank you all for having entrusted me with this responsibility. Rest assured that I shall spare no effort to make sure our work in the plenary over the coming days is fruitful. This morning we shall continue with the general discussion on the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. Before we begin, I should like to remind you that, according to the arrangements approved at our opening sitting with regards to the modalities of the special sitting on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories, the appendix to the Director-General's report on this topic will be discussed at the special sitting tomorrow, the 6th of June. I therefore encourage you to please focus your interventions on reports 1(A), 1(B) and 1(C). I want to thank you for this. Likewise, I would like to recall the principles governing this discussion which the Conference President referred to yesterday afternoon. One, on the use of parliamentary language, I wish to call on all those who will speak in plenary to do so with both the openness and the dignity that are appropriate to the highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters. Freedom of expression is a vital feature of the International Labour Organization. To exercise this freedom in a spirit of mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates respect the accepted procedure, use parliamentary language, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising any question foreign to these matters. The respect of these principles is necessary if we want our work to be effective and successful. Two, on plenary starting times, there is a firm agreement on the part of the officers to begin our sittings strictly on time. I am sorry we have delayed a little bit today. Only in this manner will we manage to complete the debates within the time scheduled. I am counting on you all to make this possible. Three, I must refer to the length of plenary speeches. As you may already know, the duration of speeches is limited by the standing orders of the Conference to five minutes only. This time limit will be strictly applied. It is therefore strongly recommended that delegates reduce courtesies to a minimum. Timekeeping is a collective responsibility. For the sake of transparency, a countdown will be on display on the screen for all interventions. Four, I should like to address points of order and rights to reply. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order or request the right of reply in the plenary do not need to interrupt the proceedings. Instead, they should simply raise their flag. A member of staff will then approach them in the room and attend to their request. In the case of a right of reply, I ask that you clearly inform that member of staff who will come to you the intervention in respect of which the right of reply is sought. Please be reminded that a right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes and it should be delivered in respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice in our organization to allow a right to reply to a reply. We have a long list of speakers for today, so I suggest we begin with our business without delay. And my first speaker, I would like to begin by giving the floor to the first delegate on my list who is the President of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation. Mr Kabir, I give you the floor.

Mr Ardashir Kabir

Employer (Bangladesh)

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you. At the outset, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman on being elected to the distinguished chair, and I also congratulate the vice-chairs for being elected to their respective positions. My compliments to the Director-General for exhibiting a comprehensive report titled 'Towards a renewed social contract', highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by the global community during this age of digital progress. The report on a renewed social contract serves as a crucial reference for understanding the current state of social demographics and labour markets. It highlights the actions needed to promote social justice globally. It provides valuable insights into persistent inequalities, vulnerabilities and injustices faced by workers and employees worldwide as well as the challenges businesses encounter across different countries. It underscores the interconnectedness of economic, social and environmental dimensions, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to addressing human-centric issues. Social contracts are essential for the collective well-being and governance of any society. We can go back all the way to the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his social contract establishing what is provided, how and by whom, thereby connecting individuals and communities. They articulate responsibilities and duties, reflecting a common understanding of access to basic services, employment opportunities and social protection, and define the role of and our expectations from the state, especially as an insurer of last resort in challenging times, as we saw during COVID. To maintain legitimacy and support, social contracts must be periodically updated, re-examining roles and responsibilities in order to ensure social justice in times of unprecedented and very fast change. The UN Secretary-General has emphasized the need for a new social contract to combat poverty and social exclusion. However, climate change, structural inequality, demographic shifts, technological transformations and diminished civic space have been a barrier to this progress. Workers are transitioning from carbon-intensive sectors, for example, which were posing health risks to environmentally friendly ones. Digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence are creating insecurities and raising concerns about transparency and respect for rights. The ILO tripartite governance model, based on freedom of association, is a unique system to promote and renew the current social contract. This renewal should focus on accountability, adaptation, responsiveness and inclusivity, prioritizing labour market imbalances and addressing workers and enterprises on the fringes of existing social contracts. As employers, our role in maintaining a proper social contract is paramount. We should emphasize promoting fair labour practices by ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions and respect for labour rights, including the right to organize and bargain collectively. Fostering inclusivity and skills development is essential, creating a diverse and equal-opportunity work environment. Additionally, we must be responsive to economic, social and technological changes to ensure business practices remain relevant and supportive of employee and employers' needs. By addressing these challenges and committing to these principles, we can ensure that social contracts remain relevant, inclusive and robust, fostering a society that upholds social justice, economic security and equal opportunity for all. At the same time, workers also have a critical role in maintaining the social contract. They must actively engage in their own skills development, adapting to new job requirements and technological changes which are coming upon us almost every day. Upholding workplace responsibilities, maintaining high standards of professionalism and supporting inclusive practice are

essential if the workers and the employers together are to meet contemporary challenges. The governments bear a significant responsibility in upholding the social contract. They must ensure the creation and enforcement of fair labour laws and policies that protect workers' rights and promote equitable economic growth that ensures sustainability of businesses. All responsibilities do not belong to businesses. Businesses cannot bear the burden of every aspect of society. Governments must commit to transparency, accountability and responsiveness in their actions. Ensuring public trust and effective governance by fostering an environment that supports social justice, economic security and equal opportunity, governments play a pivotal role in maintaining and renewing the social contract. In conclusion, as a constituent of the ILO, we hope that the ILO will foster a renewed social contract that promotes a universal and lasting peace based on social justice to create a world where social justice is both a journey and a destination, characterized by universal human rights, fair labour practices and inclusive sustainable economic growth. This vision requires the active participation and commitment of employers, workers and governments working together to build a just and equitable society for present and future generations. Thank you.

Mr Steinar Krogstad

Worker (Norway)

Ladies and gentlemen, the Director-General's report has a sombre start. He reminds that trust in governance is waning and that many feel the system is rigged against them. We welcome the discussion on how to renew the social contract. However, I believe we already have the answer: the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. In 2015, during the UN General Assembly, the four pillars of the ILO Decent Work Agenda became integral elements of the 2030 Agenda. We should continue emphasizing the Decent Work Agenda as our solution to deliver on Sustainable Development Goals. The Centenary Declaration highlights the need for a transformative agenda for gender equality and an investment in people through jobs, skills and social protection. It recognizes the relevance of the care economy. Unpaid care work has to be recognized, reduced and redistributed. To achieve this we need financial investment in care systems and care infrastructure. To achieve gender equality we also need data. Currently, fewer than half of the UN Member States can measure progress on gender equality. We cannot achieve what we cannot measure. Better data will revolutionize decision-making. Estimates show that stronger data systems will unlock a powerful data dividend with \$32 return for every dollar invested. However, data systems lack investment and critical information is missing. In his report, the Director-General asked whether universal social protection might be our best hope for inspiring global solidarity and putting the Sustainable Development Goals back on track, fostering a more equitable and sustainable world. I agree. As a workers' delegate from Norway, I have witnessed the remarkable development of the Norwegian welfare state through my life. The vision of community that provided social security from cradle to grave was largely realized between 1945 and 1970. Even before Norway became a wealthy nation, it was a matter of will and planning and, of course, strong unions. However, despite these advances, a recent documentary called *The Black Swan* is currently shocking the Nordic countries. The documentary reveals a stark, unsettling reality where entrepreneurs, lawyers and business people deliberately cheat the tax authorities, collaborate with criminal gangs and embezzle millions at the state's expense. [vgr INAUDIBLE 15:58] and organized crime undermines the very foundation of our society. We need to rebuild trust by implementing rigorous checks and balances and taking decisive action against crime

and corruption. We must recommit to transparency, accountability and genuine dedication to the welfare of all citizens. In Norway the trade unions have advocated for several measures to address these challenges. To combat work-related crime, there has been established robust collaboration between various agencies: the Labour Inspection Authority, the Labour and Welfare Administration, the police and the Tax Administration. This cross-agency collaboration ensures that efforts are more effective and targeted. Additionally, the new Transparency Act requires companies to ensure human rights and decent work conditions are respected in their operation and supply chains. Companies must carry out due diligence activities and respond to information requests about their impacts on human rights and working conditions. Sustainable public procurement is key. Oslo, and other Norwegian cities, has since 2013 had social contract clauses in its procurement of goods. In 2023 due diligence requirements were included in all tenders, both goods and services, where there is a high risk of violation of human rights and labour rights, and/or where there is a risk of corruption and/or negative impact on the environment. Europol states that 60% of crime networks in Europe use corruption as an active tool. This is highly detrimental to society and must be fought. The best way of doing this is by revitalizing tripartism and applying the principles of good governance and encourage sustainable investment. This will build trust and help renew the social contract. Thank you.

Mr Ali Hossein Rayati Fard

Government (Iran (Islamic Republic of))

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. Mr President, I congratulate you on your worthy election as President of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference as well as the election of the Vice-Presidents. I would also like to thank the Director-General for presenting his report on renewing social contracts. This report clearly shows that the world of work has simultaneously been affected by compounded and intersecting crises over the past few years, the effects of which cannot be contained without adopting appropriate policies and actions at the national, regional and international levels. The unveiling of the Director-General's latest report to us, achieving social justice and elaborating the requirements of a new social contract adapted to current conditions, heralds a new chapter in the world of work, the necessity of renewing the social contract and adapting it to the evolving current conditions, an undeniable necessity for achieving social justice and lasting peace. In the Islamic Republic of Iran this is not only a policy concern but also a cultural idea and a genuine religious value enshrined in the constitution and overarching documents such as vision documents. To renew the social contract, strengthening the mechanisms of norm setting and tripartite dialogue, bridging legal gaps and supporting workers and cross-border businesses as well as securing fiscal space for investment in social policies are essential. Based on the Director-General's report, one of the key priorities for renewing the social contract is to provide universal social protection and equitable access to public services. In this regard, the development and completion of the Iranian welfare database as a comprehensive welfare information system has been one of the most important actions of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to promote social justice. This system facilitates the accurate identification of target groups for supportive policies and better targeting of welfare services. In recent years, we have also witnessed significant achievements in the field of human development and the provision of basic services for all. Life expectancy in the country has increased from 54 years at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution to over 74 years at present. Free health

and medical services have been provided for all segments of society, including immigrants, and the country's food security has also been improved. However, the full realization of the ideal of social justice has still a long way to go. As the Director-General's report also pointed out, the world of work is the original arena for the manifestation of many inequalities and equalities that sometimes originate outside of a work environment. Unilateral coercive and sanction actions against countries, including the unjust sanctions against Iran, play an undeniable role in exacerbating these inequalities and depriving nations of the right to development and decent work. The International Labour Organization, in cooperation with other international bodies, can examine the impacts and consequences of these hostile actions on the world of work and the formation of equal opportunities for all. The inhumane crimes of the Zionist regime in the occupied territories have drawn the [vgr INAUDIBLE 22:35] and conscious attention of all humanity. The widespread protests in the farthest corners of the world reflect global public opinion against such behaviour that is contrary to all human principles and international standards. The ruling issued by the International Court of Justice is a strong and ideal legal confirmation of ending the injustice and crime being committed against humanity in Palestine. While supporting the respected Secretary-General's report on the occupied territories, we call on all Member States and social partners to resolutely condemn these crimes and stand with the oppressed workers and employers of Palestine. Achieving the ideal of social justice and full employment requires global cooperation and interaction. Therefore, the respected Director-General's initiative to propose the idea and establish a Global Coalition for Social Justice is a valuable step that we welcome, and we hereby announce the Islamic Republic of Iran's joining to this coalition from this podium. Finally, it is hoped that, with your esteemed president's wisdom and the participation of all stakeholders, the current session can take effective steps towards reviving and strengthening the new social contract and realizing the human ideals of the International Labour Organization. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Sahil Babayev

Government (Azerbaijan)

Dear Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, firstly I would like to greet the esteemed participants of the Conference and express my gratitude to Mr Hounbo, the Director-General, for his insightful report. The report outlines innovative strategies and recommendations for ensuring fundamental labour rights and principles during a period of growing social and political unrest and adverse effects of climate change. In this context, the initiative of a renewed global social contract which will contribute to the recovery of the world economy and the creation of new mechanisms based on the Decent Work Agenda is of particular importance. Since social partners are the ones who are primarily impacted by the socio-economic policies, social partnerships play a crucial role in the implementation of anti-crisis measures. This approach serves as the cornerstone for all laws and programmes in the field of labour, employment and social protection in Azerbaijan. Since 2001 the Government, the confederation of trade unions and National Confederation of Entrepreneurs conclude every two years a general collective agreement, declaring their coordinated position, joint activities and commitments in the field of socio-economic and labour relations. In other words, we ensure decent work in our country by creating sustainable, quality and green jobs, improving the workforce, providing workers with safe and healthy working conditions and strengthening social dialogue. During the last five years, four social reform packages have been implemented covering 40% of the population, with additional

annual funding of USD\$4 billion. During this period, the minimum pensions increased by 2.5 times, the average master pensions by 2.4 times, social benefits and pensions by 5 times, the minimum wage by 2.7 times, and the wage fund went up by 2.8 times. The DOST centres providing 159 social services from a single platform in a transparent manner, proactive services in the field of pensions and social payments, centralized electronic information service, all together ensure the quality of social services provided in a coordinated and modernized way. Our employment policy executed in close collaboration with the ILO and the effective execution of two Decent Work Country Programmes serve as a prime illustration of this. We are certain that the next Decent Work Country Programme, based on the social partnership and tripartism principles, will be signed shortly. Dear ladies and gentlemen, as part of the Great Return programme, large scale development and reconstruction projects are underway in the liberated territories of our country. As of today, more than 7,000 individuals have made their way back to the homeland. By the end of this year up to 30,000 people will return to their native lands. The economic revival of the liberated areas will become an integral component of the Azerbaijani's economic growth. As you are aware, Azerbaijan has been selected as the host country for the 29th Conference of the Parties which will be held in Baku in November this year. We believe that COP29 will serve as an effective platform to further advance the ILO's agenda within the framework of the UN climate process. At the end of my speech, I would like to reaffirm the importance and necessity of strengthening social dialogue for each country. I wish all the participants of this conference fruitful work and success in your endeavours along the way. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Ahmed Al-Asadi

Government (Iraq / on behalf of the Arab group)

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful. Chairman, Excellencies, I am pleased to address you on behalf of the Arab group at this 112th Session of the ILC. I would like to congratulate you on my behalf and on behalf of the Arab group, the representatives of all the groups. And I would also like to thank the Director-General, Mr Hounbo, for the report and for his presence at the meeting we had in Baghdad on the 27th of April. We thank Mr Hounbo as well for his very complete report titled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Our countries are going through an important period that requires us to rethink our social and economic policies to face current and future challenges. We are seeing repeated crises, be they economic or social or environmental, and they are having an impact on the labour market, on unemployment and making it difficult for people to find decent work. This is covered by the eighth Sustainable Development Goal. We must address social issues at different levels in order to achieve social justice. Ladies and gentlemen, our region is going through various challenges, and the Arab Labour Organization therefore plays an important role in strengthening the Arab position and undergoing efforts to ensure that we have social security and stability during this period of troubles. Of course, we attach importance to the new social contract. This is so that we can create a fair and lasting future. This is also the title of the 49th meeting of the Arab Labour Organization, adopted at the Arab Summit for work in the 33rd session. During that session cooperation was strengthened between the governments, employers and workers in the Arab countries with a view to achieving social justice. We cannot talk about social justice without talking about the disastrous situation in occupied Palestine. Workers and the Palestinian people are daily suffering continued aggression on the part of the occupying forces, and this is happening in the

Gaza Strip for the eighth month in a row. This has caused thousands of deaths and injuries. It has devastated employment as well and the opportunity for a dignified life for the people in that area. We thank the Director-General for having agreed a special session during this conference to address the issue of workers in the occupied territories, but we also ask this to become a permanent item on the agenda so that it is debated. Ladies and gentlemen, of course everybody is working towards social dialogue, and among the social partners we have also the three sources of production that are involved in an attempt to achieve social justice and a better future. Therefore, we encourage all of the various stakeholders to carry on this noble work during this annual meeting in Geneva. We would also ask that pressure be applied to the international community and to the active stakeholders in order to end this destructive war and to end the suffering of employers and workers as well as to ensure that the human rights of workers in Palestine are upheld by respecting the principles of decent work and human rights in the framework of the new social contract. The Global Coalition requires cooperation and a pooling of international efforts. Therefore, we encourage everyone to support the Palestinian demands, in particular for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and also that Palestine be a fully-fledged member of the ILO so that it can also strengthen cooperation in terms of development so that we can help Palestinian workers and kickstart the Palestinian economy once again. We must also support the national Palestinian employment and social protection fund so that we can reduce the suffering of the Palestinian people and ensure them a dignified life in the future. Of course, in addition, we also have to uphold international standards and apply them for Palestinian workers so that they can enjoy their rights and reactivate the emergency fund for them so that future generations will also know social justice around the world. Thank you very much for your kind attention, and I wish everybody every success at this conference. I thank you once again for your kind attention.

Mr Nasser Abdulaziz Aljaryad

Worker (Saudi Arabia)

May peace be upon you. In the name of God, distinguished Chair of the Conference, Director-General, distinguished delegates, it is my pleasure at the outset to address you, Chairman, and congratulate you on your election as Chair of this session. I also congratulate the Vice-Chairs and wish everybody every success. In similar fashion, I also welcome the Director-General's report submitted for the Conference's consideration entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. And we support the content of this report, in particular with regard to the need to examine social contracts in light of new challenges. We need social contracts that are adapted so that we can face injustice and insecurity. Similarly, in terms of the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, we condemn Israel's practices as well as the crimes against the Palestinian people and Palestinian workers. These are a violation of international law. We encourage the international community to apply pressure to Israel so that these practices are ended. Ladies and gentlemen, we need increased attention to workers' rights in light of social and environmental changes. There are also new working methods that are appearing such as platform working and new technologies such as artificial intelligence. These have an impact on workers around the world. We require synergies and cooperation to find lasting and fair solutions here. Ladies and gentlemen, my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in recent years has seen great social and economic change through the implementation of a 2030 Vision which aims to diversify our sources of income to strengthen the role of the private sector and the role of young people and women. We

have carried out widescale reforms in the labour sector. These include the development of regulatory frameworks and laws for the promotion of work. We also have a national commission, including workers' representatives. This works in collaboration with social partners. We support the development of new laws, and we do this through tripartite social dialogue so that we can create decent work and can uphold workers' rights in Saudi Arabia as well as the rights of migrant workers, without any discrimination, all while guaranteeing social justice and economic efficiency. We have participated in improving contractual relations in the labour market for migrant workers. This has helped us to improve our index in this area. We now have a figure of 73% in the international measure on this issue. This is a result that was above our expectations for our 2030 plans. In terms of participation of Saudi women in the labour market, the ILO report underlines that 36% is the figure that we have reached in terms of participation of women on the labour market. We are going to continue our efforts to uphold the rights of all workers in Saudi Arabia. Ladies and gentlemen, as the representative of our country and working with organizations in the Gulf countries, we have also created a council for the trade unions in the Gulf countries so that we can unify our efforts to contribute to decent work and to protecting all workers while also supporting the economies of the Gulf countries. In conclusion, we are facing many challenges, but nonetheless we are trying to consider the interests of all of the different stakeholders to strike a balance and to strengthen the economic situation of our countries. I sincerely wish everybody every success at this conference. I thank you.

Ms Agnes Makonda-Ridley

Government (Malawi)

Good morning. Mr President, it is with great pleasure and a profound sense of purpose that I am here today in person to make a statement to the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Firstly, allow me, Mr President, to convey my greetings and best wishes to you, Mr President, and your bureau and the entire session from his Excellency Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, and from the people of Malawi. Secondly, Mr President, I congratulate you and your bureau on the well-deserved election to steer the deliberations of this conference to a successful conclusion. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for submitting his second report to the International Labour Conference titled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. I agree with his views that climate change, wars, demographic shifts, increasing cost of energy and food, unemployment and underemployment, the growth of the informal sector are all exerting pressure on social contracts. The disruptive effects of climate change on labour markets cannot be disputed. In Malawi, for example, we have many testimonies on climate-related disasters and their far-reaching impacts. I believe many here are aware of the devastation that was caused in March 2023, that is last year, by Tropical Cyclone Freddy in my country. It caused permanent dislocation of labour markets in affected areas and beyond, contributing to food shortages as well as exacerbating unemployment, especially amongst the youth, which at that time stood at 23%. The worst affected was the informal economy, which accounts for 89% of our national employment in Malawi. In order to address these challenges, I agree with the Director-General that the solution is with us as tripartite partners. We need to seriously change our approaches. We need to examine what has worked and what has not worked to satisfy expectations of our citizens. I propose that we should cultivate a culture that stands on shared and collective responsibilities towards each other, based on the concept of Umunthu, or the

philosophy of Umunthu, which is part of our DNA in Africa. In Malawi, Umunthu reflects that no single person and indeed no single country exists as isolated and individual but rather as a member of the broader community built on the foundation that promotes, cohesion, harmony, duty, interdependence, achievement of group goals and conflict avoidance. Mr President, we in Malawi are moving on a structured development path that embraces the concept of the social contract. Malawi 2063, which is our long-term development strategy, is a promise to the people of Malawi by their government to move the country to an inclusively wealthy upper-middle-income country by the year 2063. Mr President, I am happy to report that Malawi has ratified all ten fundamental ILO Conventions and is reviewing policies and labour laws in order to align them to the ratified Conventions to adequately prevent and punish labour rights violations, including perpetrators of child labour, forced labour and trafficking in persons. With support from the ILO, we are in the process of generating our third Decent Work Country Programme which has prioritized employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue as cross-cutting issues. We have also developed a job creation strategy and a road map to accelerate creation of jobs and extend social protection through the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Malawi is a pathfinder country of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection, and as such, we have prioritized agriculture, tourism and mining as the main vehicles for wealth creation and job creation and as a vehicle that would take us to 2063 where we believe we will become an inclusively wealthy upper-middle-income country. Mr President, I wish to conclude by stressing the need for all of us to commit to and to renew and strengthen a new social contract that is built on a foundation of respect for human rights, equality of opportunities, fair distribution of wealth, just transitions and international labour standards. The Global Coalition for Social Justice provides an opportunity, uniting diverse stakeholders to fight social injustice, while the Second World Summit for Social Development provides a platform to promote social justice and to fight discrimination. International cooperation, essential to advance social justice, is part of the bedrock of what we must all do. We look forward as Malawi to the inauguration of the Global Coalition next week and the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025. Lastly, Mr President, Malawi would like to appeal to the Office and to other partners present here to prioritize interventions to support Member States. Malawi looks forward to technical support from the ILO to promote social justice for a renewed social contract that will ensure that as we move as a country to 2063 we do not leave a single citizen of Malawi behind. I thank you, Mr President, for your attention.

Mr Mohammad Otaredian

Employer (Iran (Islamic Republic of))

Dear Chair, dear Director-General, dear delegates, good morning everyone. I would like to begin by thanking the Director-General for providing us with a report that offers a review of the dimensions of the renewed social contract. It was worth noting some views echoed also in the report. Among others, Mahatma Gandhi's comment in 1952 was worthy of recalling that said, "My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest." Ladies and gentlemen, the importance of the Declaration of Philadelphia for social justice as a foundation for peace has been reaffirmed by the Director-General. This is why [vgr INAUDIBLE 48:08] in all fields exists in the world. Arms are easy to obtain but decent work and decent living conditions are hard to find. In short, we are living through a period of profound turmoil, transition and transformation. In all these discouraging circumstances, it is people

especially youth [? 48:37], who will bear the brunt of these effects. Ladies and gentlemen, the succession of multiple crises, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical, financial, food and energy crises, also the pressure of climate change introduced the urgency of a new social contract to regulate the rights and duties between states and citizens more effectively. In summary, the blueprint for a new social contract demands the active engagement of diverse actors by fostering collaboration, implementing proactive measures and affording comprehensive supports. Governments, platforms, companies, trade unions and stakeholders can collectively establish a nurturing ecosystem conducive to the flourishing of a new social contract content. Dear Chair, distinguished delegates, while social protection is recognized as a basic human right for virtually all governments and international institutions, most of the population still has in fact no social protection coverage. Ladies and gentlemen, I totally agree with the article 58 of the Director-General's report saying, "In order that social negotiation should succeed in laying the foundations of a social contract, strong employers' and workers' organizations must be active at all levels, and the State must guarantee these and not surrender its function of arbiter." Mr Chair, my organization, the Iranian Confederation of Employers' Associations, would like to propose considering the first day of June as the World Day of Employers, such as the World Day of Workers on the 1st of May, in order to call the world's attention in supporting the employers and owners of production and services to whom the expansion of the world economic development is indebted to. Mr Chair, at the end of my address, I would like to thank all the ILO and IOE's staff members behind the scenes for being such an excellent facilitator for such a diverse group of participants while upgrading the quality of the programmes. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for your kind attention.

Mr Omar Abdi Said

Government (Djibouti)

President of the Conference, Excellencies, ministers of Member States of the ILO, distinguished Director-General of the ILO, members of the bureau, employer representatives, worker representatives, distinguished delegates, I greet you all. At the outset, I would like to thank the Director-General of the ILO for his continued commitment towards social justice and shared economic progress. The theme of this conference, as highlighted by the ILO Director-General, reminds us that in a world ever more interconnected, cooperation and collective action are vital. We must forge a unified coalition that transcends national borders and political differences to promote development policies which respect both human rights and the environment. Allow me also to commend the tireless efforts of all Member States, employers and workers who have committed to promoting decent work and fundamental human rights. Since our previous meeting, held last year here in Geneva, relations between States have been severely strained by unprecedented global challenges that have been posed by successive crises. In this difficult context, the mission of the ILO, which is to promote social justice and human rights, is extremely important in guiding collective action towards a fairer, more equal and more sustainable post-pandemic world. The protection against biological risks and the discussion on decent work and the care economy are extremely important. In fact, our government has committed to guaranteeing the health security of our population by implementing effective preventive and remedial measures. In addition, we have strengthened our health system by investing on a large scale in hospitals, health centres and in training medical staff. These initiatives aim to reduce risks linked to infectious diseases and to strengthen the resilience of our health system

when faced with future threats. With regard to fundamental principles and rights at work, our country remains attached to promoting equitable, fair and inclusive conditions for all. Our labour code possesses an arsenal of provisions designed to establish a professional environment free from violence and intimidation, thereby promoting the empowerment of women and their full and effective participation in socio-economic life. Dialogue and tripartism are the bedrock of our action. We recognize that only robust partnership between the Government, employers and workers can ensure lasting progress towards social justice. Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, with regard to the theme of this conference, decent work and the care economy, I would like to highlight the vital importance of this issue for my country. Informal sectors still represent a large proportion of our labour force which is mainly made up of women. However, upon the initiative of the Head of State and the President of the Republic, Mr Ismaïl Omar Guellé, a national plan has been established, and we are progressively witnessing a growing formalization of these activities, thereby offering more legal and social protection to persons concerned. Family carers, who are mainly women, play an extremely important role in providing unpaid care services, and this work needs to be recognized and valued as an essential contribution to our society and to our economies. By investing in care work and by supporting family carers, we can build a fairer, more equitable and more inclusive world for all. To conclude, allow me to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Republic of Djibouti towards the ILO's goals and the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We will continue to collaborate closely with all our partners to build a better future in which everyone can benefit from equal opportunities and contribute actively to collective well-being. I would also like to commend the President for leading our work. I would like to thank you for your attention and I wish you all a productive and fruitful conference. Thank you.

Mr Simon Masanga

Government (Zimbabwe)

Mr President, allow me to congratulate you and your fellow officers on your deserved election to preside over the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the Director-General's report, which resonates very well with the aspirations of Zimbabwe. Mr President, Zimbabwe takes heed of the Director-General's call to work toward the renewal of a social contract so as to address the pressures affecting the world of work. In 2009, the tripartite partners in Zimbabwe signed the Kadoma Declaration towards a shared national economic and social vision. The declaration set the tone for the tripartite partners to address macroeconomic and social challenges by identifying areas that each of the tripartite partners needed to work on in order to institutionalize social dialogue and positively contribute towards the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe. In 2019 the Tripartite Negotiating Forum, TNF, was legislated and has since established an independent secretariat with the assistance of the ILO. Mr President, the persistent pressures in the world of work are an indication that we need to urgently take steps towards renewal of the social contract. Zimbabwe, under the auspices of the TNF, is currently working towards the conclusion of a social contract by the end of 2024. The Second Republic is currently implementing National Development Strategy 1, running from 2021 to 2025, which is consistent with collective aspirations and determination of the people of Zimbabwe and is aimed at achieving an empowered and prosperous upper-middle-income society by 2030. The Second Republic launched Vision 2030 to chart a new transformative and inclusive development agenda which seeks to improve

the lives of all Zimbabweans, leaving no one and no place behind. This is being pursued through a number of interventions. Number one, ensuring healthcare for all citizens of Zimbabwe through the building of hospitals and clinics throughout the country. Two, access to education for vulnerable children through the Basic Education Assistance Module, BEAM. Three, infrastructural development such as building of dams. And four, climate proofing agriculture through water harvesting and conservation agriculture, known in our country as Pfumvudza or Intwasa, road construction, energy and power generation, including the development of green energy. Five, industrialization, in particular validation and the beneficiation in the mining and agricultural sectors. Whilst implementing all of these initiatives, our major priority as a country is the promotion of employment, skills development and building sustainable enterprises for our youthful population to access decent jobs. Mr President, sir, with regard to the report of the Chairman on the Governing Body, my delegation takes note of the important issues that the GB has been working on. Of particular importance to my delegation is the need to democratize the governance structures of the ILO which continue to have non-elective seats reserved for countries of chief industrial importance. It is of uttermost importance that the reform process of the ILO shift towards the non-elective seats and pave way for equal regional representation of seats. This takes into consideration that currently no African country is included on the non-elective seats. To that end, Mr President, we call upon the countries of chief industrial importance who have not yet ratified the 1986 Instrument of Amendment of the ILO Constitution to do so and pave way for an inclusive ILO. Finally, Mr President, I wish to conclude my remarks by stressing that if we are to renew the social contract, we need to rebuild back better the trust among our social partners. This will lead to a more inclusive, human-centred and sustainable social contract. I thank you.

Ms Saida Neghza

Employer (Algeria)

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. Heads of government, ministers, Director-General of the ILO, Mr Gilbert Hounbo, Mr Alexei Buzu, President of the Conference, honourable delegates. At the outset, I would like to thank you for this invitation and for giving me the opportunity to deliver this statement at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to thank the Director-General of the ILO for his work and for his visit to the Algerian employers' confederation. I would like to commend Mr Alexei Buzu, the Labour Minister, following his election as President of this conference, and I wish him every success in his work. We are honoured to participate in the social pact launched by the Director-General of the ILO and we are confident that social cohesion and social justice are the foundation of true development, a development that involves all citizens. Ladies and gentlemen, a number of different crises, health and political in nature, have demonstrated that they can have varied consequences on States. Developing countries have been the most affected by these crises, and we have noticed this in the business world as well. SMEs have been the most affected and many have had to close. Therefore, we need cooperation that is based on solidarity and one that takes into account national circumstances more effectively. Within our confederation, we believe that qualified human resources are the key to development, and we need to ensure competitiveness and we cannot do this without qualified human resources and through work in the best conditions. And therefore we are organizing more training for heads of businesses so that we can raise awareness of this need, which is key to ensuring the sustainability of activities and competitiveness.

We are working to improve occupational safety and health, and to that end we recall that our confederation is implementing a project in collaboration with the ILO, and in particular through the ILO regional office in our country. And our theme is 'Working towards decent work' and we are dealing with the informal sector which is occupying a greater proportion in our country and it deprives workers of their fiscal rights. And I would recall that our economies are dealing with challenges at the moment, particularly in Africa. Africa suffered from colonialism, and we are now dealing with a scientific and technological delay and a lack of basic infrastructure. And this in a complicated geopolitical situation linked to security crises and environmental pollution, climate change, food crises and illegal migration. And I would recall the conclusions of the COP, particularly these conclusions which call for greater cooperation for countries of the south to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to promote businesses so that we can distribute different products. And I would sound the alarm regarding the issue of migration which empties institutions and societies of countries in the south of their employees, and the most qualified ones. And this means that we cannot use our modern technologies, and this phenomenon, linked to the issue of illegal migration, prevents cooperation between countries of the north and south, and we need to find mutually acceptable solutions. And I would recall the importance of social dialogue and the need to find solutions that are acceptable to all. I would recall the role of tripartism made up of unions and governments and employees' organizations. This is the approach that we use within this conference. Tripartism is necessary for dealing with important economic issues and for developing new policies that enable us to reach, through consensus, a new social contract. We cannot fail to mention the massacre of our brothers in Gaza who are facing a Zionist attack that has caused the deaths of thousands of women and children. I would recall the need to implement a two-state solution to enable our Palestinian brothers to live in peace. To conclude, I would recall the exceptional relations that link our confederation to the International Labour Organization and the IOE, and I would like to thank the Director-General for his fight towards a fairer world. I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the IOE for his continued support, and I would also like to thank him for his visit to Algeria last September. I would like to thank the Labour Minister of Moldova for his efforts during this conference.

Mr Jameel Humaidan

Government (Bahrain)

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. Distinguished President of the Conference, distinguished Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, may God's peace be upon you. At the outset, allow me to address my most sincere congratulations to you, President, on your election as president of this conference. And similarly, I would like to congratulate the Vice-Presidents, and I wish you every success in your work. I am also honoured to pass on the greetings from the Kingdom of Bahrain and their wishes for a successful conference. I must express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the sincere efforts that have been undertaken by the Director-General of the ILO to strengthen the role of the International Labour Office across the world. I would also like to thank him for his efforts to provide greater support and assistance to tripartism within Member States. In addition, I would like to express the Kingdom of Bahrain's satisfaction with the spirit of fruitful cooperation that prevails between Member States of the Organization as well as the cooperation initiatives between different regions and the desire to strengthen consensus. We are trying to improve expertise on a bilateral level, and this is a major step for our organization. Bahrain would

like to answer the call of the Director-General to improve labour conditions and to improve social well-being to ensure a decent life and inclusivity for all, above all in regions that are suffering from volatile political and health conditions and which have had a significant impact on security and peace as well as the stability of labour markets. This requires all of us to look at the important values recognized by the UN and to ensure collective action in order to reduce global conflicts and maintain economic growth and stability within societies. The reform that has been initiated by our king, this project is the foundation for achieving the noble principle of social justice. This is a principle that aims to achieve the highest level of equality and solidarity and to enable adequate living standards for our country. To make this concrete, measures have been implemented. For example, freedom of association to strengthen social dialogue and to establish tripartism to broaden social protection for all workers without exception, including unemployment benefits, salary protection schemes and all other efforts that have been undertaken to ensure legal protection for workers through regulation and also through the implementation and establishment of a number of bodies. And joint efforts of the Government and workers have enabled us to ensure robust measures to improve development and education efforts on the labour market. Thanks to our integrated social protection system, Bahrain is one of the most advanced countries in this area and we are trying to limit unemployment and create more jobs. As I have already mentioned, we are looking at the needs of the labour market. And to conclude, I would like to highlight the firm position of Bahrain to maintain stability across the world as well as its plan of support to the people of Palestine so that it can establish an independent State recognized by all countries of the world and provide them with a life of dignity. We remain determined to support the rights of workers in the occupied Arab territories and Palestine. I wish you every success in this conference, and I would like to thank you for your attention.

Mr Yankoba Diémé

Government (Senegal)

Distinguished President of the Conference, I would like to congratulate you on your election. Distinguished ministers, Chair of the Governing Body of the ILO, distinguished Director-General of the ILO, who I congratulate on the quality of his reports, colleagues, delegates, guests. I am particularly honoured to take the floor at this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the tripartite delegation of Senegal. During the previous session of the Conference, the 111th Session, the Director-General of the ILO proposed to us a novel idea to establish a Global Coalition for Social Justice, and he suggested to us at that time that we should breathe new life into tripartism to renew the social contract. This is a wonderful idea, and I am honoured to reiterate here, on behalf of Senegal, that the achievement of social justice, which is the foundation of lasting peace, shared prosperity, equality of opportunity and just transition, must involve a renewed social contract. A social contract, the ultimate goal of which is to ensure decent work and social justice as full components of sustainable development. This is a vision that is in line with the will of the new government that has recently been elected to renew social dialogue on the basis of a new social pact. In fact, His Excellency Mr Bassirou Diomaye Diakhary Faye, President of the Republic of Senegal, resolutely has decided to make Senegal a just, prosperous and sovereign nation rooted in strong values. In addition, one of the main areas of the project for a sovereign, just and prosperous Senegal focuses on full employment, decent work for all and reducing poverty in all its forms. Thus, important work is underway in order to mitigate the

employment crisis and to better guarantee labour rights and to extend social protection and reduce poverty rates. And an example of this is the reform that is currently underway of the labour code and the social security code as well as the modernization of the labour administration and the national social association for artisans and the institution for inter-business health insurance for non-salaried workers which we have recently initiated and new initiatives to create jobs for young people and women. These initiatives will be furthered in the third country programme for decent work which is currently being prepared and which is focused on new priorities that include strengthening social protection and inclusivity as well as promoting employment and the effectiveness of labour market institutions. Ladies and gentlemen, our country, Senegal, which has a new occupational safety and health policy, is interested in the fourth agenda item which focuses on standard setting on biological hazards. And in the same vein, our attention will focus on studying the labour administration in a changing world of work. This elite administration has recently undergone many changes in our country, such as the dematerialization of procedures, strategic planning with regard to compliance control, and strengthening of logistics. Distinguished President of the Conference, before concluding my statement, I would like to say that I am very satisfied with the quality of tripartite social dialogue in Senegal. As we can see through the regular organization of trade union elections and the implementation of a national plan to strengthen social dialogue, social dialogue is key for us. And at the moment we have held a first dialogue on reforming justice and our conviction is that the outcomes of this conference will enable our States to renew the social contract in order to revitalize and rethink strategies that promote full employment which is productive and freely chosen. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Omar Faruk Osman Nur

Worker (Somalia)

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to address the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the working people of Somalia and their trade union organizations under the leadership of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions. The Director-General's report, 'Towards a renewed social contract', highlights the urgent need for a collective approach to social justice, which is the foundation of lasting peace, shared prosperity, equal opportunities and just transition. We must seize this opportunity to reinforce our collective efforts to these goals. Somalia is navigating a critical period in its history. Our country has endured years of conflict, instability and economic difficulties, deeply affecting our labour market. Despite these obstacles, Somali workers have shown incredible resilience. The need for a new social contract in Somalia is urgent to rebuild our nation and ensure social justice for all. The connection between peace and social justice, as enshrined in the 1944 ILO Declaration in Philadelphia, is more pertinent than ever. In Somalia, enhancing rights, reestablishing and fortifying the rule of law and building strong institutions are essential for ensuring peace, which in turn enables the freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue. These are not just ideals but vital mechanisms for peacebuilding, ensuring our society recovers effectively. We cannot talk about social justice without gender equality. Women in Somalia face significant barriers to employment, economic empowerment and education. We must tackle and eliminate these obstacles. Our commitment to gender equality is resolute as we have successfully campaigned for the domestication of ILO Convention 190 and are now campaigning for legislation on sexual and gender-based violence. This ensures women are protected and have equal opportunities in the

workplaces. The dual impact of climate change and ongoing conflicts is forcing more people to migrate in search of better living conditions and safety. Somalia is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants. We must all embrace a comprehensive rights-based approach to migration that includes sustainable solutions for workplaces and societal integration. Migrants must be treated with dignity and respect, which is crucial for social cohesion and economic stability. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr President, climate change poses a significant threat to workers and the economy, with Somalia being especially vulnerable to repeated climate-related disruptions, exacerbating poverty and displacement. We advocate for a just transition that safeguards workers' livelihoods during the shift to low-carbon economies. On this World Environment Day, I am pleased to inform the International Labour Conference that Somalia has passed a progressive environmental management law. This law enshrines just transition and clearly dictates what our country must do to achieve this through social dialogue, ensuring our national climate action is ambitious and equitable, leaving no one behind. Geopolitical interests and polarization are undermining multilateralism at a time when global cooperation is crucial. The ILO, with its tripartite structure and mandate, plays a key role in supporting inclusive multilateralism. As Somalia prepares to join the UN Security Council it must exemplify the global commitment to international labour standards and collaborate to address critical global challenges such as peace, climate change and inequality. By doing so, Somalia can contribute strengthening the very multilateralism that is currently under threat. Finally, the Director-General's report offers a detailed road map for developing a new social contract. For Somalia and the world, this means recommitting to the principles of social justice, gender equality and inclusive multilateralism, which we wholeheartedly support. It entails placing workers' rights at the core of our efforts to rebuild a fairer and sustainable world. I thank you very much.

Mr Colin E. Jordan

Government (Barbados)

Chair, distinguished delegates, Barbados thanks the Director-General for his report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Barbados continues to value its people, their development and their ability to lead fulfilled lives as they contribute their intellect and their physical labour to national development. We stand against the commoditization of that labour. Earlier this year we enacted the Labour Clauses (Concessions) Act. This legislation builds on the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention 1949 and aligns itself with accompanying Recommendation 84, which includes references to utilities as well as subsidies provided by the state. We are about to establish minimum rates of pay and conditions of work in the hotel and accommodation sector. Previously, we established minimum rates of pay and conditions for work in construction and road building under the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Act. Our National Workplace Wellness Policy, developed through the work of our largest trade union, the Barbados Workers' Union, is being rolled out with workers and managers being sensitized about the need to address wellness and work-life balance as part of personal, organizational and national development. At the recently concluded SIDS Conference in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados launched the Bridgetown Initiative 3.0. Version 3.0 builds on the essential call contained in previous versions of the Bridgetown Initiative. If we are to achieve the goal of creating and maintaining jobs that contribute to the well-being of our population and broader national development, those reforms that we have begun to see in the international financial architecture must be intensified. A more equitable

governance of the international financial institutions is still an objective to be achieved. The Bridgetown Initiative also agrees that GDP per capita is inadequate for the measurement of progress. This measure alone cannot address the matter of vulnerability that continually hangs over us as a Small Island Development State located close to the hurricane belt. The ILO must actively support the Bridgetown Initiative and the principles it espouses. We have already made ourselves clear in various fora of the ILO that the Global Coalition for Social Justice will be essential if the international community is to be galvanized for human-centred developmental policies. There must be policy coherence, particularly as it relates to Small Island Developing States. Barbados recognizes that social security is a crucial component of social protection, an important pillar of decent work. When we received our most recent actuarial review and recognized the demographic trends and the resulting challenges that could face our national insurance scheme, we set about a process of strengthening the scheme to ensure its continued viability. We engaged all social partners and all stakeholders. We conducted townhall meetings across the country, allowing us to hear the views of the population. We have implemented the policies developed using the input from that extensive consultative process. As we addressed the revitalization of our social security scheme, we developed a new self-employed person regime to make it easier for those workers to participate in and to contribute to our social security programme and therefore to their own social protection. As a result of a decision of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, we have added additional categories of workers to the list of those entitled to free movement within the region. These additions include household domestics. Last month Barbados deposited the instrument of ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011. We will use this development to accelerate our work to improve the conditions of care workers, including those in the informal segment of that sector. Chair, before I conclude, I must remind you of two things. The climate crisis remains an existential threat, not just to the residents of Small Island Developing States like mine but to humanity generally. As Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley often says, we are now living in the era of superlatives: the hottest, the driest, the wettest, the worst. Urgent action is needed to mitigate the negative impacts of the crisis and to adapt workplaces and the countries to the impact on human beings. Secondly, the impact of rapid advances in technological development must be recognized and guidelines put in place to ensure that the vulnerable do not become collateral damage. The intersectionality of climate and technology on the world of work and their potential impact on realizing development that is human-centred must be recognized, must be addressed. Barbados remains and reaffirms its commitment to fairness and to justice within our own country, within our region and around the world. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr Francis Atwoli

Worker (Kenya)

The Central Organization of Trade Unions Kenya, welcomes the Director-General's report which proposes a renewal of the social contract, being the pillar that we have all along relied on in the pursuit of the promise made in the Declaration of Philadelphia on 10th of May 1994. We also, Mr President, note that a functioning and futuristic social contract is fundamental to the existence of just societies, which we all acknowledge as an imperative and essential ingredient for achieving universal lasting peace. Mr President, the Central Organization of Trade Unions in Kenya acknowledges that over the years many people across regions are losing trust in the way governance is

exercised, whether at the national level or at the international levels. People feel disillusioned, abandoned and seen they are not benefiting from the gains of our economic progress. This trend is unsustainable and does not portend well for humanity. Mr President, the situation is worsened by the lack of focus and attention on social protection by many governments. Just last week I had a productive meeting with the Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organization for Jobs and Social Protection, Sister Mia Seppo, during her visit in Kenya, where the Central Organization of Trade Unions in Kenya emphasized the importance of the International Labour Organization to work together with governments to ensure that there is robust investment in social protection infrastructure not only in Kenya but in many other countries of the world. Today, more than ever before, Mr President, we must remind ourselves that the International Labour Organization, as a guarantor of social justice, cannot remain indifferent in the face of these challenges. Mr President, we note that while the International Labour Organization has the institutional means at our disposal to spearhead the renewal of the contract, there might be need for a relook into the bureaucracy of the Organization with the aim of boosting effectiveness and productivity. Mr President, at the same time, we must all remember that social dialogue is our time-tested tool which has for a long time served us well over the years and helped us to successfully navigate many daunting challenges on crises in industrial relations practice. Colleagues, we are encouraged by the timing of this discussion, which is happening just a few months before we convene at the Second World Summit for Social Development, which is spearheaded by the United Nations, in 2025. It affords us an opportunity to concretize our organization's priorities in order to better and entrench them in the United Nations system. Mr President, the Central Organization of Trade Unions in Kenya also sees this as an opportunity for international organization constituents to reflect on the extent to which we have exercised our collective responsibility we owe each other, including the mainstreaming of workers who have not been benefiting from a fair share of economic progress achieved so far. Mr President, lastly, these categories include women, youth, migrant workers, informal sector workers and workers in the care economy and digitally [? 100:58] enabled platforms, including gig workers. I must also note that the growth in the informal sector, particularly in Africa, has brought with it challenges and opportunities at the same time. And the Central Organization of Trade Unions in Kenya calls for a renewed focus by not just the International Labour Organization but also by governments so as to ensure that there are strategic investments in this [vgr INAUDIBLE 101:32] industry of informal sector, which aims at ensuring the formalization of the informal sector for more provision of employment in Africa, on our continent. Mr President, I thank you.

Mr Ergün Atalay

Worker (Türkiye)

Dear President, distinguished delegates, it is an honour to appear before you as the Worker's delegate of Türkiye. The living and working conditions of waged labourers around the world, including in my country, have continued to deteriorate over the last year. The vast majority of workers around the world have been suffering from various labour market problems such as precariousness, anti-unionism, poverty and inadequate occupational and safety measures for years. A significant number of workers have lost their lives due to work accidents and occupational diseases over the past year. These work deaths and the problems experienced by people and workers are strongly related to greed which ignores people and workers. This excessive greed for profit is at the

centre of all problems. In my country the situation of low and fixed-income earners has got worse over the last 25 years. The high rate of inflation has also led to worsening living conditions. The purchasing power of waged labour has been lost, and because of the heavy tax burden on the shoulders of working people there is no income justice anymore. A regulation enabling higher taxes to be collected from people with high incomes and lower taxes for people with low incomes needs to be enforced. The COVID-19 pandemic, earthquakes and wars have also hit workers hardest and unemployed people and people with low incomes around the world, as mentioned in the Director-General's report. Due to wars, workplaces have collapsed, workers' income has been lost. Workers have also lost their families. Working people, pensioners and minimum wage earners are paying the prices for these ongoing socio-economic policies. Trade union rights are declining across the world. The ILO Conventions have a significant impact on trade union rights and regulations with regard to the labour market. Most of these Conventions have become unenforceable right now, and the main reason for this is the relentless greed of multinationals. What we have seen is deregulation that is under way around the world. If the accepted and ratified Conventions are to be properly implemented, that would improve workers' rights. Therefore, the governments of Member States and employers must play an active role in the implementation of these ILO Conventions and standards. Every working person should benefit from the right to organize and to be involved in collective bargaining. Workers should have the right to choose a trade union of their own free will and without discrimination. The fundamental ILO Conventions must be respected. This is essential for the effective functioning of the tripartite mechanism. In Türkiye there are problems concerning the right to organize and collective bargaining for civil servants. Freedom of association and the right to choose a trade union for civil servants must be fully respected. Discriminatory practices on various grounds must be stopped. We have celebrated the centenary of the republic in our country last year. For the past 50 years we have been fighting terrorist organizations, and I regret to say that some developed countries are supporting these organizations, including by providing them with weapons. Today, terrorism has become an international problem that we need to solve. And while we are talking about labour rights in this room, conflicts continue to rage in many parts of the world. The Middle East is in flames. Today is the 243rd day of the occupation of Gaza. Palestinian workers are trying to survive despite Israel's brutal aggression that is violating all fundamental human rights. While this happens, the international community is just looking on. While we are talking here, infants, children and women are losing their lives. All over the world, students are demonstrating in support of Palestine. All of us in this hall, including trade unionists, have not been able to respond as effectively as these students have. I call on the international community to go beyond words and take action to end the wars and violations of workers' rights in Palestine and in other parts of the world as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Jamal Kadri

Worker (Syrian Arab Republic)

Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, Chairman of the Conference. At the beginning, I wish to congratulate the ILO, the Chair of this 112th Session of the ILC, on his election. I also thank the Director-General, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for his annual report to the Conference on the very important issues in the world of work. I also thank him for the report on the workers in Palestine and the workers in the occupied Arab territories. The Organization needs to set up dissuasive measures against the occupying

Israeli forces because of the harmful effect that has in the occupied Arab territories as well as the issues related to the Syrian Golan. We also have discussions on the agenda concerning the protection against biological hazards, decent work in the care economy and following up the discussions on the fundamental rights and principles at work. These are subjects where we want to see better protection of workers. Ladies and gentlemen, this conference is taking place in difficult and complex circumstances, as the case around the world, particularly in the Arab region. Our region is suffering. It is suffering from the genocidal war led by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinians in Gaza. There are also severe violations committed by the occupying forces against workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the occupied Syrian Golan. In particular, these violations are seen through racist practices targeting our workers, discrimination at work and direct attacks, indiscriminate attacks. These represent a flagrant violation of the legitimate rights of the people under occupation. There are various international provisions governing this situation. These are various international norms that must be upheld. After a number of years, ladies and gentlemen, terrorists have targeted my country where we have seen terrorist groups succeed, and the Western occupiers continue to occupy part of Syria's national territory. My country is therefore deprived of its resources in terms of oil, gas and wheat. There have also been various separatist movements operating at local levels. What we need to see is effective international cooperation to resolve these issues. It is very important today that we work to rebuild in this region, under the aegis of President Bashar al-Assad. This is how the Syrian people will be able to rebuild the country. It is imperative that we build our economy and repair the damage done by terrorists and those who support them. I refer in this regard to Recommendation 205 of the ILO on decent work. This recommendation stresses the need to see concerted efforts from all countries to help countries that have been ravaged by war to set up policies for early recovery and to work on these policies in an effective way. This is something we need in Syria. Unfortunately, the economic embargos and unilateral coercive measures imposed on the Syrian people, by countries that support terrorism, run counter to this objective. This is simply collective punishment, which is unacceptable and should be condemned in the strongest possible terms. We should remove the economic embargos imposed on a range of countries, including my own. These embargos constitute a blatant violation of the Charter of Human Rights and of international law. In this end, I would like to mention the work that is being done in Damascus by the International Labour Organization and efforts and various projects that have been set up. These efforts and projects are welcome, and we call on all the different stakeholders to work, in particular after the earthquake that affected the country last year. We want to thank the Organization for the efforts that it has made and the support that we have received in my country. We wish once again to express our gratitude. And aiming to work towards health and safety at work is a priority for us as well. We once again call for transparent and fair elections so that we have the right candidates to the Governing Body of the ILO. All of this is essential to counteract certain tendencies within the Organization and to refocus efforts towards the goals of the Organization for which it was founded, upholding workers' rights around the world and ensuring a beneficial working environment. The various stakeholders in this area should work together on an equal footing together with all countries, and we want to see no discrimination take place. We hope that we will see lots of success during this conference and in the decision-making and policies that will serve the Organization's mission. Thank you very much.

Ms Sumita Dawra

Government (India)

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, popularly known as the International Parliament of Labour. I heartedly congratulate the ILO for organizing the 112th Session of the ILC meeting with the plenary discussion on such an important topic of social justice and social contract. ILC meetings allow countries and social partners to exchange ideas and foster the spirit of consensus building and tripartism, thus bringing us closer to a common goal of promoting decent work for all. The International Labour Organization has been instrumental in shaping a global social contract for over a century by adapting frameworks for economic and social progress. The ILO's emphasis on social protection sets benchmarks for key governance principles that lead to decent work and opportunities for all. Being a member of the coordinating group of the ILO's Global Coalition for Social Justice, India is committed to advancing social justice across the globe. India is guided by the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity enshrined in our constitution to establish equitable and accessible social security systems for all. The fundamental rights enshrined in India's constitution symbolize our commitment to social justice and fair treatment for every citizen. India is moving towards a better future with the aim to provide universal social security to all formal and informal workers. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation and Employees' State Insurance Corporation are pivotal in providing social security benefits in India to organized workers, reaching millions across the country. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation extends benefits such as provident, pension and insurance funds to over 2.4 million establishments. Currently, 320 million members' accounts are maintained under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation as in 2023/24. The Employees' State Insurance Corporation is serving 34.29 million insured persons offering assistance in various exigencies, including death, sickness, old age, with a network of 165 hospitals and more than 1,500 dispensaries across India. For providing social security to informal sector workers, India has created a national database of unorganized workers in the country, seeded with unique identification numbers through a digital portal named eShram. Almost 300 million workers have already been registered on the portal, which helps in evidence-based decision-making, policymaking and targeted delivery of social security schemes to informal workers. The eShram portal has been linked with the National Career Service portal, providing employment related services and opportunities to labour, and also the Skill India portal, which provides skill development opportunities, as well as with the portal for a pension scheme for informal workers, thereby benefiting millions of informal workers in the country. India is also providing various in-kind social protection benefits, including free housing, food guarantee through the public distribution system, subsidized cooking gas, cash transfers, agriculture crop insurance and so on. These efforts, coupled with advancements in digital payments and governance through direct benefit transfer system and financial inclusion initiatives have led to good governance and a targeted system of delivery of benefits. India, with the support of the ILO, has made efforts to map the unique beneficiaries of social security under the various central sector schemes. And based on this exercise, the ILO has revised its estimate of social protection coverage in India to about 48.8% in its database. While I thank the ILO for their sincere efforts for the correct estimation, the figure of 48.8% is also an underestimation of actual social security coverage in India because it does not account for in-kind benefits provided to the citizens of the country and it excludes the social security schemes which are run by the

state governments in India. The actual social security coverage of India is much higher. During 2023, under India's presidency, the G20 countries marked a significant stride towards addressing the global skills gap, social protection of gig and platform workers and sustainable financing of social protection. The G20 countries agreed to conduct a pilot study on international reference classification of occupations. This will help in skills gap mapping and addressing global skills gaps by cross-border job matching. India has already committed ten million rupees for this pilot study. I also urge the ILO and other G20 countries to contribute towards this pilot study. India is promoting the safe and regular migration of skilled personnel to countries facing labour shortages. The ILO is requested to prioritize its programmes towards safe and regular international migration and encourage countries to sign bilateral or plurilateral migration and mobility partnership agreements and social security agreements for the welfare of international migrants. India has witnessed a rise in the female labour force participation rate from about 23% in 2017/18 to 37% in 2022/23. The Government of India has enacted four labour codes to support gender equity, gender equality, provide comprehensive childcare services, have flexible working arrangements, and also prohibit gender discrimination and harassment at the workplace, thereby promoting gender equality and economic prosperity. Lastly, I thank the ILO for bringing together the countries across the globe to work towards labour welfare and for the development of a renewed social contract. Thank you.

Mr Khaled Fanatsah

Worker (Jordan)

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. Distinguished President of the Conference, distinguished Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you and your vice-presidents on your election as president at this conference. I would like to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report, and I would like to say that the social contract is a concept linked to a transformational change in relations between individuals and society. This contract can be linked to technology and communications and responsibilities, and it reflects the challenges and opportunities that our societies are facing in this modern age. As part of this new social contract, individuals can play a more important role within society and in decision-making. Technology, in turn, plays an ever more important role in ensuring social interaction. Social responsibility should play a greater role in achieving a balance between individual and society. This new social contract requires a rethinking of strengthening mutual understanding and justice within society. The role of teaching and awareness-raising is extremely important as part of such efforts, and we must also be careful in using technologies so that we can ensure that they are of service to all. Trade unions play an essential role within society. These are society-based organizations that represent workers and defend their rights. They work to improve the working conditions and to increase salaries and ensure occupational safety and health as well as decent work. Trade unions play a role in ensuring a balance between employers and workers, and they strengthen social justice. In some countries, trade unions have to face challenges when it comes to representation as a result of legal obstacles in their countries. And so we must strengthen freedom of association and the enjoyment of their rights. They represent different population categories and they provide protection to all their members, and they can mobilize people so that we can have greater freedom, and they play a role with social partners to achieve social peace and to implement workers' rights. And we must talk about Palestinian workers, which we will do during the

special session. With regard to the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, we would like Palestine to become a fully-fledged Member State of the ILO and for it to be an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Joseph Bugeja

Worker (Malta)

Director-General, distinguished delegates, it is a privilege for me to address you today as the Maltese Workers' delegate at this esteemed International Labour Conference. We all are at a very critical juncture where our actions must speak louder than our words. Renewing our social contract has never been more pressing and essential. The forward-looking report from the Director-General provides a timely and essential framework for our discussions and guidance. The notion of the social contract is fundamental to our societies, embodying the mutual responsibilities that bind us together. Historically, social contracts have evolved to meet the changing needs of our societies and communities. Today, as we face unprecedented catastrophic and dangerous challenges ranging from climate change and economic equality to technological disruptions and demographic shifts, from war to genocide, our social contract must once again be renewed. This renewal must ensure that our governance systems and social protection remain robust, equal and inclusive. Pivotal to this new social contract is the principle of social justice. Social justice is about creating a fair, inclusive and equal society where everyone can enjoy a peaceful, dignified and fulfilling life, regardless of their background or circumstances. Regions and countries around the world are torn apart by war, famine, death and destruction. Thousands of people have died and the lives of millions are ruined by these conflicts. In times of crisis, it is the most vulnerable who bear the brunt of economic and social upheaval. Social justice also means that everyone has the chance to advance economically and socially. We must ensure that decent work and fair working conditions for all becomes a reality, where employment is not just a means of survival but a path to dignity and fulfilment. Decent work, apart from productive employment and fair pay, must encompass a safe and healthy working environment, inclusive practices, gender equality, continuous personal development, a just transition, freedom of association, the right to strike, collective bargaining and effective tripartite social dialogue. We must also emphasize the importance of social protection for all workers, including those in the informal economy. Social protection systems are the safety nets that prevent individuals from falling into poverty and despair during times of hardship. They are essential for building resilient societies where no one is left behind. As the report suggests, businesses' sustainability must be viewed through a dual lens: economic viability and social responsibility. While economic sustainability is crucial for businesses to thrive, it is equally important that they operate in a manner that is socially sustainable. This means adopting practices that support the well-being of workers, community and the environment. Businesses must recognize that long-term success is intertwined with the health and stability of the societies in which they operate. A socially sustainable business model not only assures ethical practices but also contributes to a more equitable and just world. Social justice in Malta has seen significant strides during the years, marked by various progressive measures aimed at enhancing the well-being and equality of its citizens. The increase in the minimum wage has provided a much needed boost to the lowest earners, ensuring a more equitable distribution of income. We ensured that social protection and basic working conditions are extended to platform workers, recognizing the growing gig economy. Most recently, new laws governing employment agencies have been

introduced to ensure fair practices and protect workers from exploitation. A notable development is the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for subcontractor employees, addressing wage disparities and promoting fairness in the labour market. Furthermore, there have been increases in pensions and social benefits, improving the quality of life for pensioners and those most vulnerable in our society. The Government has also provided subsidies on fuel, water, electricity and basic food products, making essential utilities more affordable and supporting the overall cost of living. The General Workers' Union, in collaboration with the Alliance Against Poverty and Moviment Graffiti also published a study on the living income and how to transcend from a minimum wage to a living income. These measures collectively represent our commitment to social justice, aiming to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all its citizens. In conclusion, the path forward is clear. It is our collective duty to renew our global social contract, grounded in the principles of social justice and decent work for all. Together we must build a future where everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive. The International Labour Organization must be the main promoter and take a leading role in this endeavour. Thank you.

Mr Sumbue Antas

Government (Vanuatu)

Mr President, good morning, and I bring you warm greetings from the people of Vanuatu. We thank the Director-General for his report and introducing the theme of this ILC conference, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Today, as we continue to adhere to the principles that established the ILO many years ago, Vanuatu stands united with the international community in supporting the ongoing work of the ILO. We recognize that the ever-changing environment, the evolution of human beings' behaviour, the changes to standards and evolving aspirations of humanity have not diluted the established ILO principles. Those principles have withstood the test of time and we, Vanuatu, are pleased to be so associated. Our commitment to the principles has been revitalized in the past year and which can be reflected in confidence-building measures and capacity enhancements with the establishment of our ILO office in Vanuatu in November 2023 which, amongst labour issues, will focus on our mutual interests on climate change, migration and human security. This conference theme, social contract and justice, focuses on the very foundation of fair societies that opportunities are built on. Vanuatu subscribes to that, and we are delighted to acknowledge the ideas that are generated by this theme from everyone. It reminds us of the way we organize ourselves in our communities, such as in Vanuatu where people have to care for each other as a given. Vanuatu's national sustainable development plan requires us to set for ourselves a pillar of a society that seeks to ensure that we maintain the vibrant cultural identity which underpins the peaceful, just and inclusive society that is supported by responsive populations and capable institutions delivering quality service to all citizens. In so far as implementing global and national [vgr INAUDIBLE 132:49] are concerned, we will ensure that systems of [vgr INAUDIBLE 132:54] governance and religious faith principles are an inherent element to bestow life skills and knowledge for future generations. It is not only that but a healthy population that enjoys a high quality of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being, resulting in quality healthcare for all; that there is an inclusive and equitable and quality education with lifelong learning; that Vanuatu society and other societies uphold human dignity and where human rights for children, women, youth, the elderly and vulnerable groups are supported, protected and promoted in our daily living. Those are what we consider as essential elements for the social justice which you

have ably decided to be a theme this year. Mr President, the same principles can equally apply in the economic settings, ensuring economic opportunities for all members of society. That, for many of us in the strong rural economy, creates opportunities which will enable the development of rural communities where the majority of our populations live in Vanuatu leading to an absolute increase in their contribution to national prosperity. Our own version of the social contract also calls on the members of the powerful leaders of the world, because of the political, economic and [vgr INAUDIBLE 134:10] status, to reinforce their relations with smaller countries under the same principles. It will contribute to the world the possibilities of good standards of living and protect the health of the world we live in. We agree that the DG's report can be an incubator to renewing the social contract and advancing social justice, and that in the United Nations Second World Development Summit in 2025 we will stimulate the conversations and renew our commitments. It is the choices and decisions that we make which will determine our future. Despite the social contract we aspire to, the developments in technology, the emergence of artificial intelligence, social media influences, will have a significant impact to our social contract. Caution should be expressed that these technological advancements should be for the good, to use them to feed each other and to address food security. What is the use of these advancements if one cannot find water, shelter and clothing to men, women and children? In fact, what good are all these developments if countries like Vanuatu face climate change challenges? We, Vanuatu, are a part of the community, we call ourselves Big Ocean States, and where climate change remains the most significant threat to our human society and sustainable development. With manmade negative effects of climate cost and determined by the work that these men and women have done over time, we wonder if the direction imposed on us by the [vgr INAUDIBLE 135:43] of the changing social contract will do justice to our communities. The influence, power, energy and authority of mankind, resulting in the creation of industries, formation of changing consumption behaviours and the degradation of our environment, creates a challenge. Finally, Mr President, Vanuatu graduated from LDC status to developing country status in 2020 at the height of COVID-19. Despite our graduation, [vgr INAUDIBLE 136:12] that we will need increased support from our friends and partners. We call on the ILO family to continue supporting Vanuatu and to increase the development efforts to the Small Island Developing States, the small and vulnerable economies, and the Big Ocean States, of which Vanuatu is part of. We thank you in anticipation of that support, and we look forward to a bold and clear declaration on the social contract for humanity. Mr President, I thank you.

Mr Nasser Al Meer

Employer (Qatar)

Delegations participating in the 112th Session of the ILC, may the peace of God be upon you. I represent the employers of Qatar and I would like to highlight a number of issues of concern to us all on our path towards achieving the SDGs and economic prosperity. I would like to thank His Excellency the Director-General for his report, and I would like to commend the important issues that he has referred to in his report and for addressing the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories in Palestine. We are witnessing the destruction of infrastructure, and we invite the international community to condemn these actions. We are facing a certain number of economic and regulatory challenges that are hindering innovation and cooperation. Such challenges include issues of energy and the economy, and we must diversify as a result of this. But

we can see new opportunities as well, for example, when it comes to green technologies. This broadens our horizons, and we highly appreciate the efforts of the Government of Qatar to support employers, particularly through facilitating measures and investment procedures and in promoting a business climate. The Government has implemented a number of policies that enable local and foreign investors to more easily create and develop new projects. Sustainable development is the cornerstone of the national vision of Qatar up to the year 2030, and we support this vision thanks to the adoption of responsible environmental and social practices and we are committed to preserving the environment and ensuring sustainable development which will ensure prosperity for all. Strengthening international cooperation is the key to success in an interconnected world. In Qatar we hope to develop partnerships together with other countries to support business and investment. These partnerships facilitate the exchange of experience and enable us to open new markets. We are working tirelessly to train our labour force in Qatar in order to respond and meet the needs that are continuously changing within the labour market. We are committed to creating jobs and developing human resources in Qatar so that young Qataris can participate in building a prosperous future. Technology plays an essential role in enhancing competitiveness. We want to use modern technologies across the sector, and this will enable us to improve efficiency and provide new services to meet new needs. To conclude, I would like to express my thanks to the organizers of this conference. Collaboration and exchange enable us to achieve our shared goals when it comes to economic and social and sustainable development. Thank you.

Mr Faiez Almutairi

Arab Labour Organization

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful, may God's peace be upon you. Chairman of the Conference, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, may God's peace be upon you. At the outset, I would like to express my warmest congratulations to the Chair of the Conference on his election, and thank you also to the Director-General for his report titled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. We are using more socio-economic policies to face current challenges. In doing this, we aim to strengthen social justice and good governance. That, in turn, contributes to mitigating social inequalities and ensuring greater stability between the three parties to production. This renewed social contract that comes at the same time as a call for a Global Coalition for Social Justice but also in parallel to our efforts towards the next Social Summit in 2025. Ladies and gentlemen, the Arab Summit held its 33rd session in Bahrain last month. Here we saw the adoption of an initiative from the Arab Labour Organization for a new social pact. This incorporates new guidelines and aims to ensure complementarity between visions and objectives. It is a coalition that sheds light on the best ways for us to proceed to achieving greater complementarity between the parties in production in the Arab region. We are now working towards implementing this initiative to consolidate and to implement social justice across the Arab countries. Ladies and gentlemen, the conditions in which workers are living in the occupied Arab Palestinian territories are getting worse daily. They are subject to continuous attack. This is a war of destruction that is being rained on Gaza that has lasted more than eight months now and it is the cause of a human and social and economic catastrophe. It is taking the lives of tens of thousands of innocent men, women, children, older people. It has also been the cause of the total destruction of the infrastructure in that part of the world and also has taken with it tens of thousands of jobs. That in turn has led to unprecedented levels of

unemployment in Palestine. There is no longer any means of subsistence in Gaza. So from this high rostrum I call on all of you to ensure that this war be ended and to ensure that emergency aid be sent to people who are still alive. We need to see more social justice and more security in order to achieve peace and security on our planet. We call on the other stakeholders and the ILO as well to support the Palestinian employment and social protection fund and UNRWA so that it can help all of those who have suffered the effect of this war. And we need urgent aid to help those in need. We also need a work plan to strengthen the development cooperation plan to the benefit of the occupied Arab territories in cooperation with the Arab Labour Organization. Similarly, we should integrate the annex document to the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied territories as a permanent document on the agenda of the ILC and the successive conferences. There, it should be submitted to the plenaries then. In closing, I recall that our work requires commitment to the benefit of all future generations. Here, in Palestine and around the world. I wish everybody every success. May God's peace be upon you.

Mr July Moyo

Government Vice-President (Zimbabwe)

I thank you, Director. Fellow delegates, that concludes our list of speakers for this sitting. I thank you all for your contribution to this morning's proceedings. The sitting is now closed.

Mr Rajeev Dubey

Employer Vice-President (India)

Good afternoon, distinguished delegates. It is my honour to declare open the fourth sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Before going any further, I would like to start by thanking you for all the trust you have placed in me as Employer Vice-President of this 112th Session of the Conference. My fellow officers and I will spare no effort to make sure our plenary proceedings in the coming days live up to the high standards of work undertaken by this organization and its constituents for over a century now. Before we begin our general discussion, however, we need to attend to an administrative matter. The Conference will recall that the Credentials Committee was established at our opening sitting on Monday. The secretariat has informed me that the Workers' group has nominated Ms Amanda Brown from the United Kingdom as the substitute for Ms Zingiswa Losi, Worker member of the Credentials Committee. This nomination was done according to the recommendation made by the Governing Body at its 350th Session in March 2024 to ensure the continuity of the committee's work. Ms Brown's nomination as a substitute member of the Worker member of the committee is now being presented to the Conference for approval. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference approves this nomination? Approved. Thank you. Distinguished delegates, we shall now resume our general discussion on the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. Before we go any further, I should like to remind you that, according to the arrangements approved at our opening sitting with regards to the modalities for the special sitting on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories, the appendix to the Director-General's report on this topic will be discussed at the special sitting tomorrow, 6 June. I therefore encourage you to please focus your interventions today on reports I(A), I(B) and I(C). Thank you. I would also like to recall the principles governing this discussion, which the Conference President referred to yesterday afternoon. Firstly on the use of parliamentary language, I wish to call on all those who will speak in the plenary to do so with both the openness and the dignity that are appropriate to this highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters. Freedom of expression is a vital feature of the International Labour Organization. To exercise this freedom in a spirit of mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates respect the accepted procedure, use parliamentary language, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising any questions foreign to these matters. The respect of these principles is necessary if we want our work to be effective and successful. Secondly on plenary starting times, there is a firm agreement on the part of the officers to begin our sittings strictly on time. Only in this manner will we manage to complete the debates within the time schedule. I am counting on you to make this possible. Third, I must refer to the length of the plenary speeches. As you may already know, the duration of speeches is limited by the standing orders of the Conference to five minutes only. This time limit will be strictly applied. It is therefore strongly recommended that delegates reduce courtesies to a minimum. Timekeeping is a collective responsibility. For the sake of transparency, a countdown will be on display on the screen for all interventions. Lastly, I would like to address points of order and rights of reply. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order or request the right of reply in the plenary do not need to interrupt proceedings. Instead, they should simply raise their flag. A member of the staff will then approach them in the room and attend to their request. In the case of a right of reply, I request that you clearly inform that member of staff the intervention in respect of which the right of reply is sought. Please be reminded

that a right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes, and it should be delivered in respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice in our organization to allow a right to reply to a reply. Without further ado, let us now begin with our list of speakers for the afternoon. I begin by giving the floor to Ms Golpour Charmarkoohi, Chairperson of the Confederation of Trade Union Workers of Iran. Madam, Charmarkoohi.

Ms Somayeh Golpour Chamarkoohi

Worker (Iran (Islamic Republic Of))

In the name of God. His Excellency Mr Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, with great sorrow for the unfortunate death of Mr Ebrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and appreciation for the kind message of the DG, Mr Gilbert Hounbo, to the Iranian annual labour summit. As a representative of the Workers' delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in your presence, and I am here to expand our interaction and share experience. As the DG states, social contracts are the basic pillar of the system that provides the mutual interests for us as the workers and employers. Therefore, in order to achieve social justice, that is enjoyment of all human beings, irrespective of their social and occupational status to fundamental rights contained in the Declaration of the Human Rights and [vgr INAUDIBLE 7:39]. The collective efforts of the [vgr INAUDIBLE 7:45] organization, governments and international institutions is needed so that rights they could be not violated. Of course, in a crisis situation weak people are exposed to more damage and need support. In such situations, what caused the owners of the [vgr INAUDIBLE 8:05] interest to observe fairness towards the [vgr INAUDIBLE 8:08] in their belief and commitment to moral value. In the Islamic Republic of Iran we believe that religion is the base of the people's adherence and maintaining fair standards as the Quran has instructed to adherence to the contract and set up justice. And in the Islamic tradition, believers are committed to complying with the conditions, and oppression of the strong against the weak is prohibited to the extent that Hazrat Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, has repeatedly ordered a society in which is the right of the weak are not taken from the strong. Without hesitation it will not reach to the salvation. Unfortunately, we are facing great challenges for the realization of civil society based on ethics and human rights, which include various forms of domination, racism, exploitation, [vgr INAUDIBLE 9:17] of the strong against the weak, deliberately disenfranchising vulnerable communities. And [vgr INAUDIBLE 9:26] shows that we have moved away from the civil society based on the social contract on the basis of the value contained in the Philadelphia Declaration. In this, the role of the ILO, governments and the labour employer syndicates in the field of the labour relation is first trying to create decent working conditions and maintaining fundamental labour rights. Two, establishing convergence among stakeholders to ensure social justice. Three, providing technical and educational coverage. Four, orienting the future developments of the labour market due to the big changes caused by technologies such as artificial intelligence, climate change and problems resulting from the ageing of societies. In Iran, out of the population of 25 million working people, about 15 million are employed under the labour law and regulation, and the rest work in the government, freelance, domestic jobs. Of course, due to the fact that non-workshop [? 10:38] jobs are not well covered in the current labour law, we have freelance outside the protection of the labour law that we are trying to solve this problem. In conclusion, as a working woman who has

personally experienced gender restriction, I hope that with cooperation humanity could achieve a world free of undue discrimination.

Mr Alfonso Palacios Torres

Employer (Colombia)

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. On behalf of ANDI, the Colombian employers, we think that it is of great importance that I have this opportunity to address the plenary. The Report of the Director-General on a renewed social contract, addressing inequality, social justice and promoting sustainable development, we think those are three very important points. However, we think it is important that the ILO's approach does not limit itself to normative standard setting but we also need to consider practical implementation. Creation of standards for their own sake will not lead us to solve the problem of inequality nor resolve the problems of informality and their structural causes nor to provide for social justice, nor will it help to promote sustainable development. Something that is necessary and complementary is strategies focused on the construction of public policy designed in a tripartite fashion, taking account of the different levels of development and the diversity of cultural reality, social realities and economic realities that exist in the Member States. Given that, the Colombian employers are convinced that the promotion of social justice requires a favourable environment for business development to make it possible to create the preconditions for formalization and make it possible to comply with legislation that seeks material equality. Addressing poverty by transition from informality to formality, creating jobs that are decent, free and productive, and the creation of a propitious environment for sustainable enterprises have to be the principle drivers of a dialogue involving everyone and all of the relevant stakeholders. That means the Government and the employers and the workers. These points are particularly important at a time when we are faced with great economic uncertainty, as in Colombia at the moment. Growth has not gone beyond 1% over the last four quarters, and of course that has led to a slowdown which is starting to be reflected in labour statistics. That is why at the moment we have a level of unemployment which has been going up continuously for eight months and has reached 11.3%, and we have a rate of informality which is at 56.1% at the moment of the labour market. So that is why we are very concerned by the attitude of the Colombian Government, not just because there's a lack of an adequate response to the economic difficulties that I've mentioned but because it is not following properly the principles that have always guided the ILO in its work: tripartism and the respect for freedom of association. As far as the first point is concerned, we are very concerned that the means of tripartite consultation and social dialogue provided for in the constitution have been weakened. For example, the commission on labour matters and salaries which has not been convoked although it has to be legally to address the reform of the labour code now going through the Colombian Congress. Nor has it been consulted on the definition of public policy, for example the policy on decent work. As far as the second point is concerned, that is the weakening of freedom of association, it is worrying the way that the Government has been interfering in employers' organizations, trying to influence who is representing employers in some of the largest employers' organizations. That is why we call on the Government to change their path and to not lose the opportunity to enter into real tripartite dialogue on the projects that are underway as I mentioned, such as the reform of the labour code, because we think that this opportunity means that we have to find solutions. Going by the three lines, widening social protection. Second, reducing informality in work and business. And thirdly, making it possible for businesses

to create new formal jobs. We in Colombian enterprises emphasize the importance of tripartite spaces for dialogue, making it possible to construct a more robust democracy and go down a path of greater consensus. Thank you very much.

Mr Daniel Teressa Shone

Government (Ethiopia)

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, it is a great honour to address the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Labour and Skills. Allow me to extend my congratulations to Mr President, along with the vice-presidents and other esteemed officers of this conference, on your election to preside over this session. Rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you undertake your responsibilities. The Ethiopian delegation welcomes the comprehensive Report of the Director-General on 'Towards a renewed social contract' for fighting the growing inequalities and promoting social justice in the world of work. Mr President, Ethiopia is on the promising path towards inclusive growth, aiming to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Our policies and ten-year development plan align with the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda and the Green Legacy Initiative supporting Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite regional and international challenges such as natural disasters and recurring conflicts, we demonstrated unwavering strength and determination towards engaging social justice and labour rights. On behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Skills, I would like to highlight our focus on empowering the youth and potential growth. We believe that uplifting this segment of society is crucial for unlocking the full potential of our nation. Our progress in institution building under challenging conditions includes research and technology enhancing, building human capital, developing infrastructures, developing skills through training and standardization, creating jobs by expanding enterprises and employment opportunities, promoting industry peace through occupational safety and health and social dialogue. Creating conducive work environment are efforts that aim to produce qualified human resources, reduce unemployment and create sustainable job opportunities. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, in our pursuit of social justice and an inclusive labour ecosystem, allow me to share some of the key reforms and achievements of the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Skills. We have reformed several areas with our partners, such as skill development via vocational training, job creation through family businesses and public entrepreneurship and youth-led innovations, establishing one-stop public employment and migration service centres, digitalizing the labour market information system, ensuring industry peace and labour productivity, expanding overseas employment opportunities through bilateral agreements. While recognizing the tremendous potential of the digital revolution, digitalization presents both opportunities and challenges. We must bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to information and communication technologies. This requires a collective effort to provide the necessary infrastructure and the resources to all citizens. In conclusion, our world of work is undergoing rapid transformation due to technological advancement. To navigate these changes, we must strengthen social contracts grounded in equality, inclusivity and resilience. Social justice is both a process and a goal. To achieve it, we must act in fostering partnership and collaboration. Our goal is to create robust systems that can adapt to changing global conditions. Social justice requires immediate and sustained action. We must act now, not delay our efforts.

Instead, we must join in good faith, share our challenges and successes and work towards a future where fair and decent work is a reality for all. I thank you.

Ms Anna Jardfelt

Government (Sweden)

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, constituents of the International Labour Organization, it is an honour for me to address this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. In an era marked by relentless change, we confront evolving challenges. The consequences of geopolitical instability which inflict profound human suffering in conflicts and crises are felt acutely also in our workplaces. These, coupled with transformative forces of the green, digital and demographic transitions, including the emergence of artificial intelligence, have effects on the world of work as well as society as a whole. At this critical juncture, a renewed social contract has a pivotal role to play in building trust, stability and social cohesion between the state and its citizens, between states within the multilateral system but also through social dialogue between the state, employers' and workers' organizations. Dialogue in all its forms remains a prerequisite for peace, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and human progress. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, in a turbulent and rapidly changing world, the worst mistake would be to stand still. To stand still alone without partners would be even worse. There is a need to reinvigorate multilateralism and to follow up on commitments made at the First World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen almost 30 years ago and renew the social contract to fit the 21st century. Let me highlight four things. Updated commitments must place human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination at its core. Around the world we see a growing resistance and pushback against human rights of women and girls as well as LGBTIQ persons. Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and applied to all. Updated commitments must be anchored in the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Decent and productive work is the best way out of poverty. It is also a prerequisite for trade and an engine for economic growth and sustainable development. We must work together to promote productive employment and decent and gender-equal working conditions for all as important factors for globally inclusive economic development and a means to end poverty. Updated commitments must address the transformative challenges linked to the green, digital and demographic transitions, shaping the future of work. We must highlight the central role of social dialogue in these times of transition. A well-functioning social dialogue is key to adapt to a changing world of work. Updated commitments must make sure that the green transition fosters social inclusion and does not exacerbate already existing inequalities. We must ensure that everyone is given the chance to reap the benefits of the transition by giving everyone the chance to keep up with and adjust to the new requirements on the labour market. The transition should be just. No one can be left behind. Before I conclude, allow me to direct our thoughts to those affected by the many parallel conflict situations around the world, including in Ukraine and Gaza, and those living under repression or in other emergency situations. In my region, the impact on the civilian population in Ukraine continues to be immense. Sweden continues to stand united in strong solidarity with the Ukrainian people in the face of Russia's war of aggression. We will continue to support Ukraine and hold Russia accountable. International humanitarian law must be respected. We welcome the ongoing efforts of the ILO and the Director-General to support the Ukrainian constituents. We live in uncertain times and intensive work lies ahead of us. The Swedish Government will do its

part and remain a strong voice and actor in building a prosperous world with equal opportunities for all. I thank you.

Mr Khalifa Khamis Mattar

Employer (United Arab Emirates)

Excellency President of the Conference, Excellency Chair of the Governing Body of the ILO, Mr Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, dear participants in the ILC, may the peace of God, his mercy and blessings be with you all. First of all I would like to express to you on my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues in the UAE Employers' delegation all appreciation and thanks to all our friends in the ILO who participated and prepared for the 112th Session of the ILC. We convene today under the slogan of a renewed social contract and we need to address the challenges facing the market of labour. We need to redefine the social contract to make it a cornerstone in a human-centred approach towards the transformations in the world of labour which is affected by technological innovations, demographic changes and climate change. I am confident that the decisions and recommendations of the 112th Session of the ILC will contribute to make concrete progress and to elaborate effective strategies to address and face the current and future challenges, to bridge the gaps at the social and economic levels and to achieve higher levels of justice and fairness. All topics listed on our agenda of the Conference and its committees represent a special importance at present, among which the report, the DG of the ILO pushing forward to collective efforts to live up to today's challenges and to work towards partnerships, alliances in our countries and to exert every effort to provide opportunities that benefit all parties that would lead to trade linkages in many sectors and to open horizons to launch new products whereby we can all reap the benefits. Ladies and gentlemen, the business community in the UAE complies with the legislations governing the practice and exercise of business in the UAE. We can name here the labour law and the regulations governing the aspects of employment in the country, including the standard employment contract which safeguards the relationship among the contractual parties. Recent changes in the labour laws in the UAE have helped resolve labour disputes and accelerate the receiving of the benefits. They also enable the wage protection system to document the benefits of the workers and they safeguard the right of the workers to receive all their benefits. We stress here the need to safeguard the balance in the interests among the tripartite constituency. We should like to emphasize the role of the business community in enabling the Emirati personnel to raise their skills and their integration in the labour market by providing financial support. The programme called Compete enables the citizens to benefit from various opportunities. In fact, the non-oil GDP in the UAE has increased by 6.2%, contributing to almost 74% of the overall economy of the UAE. The registered economic licences have increased to reach one million, and the private sector contribution has reached 72%. This has resulted in making the Emirates among the top ten on the global competitiveness indicators and among the ten largest countries in the average monthly wage. As such, it has also reached number six on the best countries to live and work, according to InterNations' report. The current situation suffered by the Palestinian people remains a considerable challenge for the international community to achieve social justice. The Emirates has spared no efforts to support the global efforts to stand in solidarity with our brothers in Palestine and to provide humanitarian support as well as relief and medical assistance. We express the hope of the UAE chambers that we will overcome all obstacles for the Palestinians to live safely and freely in a sovereign, independent state. We stress the need to take all proposals and initiatives positively and

seriously to stop escalation and protect the civilians, to intensify global efforts to put an end to extremism, tension and violence. And in conclusion, I wish all success to this session of the ILC. Thank you.

Mr Md. Nazrul Islam Chowdhury

Government (Bangladesh)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, assalamu alaikum, good afternoon. Mr President, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the President of this Conference. We welcome the reports of the Conference by the Director-General and the Chair of the Governing Body. Bangladesh has [vgr INAUDIBLE 35:02] the importance of social justice at national and global level. We welcome the ILO efforts [vgr INAUDIBLE 35:11]. Mr President, the world today is facing many challenges, challenges in the form of lack of resources for skill development, in the form of loss of employment due to climate changes, technologies replacing workers, closing of enterprises. Migrant workers often remain out of all fundamental rights of work. Restrictions of migrant workers are still in place. Armed conflict and recovery from the effects of COVID-19 are still there to make it last even longer. Mr President, our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shared his vision of our country as a world built on the idea of social justice. To realize that mission, our Honourable Prime Minister, daughter of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina has prioritized creating decent jobs, social security, education and skill development [vgr INAUDIBLE 36:34]. Hard, pragmatic actions have resulted into development in the socio-economic indicator and enhanced labour rights. Mr President, Bangladesh has ratified eight out of ten fundamental ILO Conventions and a total of 36 Conventions, which is one of the highest in our region. To further align with international standards, we are working on the amendment of Bangladesh ILO Act. With the partnership of the ILO, we have introduced employment [vgr INAUDIBLE 37:24]. The Government also has initiated a universal pension scheme for all citizens to ensure social security. Mr President, as we continue to enhance our standards, we need recognition of our reports also. The developing world needs global justice to ensure enhanced market facilities, and burden sharing by MNCs are required for labour protection. We also need enhanced [vgr INAUDIBLE 38:04] for development cooperation and technical assistance. Pursuing punitive procedures will not help the developing countries. Mr President, I am pleased to witness successful implementation of the ILO programme for 2022-2023. A good number of initiatives, including the Global Coalition for Social Justice, democratization of the Governing Body, Global Accelerator for Jobs, sustainable enterprises are making notable progress. I conclude. I am confident that with our continued commitment and efforts we can make significant progress in the life of the millions of people of the world of work. Thank you, Mr President. Thank you all. Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu. Assalamu alaikum.

Mr Vedat Isikhan

Government (Türkiye)

Esteemed Chair, distinguished ministers and delegates, it is my great honour to address you at this critical gathering organized at a pivotal moment: our pursuit of social justice and renewed social contract. I commend the ILO Director-General for this thought-provoking report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. It serves a timely

reminder of our collective responsibility to uphold the principles of social justice and dignity for all. The world of work is undergoing unprecedented transformations and challenges, and it is clear that the existing social contract is being seriously tested and struggles to find a solution to this challenge. Therefore, we need a renewed social contract built on the principles of solidarity, justice and equality. The ILO's principles, tradition and standards provide a solid foundation upon which we can construct a renewed social contract. Dear participants, while we are having a discussion on the renewed social contract of the ILO, our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Gaza are enduring the worst genocide in human history. While we speak of wages here, women in employment, collective bargaining and unionization, all these fundamental rights are being trampled by Israel in Gaza. Under the strong leadership of our esteemed President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye is a leading provider of humanitarian aid to Gaza, delivering 54,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Gaza. As the State of the Republic of Türkiye, we will stand against this genocide as we have done so far. We will keep standing by the oppressed people of Palestine. Dear participants, Türkiye's approach to social justice and solidarity is deeply rooted in our ancient state tradition and serves as the compass guiding our current policies. Under the visionary leadership of our esteemed President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his vision of the century of Türkiye, we have taken bold and inclusive steps. Through targeted policies we have fostered equal opportunities and decent work for all with a particular focus on women and youth. Our efforts have yielded remarkable results. This year we have reached the highest levels of employment rate in history. We have also achieved significant reductions in both unregistered employment and the number of young people who are neither employed nor in education. Furthermore, our country's social protection systems have been repeatedly tested, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have emerged stronger than ever. Beyond our national efforts, Türkiye is a leading voice for social justice on the global stage. Türkiye has been the country that has provided the most humanitarian aid in proportion to national income since 2015. We are proud to be a pathfinder country in the Alliance 8.7, working to eliminate child labour and sharing our expertise with other nations. Furthermore, our country has demonstrated its determination of social justice by participating in the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Ladies and gentlemen, in this period we see social dialogue as a driving force in shaping our policies and practices. The most recent and concrete examples of this are the public Personnel Advisory Board and the Tripartite Consultative Board and the Labour Assembly which we held in the last year. We are also committed to redefine the Maritime Labour Convention and the Forced Labour Protocol to further workers' rights. In concluding my remarks, I extend my sincerest thanks to the ILO for its tireless efforts towards social justice. I greet you all my deepest respect. Thank you.

Mr Evgeniy Ivanov

Employer (Bulgaria)

Dear Mr President, dear delegates, ladies and gentlemen, allow me on behalf of the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers and on my own behalf to welcome this highest decision-making forum of the International Labour Organization and to wish a successful and fruitful work of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. The Director-General's report this year again focuses on the new social contract. It continues the subject matter of social justice, the foundation of just societies on which we build the opportunities and institutions for decent work. The focus on how to renew the social contract today and ensure social justice is the foundation of lasting

peace, shared prosperity, equal opportunity and just transition ahead of the World Social Summit in 2025. The Conference themes of principles and rights at work, decent work and the economics of care as well as setting standards for protection against biohazards are important and relevant to us. Company productivity and competitiveness, digitalization, skills development, the promotion of gender equality, non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion at the workspace are key priorities for employers aiming to create sustainable employment and decent work. Global crises are deepening. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the war in Gaza are having a severe negative impact on the socio-economic conditions of the entire world. We are deeply concerned about the geopolitical situation which is hampering supply chains, international trade, accompanied by high inflation. After the unprecedented crises of the last three years, the Bulgarian business, united in the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers, continues to fulfil its mission and to defend its positions in decision-making, stimulating development of free entrepreneurship, business initiatives and market economy. Employers' organizations in Bulgaria continue to be united around three national priorities that they have been putting at the highest level for several years. Our country's full membership in the Eurozone first, the Schengen area second, and the OECD. In the past year the Bulgarian employers faced a serious challenge. Although Bulgaria has ratified ILO Convention 131, a mechanism for setting the minimum wage in accordance with the principles and criteria set out by the Convention has not yet been adopted. With the new rules introduced for setting the minimum wage, in our opinion as employers, the procedure laid down in Directive (EU) 2022/2041 of the European Parliament and that of the Council of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union has not been followed. As representatives of business, we believe that the model adopted for setting the minimum wage replaces the objectives and spirit of the directive and international standards, renders social dialogue in the area of minimum wage negotiations meaningless and erodes the role of the social partners on a key issue to them. Through its essence, we believe that in the [vgr INAUDIBLE 49:58] coming bilateral consultations, in constructive dialogue with the trade union representatives we will achieve the necessary level of consensus and the correct transposition of the Directive. I conclude by assuring you that the Bulgarian employers fully support the ILC agenda and its efforts to implement the ILO goals and values. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this highly respected forum and for your attention.

Mr Yackoley Kokou Johnson

Government (Togo)

President, before I say anything else, I would like to join my voice to those who have spoken already to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your conduct of this conference. I would like to take this opportunity to salute the devoted and constant leadership of the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Houngbou, his work in the service of his organization making it an instrument at the heart of social justice in a fruitful multilateral approach. Ladies and gentlemen, Togo welcomes and supports the Report of the Director-General based on progress of social justice and the promotion of decent work through a new social contract. Indeed, the promotion of social justice, which is an unavoidable and absolutely necessary precondition for lasting peace, as our organization has always stated, maintains its centrality in an interconnected world where we are seeing multiple challenges facing us such as the climate, health, geopolitical, socio and [vgr INAUDIBLE 52:56] crises on one hand and technological

progress on the other hand with its impact on labour and social life. This new social contract, which will take into account the major challenges facing the world such as the eradication of poverty in all its forms, the speeding up of structural transformations, sustainable development, the strengthening of resilience to crises and to shocks, governance for peaceful, just and inclusive society, protection of the environment with development solutions based on nature with the development of clean energy at an affordable cost, independence for women and equality of genders. We are convinced that the strategic framework called the Global Coalition for Social Justice will be the right tool to promote Agenda 2030 in addressing all of these challenges. Togo has signed up to this vision, choosing to make social justice and decent work integral parts of its development and supporting what it is doing on social dialogue mechanisms for inclusive and participative development. In axis 1 of its road map 2020-2025 entitled 'Strengthening inclusion and social harmony to guarantee social peace', which is a guiding light for the progressive realization of the vision of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, for shared growth, the Togolese Government is consistent in its efforts aiming to support its efforts on pillars of robust social justice for development of the country. Also through the installation of social protection. Four, aiming to make sure that the minimum needs of all of its citizens, all kinds of citizens are met. And I would like to mention a few things that are in the way as far as that goes. For many years we have been putting into place a system of monetary transport to give the most disadvantaged households a minimum income to survive on. At the moment around 60,000 individuals, 50,000 of them women, benefit from that. There has been a recent extension for the provision of school meals. Now there are more than 150,000 pupils beneficiaries of that. And there is also a programme for healthcare to school pupils. There is also a programme called WEZOU which makes it possible to provide free-of-charge care to pregnant women and newborn children. In January 2022 the salary scale for civil servants was revised, leading to an increase in pay, and then there was an increase in the minimum wage at the start of 2023. And the legislation providing for universal health insurance coverage entered into force on the 1st of January 2024 and is now being implemented. It is important to underline the fact that the new labour code, which entered into force in 2021 particularly addresses the needs of protection for vulnerable workers, as also does the ministerial ordinance which prohibits sexual and moral discrimination or harassment and violence and intimidation in work and at the workplace. Through the dynamic process of regular consultation, the social partners had a national forum on social dialogue in November 2022 addressing the subject of consolidating a culture of social dialogue which led to the adoption of a road map to re-found social dialogue in Togo. Ladies and gentlemen, to wind up, these are just some measures I could mention by way of example to demonstrate, if it was necessary, how easy it is for Togo to make the initiative of the Director-General its own for a global coalition whose launch is anticipated on the 13th of June next year which, along with other parties, will make it possible to make our contribution to achieving the objectives set out there. Thank you very much.

Mr Yury Senko

Worker (Belarus)

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am speaking on behalf of the trade unions of Belarus which bring together around four million workers. First and foremost I want to underscore that we welcome and support the ILO's desire to work on a renewed global social contract. The trade unions of Belarus have, at several ILC sessions, drawn

attention to the fact that social injustice in the world continues to increase with each passing year. Inequality has reached colossal levels. There is a concentration of resources and wealth in the hands of the most influential representatives of business who are often also representatives of government. Meanwhile, international organizations who are called upon to support the balance of peace and justice have hardly any influence on the situation. In the 20th century the era of colonialism essentially came to an end. Technical progress opened up never-before-seen horizons and it appeared that millions of people in developing countries got the chance to have a better future. But these hopes were dashed. Freedoms changed but not the goal of the most powerful around the world. And that goal, as it was before, is to expand their influence and receive economic benefits. And, unfortunately, we must recognize that those international programmes which were adopted in previous years to resolve the existing issues, for the most part, are not being implemented. In his report, the ILO DG noted that there is a huge gap between reality and those commitments that countries adopted in the agenda for sustainable development. We are convinced that the reason for this is that not one of the important principles of this strategy is implemented. I recall this basic point. National development efforts must be supported by favourable conditions in the international economy, including agreed and complementary trade, monetary and financial global systems. Instead of this, we see that Western countries every year are increasing their use of sanction policies and various restrictions in international production chains, trade and finance. Here is a clear example. As the number of people suffering from chronic hunger continues to grow, Western countries apply restrictions which raise food costs, thus making food inaccessible for millions of people. At the same time, international financial funds called upon to help developing countries force governments to reduce social spending. The new social contract the ILO DG is talking about today is not possible without the resolution of these problems. But unfortunately, until now the ILO has not adopted always clear actions to restrict the illegal and unjust actions of individual states which violate the rights of workers in different countries. Moreover, today the ILO itself is prepared to apply sanctions and restrictions. It even tries to restrict Belarus' cooperation with international organizations in the area of health, child protection, occupational and nuclear safety, amongst others. This is completely contrary to the Organization's goals. I want to underscore that today in Belarus we have a just and fair social contract. This is confirmed by the fact that in our country we have reached a minimum level of inequality. Production capacity has been maintained and massive privatization is not allowed as it deprives people of jobs. Universal social protection is guaranteed, along with access to education and healthcare. All of these very important guarantees are in place in practice and are also enshrined in our country's constitution. And despite all of the pressure being applied on Belarus today, we will not deviate from our chosen course and, in social dialogue with the Government and employers, we will work to address all the people's important issues. Thank you very much, and I wish you all a good afternoon.

Mr Mammad Musayev

Employer (Azerbaijan)

... wars, climate change, migration, immigration problems, social inequality, millions of people living below the poverty level, lack of access to sufficient food and other such issues are not the problems of only one country or one region. Every country, society, organization and individual should understand their responsibility and contribute to overcoming these difficulties. Unfortunately, we do not always observe

this approach. Sometimes discrimination and double standards prevent us from taking joint steps towards solving problems. As Azerbaijan, we have unfortunately suffered from this in our modern history. According to international law, the world, or at least a part of it, turned a blind eye to the fact that the sovereign territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan were under occupation for nearly 30 years. Only the state and people of Azerbaijan did not give up their struggle, ended the occupation on their own, freed their lands and restored justice. However, during this period one million people were condemned to the life of forced refugees, lived in poverty and misery, and billions of dollars of damage was caused to the economy of Azerbaijan and its infrastructure. As a result of two wars, thousands of Azerbaijani youth were martyred. All of this was related to the non-application of the international law. Azerbaijanis, suffering from such negative situations, have not lost their faith in law, justice, equality and solidarity. The Azerbaijan Confederation of Entrepreneurs, which is the institution I lead, always implements its activities based on the principles of justice, both in domestic discussions and on international platforms. It is clear that activity carried out only within the interests of one group cannot produce sustainable, fair and effective results. From this point of view, a balanced and constructive dialogue environment has been informed in the field of regulation of labour relations and the implementation of social and economic policy in our country. The implemented policy promotes the development of the economy, increases the attractiveness of the investment environment and ensures the protection of workers' rights and the implementation of the state's social obligations. We understand that sustainable economic development and social well-being are possible only with the principles that no one is left out and everyone's interests are taken into account. Azerbaijan follows a similar approach, not only in domestic policy but also in foreign policy. It is no coincidence that this year the Republic of Azerbaijan is hosting the COP event which is the main discussion platform of the global climate crisis, one of the main challenges faced by our planet in the 21st century. I am sure that the COP29 event to be held in our country will serve as an effective platform for discussions on adequate solutions to climate change. As the Confederation of Azerbaijan Entrepreneurs, we intend to actively participate in this process as the main business association of the host country. An agreement has already been reached with the International Organisation of Employers regarding joint and active participation in COP29. Taking this opportunity, I invite each of you, especially the representatives from employers' organizations of different countries, to participate in the COP29 event to be held in November in our capital, Baku. Concluding my words, I would like to state once again that we should work for a peaceful but fair and universally accepted legal framework for solving each issue on the basis of mutual discussions involving all interested parties. Once again I thank each and every one of you and wish you success in the work of the Conference.

Mr Mohamed Elmi Ibrahim

Government (Somalia)

Honourable President of the International Labour Conference, Director-General, esteemed delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Mr President, it is my honour to address the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of Somalia. The International Labour Organization has been vital in advancing the principles of social justice and decent work globally. We are grateful for the annual convening of this conference which serves as a crucial platform for contributing to the global dialogue of the opportunities and challenges in the world of work. We welcome

the Director-General's report which accurately captures the pressing need for addressing the challenges of our time. The Director-General eloquently outlines the current state of affairs where social justice remains not only a moral imperative but also a fundamental requirement for fostering universal and enduring peace. Mr President, the Government of Somalia is deeply committed to the ideals of advocating by the International Labour Organization. We believe that promoting social justice and decent work is essential for the overall development of our nations and the well-being of our citizens. Our journey towards stability and prosperity has been fraught with challenges, but we remain steadfast in our dedication to creating a brighter future for our citizens. In recent years, Somalia has made significant strides in rebuilding our economy and strengthening our institutions. We have undertaken major reforms that aim to address poverty, foster human development, promote decent work, enhance economic growth and open up new opportunities for employment. However, we recognize that much work remains to be done. Unemployment, particularly among our youth continues to be a pressing concern. We are actively working on various initiatives aimed at job creation, skills development and fostering entrepreneurship. These efforts are crucial to ensure that our young population can contribute positively in our nation's growth and stability. We are also committed to improving labour conditions across all sectors. Ensuring safe and healthy workplaces, fair wages and respect for workers' rights are fundamental principles that we strive to uphold. In collaboration with our social partners, including trade unions and employers' organizations, we are actively engaged in developing policies and programmes that aim to enhance the protection and improvement of our workers. Mr President, Somalia has faced numerous challenges in recent years which have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and highlighted the need for robust social protection systems which have been working [vgr INAUDIBLE 70:14] to mitigate these impacts on our economy and our people, particularly the most vulnerable. In this regard, we acknowledge the critical role of international cooperation and solidarity. The support and assistance from the international community have been invaluable in our response to shocks and vulnerabilities and in our broader efforts towards recovery and development. We call for continued collaboration and support to ensure that no country is left behind in the pursuit of a more equitable and resilient world. As we look to the future, we are hopeful and determined that the principles and the values of the ILO will continue to guide us as we work towards achieving social justice and decent work for all. We are committed to being active participants in the global efforts to build a better world where everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity and hope. With these few remarks, I thank you for your attention and I look forward to a fruitful conference. Thank you very much. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Mr Khalid Houir Alami

Worker (Morocco)

Ladies and gentlemen representing governments and employers, brothers and sisters in the union movement, on behalf of the Democratic Confederation of Workers and unions of workers in Morocco I greet all of you. The DG's report and also the annexed report and the Recommendations, Conventions and standards of the ILO which are being discussed here, relate to very important issues: safety at work, protection from biological hazards, the protection of fundamental work rights and principles. These lie at the heart of the standard-setting work of the ILO. Today we see an increasing number of wars and we see crises around the world. We see the various negative consequences

of these crises, notably artificial intelligence. We see a world being shaken by all of this, and the people pay the price for all of this. We see all layers of society being affected, and this all has an impact on all aspects of life, including workers' rights. And we see numbers showing increases in poverty, unemployment, precarity and work and backsliding when it comes to workers' rights, which of course is not in line with the Conventions and principles of this organization. We need to have a just transition for social justice. We need to have democracy and respect for human rights, and we need to, of course, fight against all forms of corruption. We cannot have successful collective negotiations without respecting unions' rights. In my country, workers continue to defend their rights under the aegis of the Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions, which continues to fight and continues to negotiate in collective bargaining. This is our main goal. We are working on maintaining wages to fight against inflation. We are seeing increasing prices, and of course this is affecting lots of people. We also see a new collective bargaining mechanism but unfortunately it hasn't been implemented and there remain some points of disagreement which are standing in the way. We fight to preserve the retirement system, the pension system. We also try to preserve the right to strike as well. We ask the Government of Morocco to ratify Convention 187, which is the basis of the protection of the right to strike. We appreciate all the efforts of our comrades in international confederations to reach this goal, and we have also decided to bring the issue to the International Court of Justice. We managed to discuss the issue during the tripartite meeting in May last year. We reiterate our attachment to social justice, the respect for the fundamental rights, decent work, a safe and healthy working environment, respect for labour standards and also social dialogue, because it is only through social dialogue that we can achieve the change we want to see and it also allows for us to address many problems. Unfortunately, this process is being undermined by continued attacks on the social movement and claims by the workers who are just trying to preserve their rights, faced with attacks from liberalism. Today we are once again calling for a social contract which allows everyone to achieve their ambitions for a decent life and to fight against all these attacks. I would also like to condemn the attacks by the Zionist entity against the Palestinians and we reaffirm the right of the Palestinians to live in an independent state with Jerusalem as their capital. I thank you.

Ms Ida Fauziyah

Government (Indonesia)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Mr President, Director-General, let me begin by congratulating Moldova on assuming the presidency of this conference. Indonesia appreciates the Director-General for his report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Let me now share our views on the report. First, ensuring inclusivity is indeed critical. Our economic development must entail better social protection and promotion of labour rights. Enforcing minimum wage, for example, and ensuring [vgr INAUDIBLE 78:24] have maintained a motivated and healthy workforce which is indispensable to sustained growth. We must work harder to realize social justice to all workers, including women, youth and persons with disabilities. I also wish to underline our duty to eradicate extreme poverty and improve living standards of our people. Indonesia therefore encourages the ILO to step up collaboration in development labour strategies that feed international conditions while remaining cognizant of future challenges. Second, strengthening capacity for social dialogue. Social dialogue is the foundation for a social contract, increasing investment in social dialogue [vgr INAUDIBLE 79:19] resilient and cohesiveness of our labour environment

and makes it better prepared to anticipate future disruptions and address labour market challenges. [vgr INAUDIBLE 79:34] furthering investment in training and education must remain high on our agenda, notably to equip workers with the skills required for the digital and green transition era. Third, adapting to global challenges while strengthening labour ecosystem at the national level. Global phenomenon such as armed conflicts, trade competition, climate change, the increased use of artificial intelligence and [vgr INAUDIBLE 80:06] effort to create better labour condition. Adapting to these global trends while [vgr INAUDIBLE 80:15] competitiveness and protecting workers' rights requires a comprehensive approach tailored to the specific condition of each nation. We believe that investing in lifelong learning programmes helps workers to adapt to the changing [vgr INAUDIBLE 80:36] demands and acquire new skills. Supporting entrepreneurship development, especially in disadvantaged communities creates opportunity for safe employment and economic empowerment. Promoting formalization have protection of rights and increased living condition of many workers. We must also support innovation in labour industries to enhance productivity and lay the foundation for a sustainable future. Mr President, at the national level, Indonesia commits and delivers first to see the renewed social contract as an opportunity to balance economic growth with social equity and [vgr INAUDIBLE 81:21] consideration. Our strategic development plan has long emphasized inclusive growth to reduce poverty and improve the living standards of [vgr INAUDIBLE 81:32]. Second, to undertake labour market reform to improve labour condition, among others, through the implementation of the Omnibus Law on job creation. This reform will make our labour market more flexible, able to attract foreign investment and create more job opportunities while striving to protect workers' rights. Third, to engage all national tripartite constituents and stakeholders to ensure the renewed social contract is realized, including in nurturing respect for freedom of union and recognition of the rights to collective bargaining. Key regulations in labour rights have and will continue to be discussed in a tripartite mechanism. Lastly, to ensure social security reform in Indonesia, continue to provide access to comprehensive social protection for all workers in the country, covering almost 140 million workers. We believe that evolving our policy coherence at all levels is crucial to ensure that all members of our society are accorded equal opportunity to live in dignity and prosperity. Mr President, before concluding my remarks let me underline Indonesia's full commitment to support the ILO in realizing its mandate. At the same time, I would like to underscore the vital importance for all constituents of the ILO to embrace the spirit of solidarity and cooperation to enable a constructive engagement that this organization is meant to uphold. Additionally, it is imperative for the Office to foster unity by listening to and accommodating the concerns of all its members in a balanced, fair and democratic manner, guided by international law and principle. Indonesia stands ready to work together to promote decent work and advance social justice for all. I thank you. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Mr Satybaldy Dauletalin

Worker (Kazakhstan)

Dear Chairman, participants of the Conference, today the fundamental values of peace, social justice, fair redistribution of economic growth and solidarity as well respect for and protection for the environment remain relevant. The urgency of the issues highlighted in the ILO Director-General's report is undeniable. The concrete proposals contained in the report provide a clear basis for strong steps in this direction. As the

report notes, the aspiration for social justice extends beyond the world of work. In countries where inequality and exploitation are increasing, where decent work deficits and citizens' distrust of elites are growing, social justice is essential for peace and stability. The most important condition for the development of the world of work is the formation of a new human-centred social contract and ensuring conditions for decent work which in turn will contribute to the steady economic growth and sustainable development of socio-economic systems at the regional and global levels. We support the main message of the Director-General's report that, in order to achieve social justice, it is necessary to develop the institution of social contract in the conditions of effective respect for freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The ILO mandate to promote decent work and social justice through the establishment and promotion of international labour standards is a tripartite expression of the social contract at the international level. At the core of any social contract are the four pillars of decent work: promotion of full and productive employment, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism. Fundamental principles and rights at the world of work, together with the principles of social justice, effective social dialogue and tripartism are the means of creating and renewing social contracts and at the same time their purpose. In the light of new challenges, social partnership, being the basis of the social contract, ensures the achievement of the targets in the social and labour sphere at the national and regional levels. Social dialogue should become a mandatory global mechanism involving collective bargaining at all levels and economic sectors, including in global supply chains, digital production, platform economies and remote work. Ensuring universal protection in the world of work, through the establishment of adequate wages, improving working conditions, achieving productive, freely chosen employment should be a crucial contribution for all. Kazakhstan's trade unions support the ILO's call for establishing a universal labour guarantee that will provide all workers with fundamental rights based on key ILO principles. We will continue to work within the framework of assistance provided by the ILO workers' bureau to strengthen cooperation and promote international standards as well as to develop a new Decent Work Country Programme for the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan always stands for constructive dialogue with social partners, to advocate for workers' rights and interests as well as ensuring social justice and promoting the principles of decent work. I thank you for your attention.

Mr Özgür Burak Akkol

Employer (Türkiye)

Dear President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference, dear Director-General and distinguished delegates, on behalf of the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations and myself, I extend a respectful greeting to you all. I sincerely thank the ILO for dedicated efforts in bringing together social partners all over the world. It is always a privilege to be here as a part of a community devoted to creating a better future for all. Dear colleagues, we face many global challenges, including power imbalances, economic crises and unequal economic opportunities. In this context, the Director-General has focused on a pivotal issue in this year's report on renewing the social contract. Our key takeaway from his report is that we need accountable and inclusive policies to ensure social justice. We firmly believe that social justice is fundamental for peace and stability. Dear Director-General, I would like to take this opportunity to declare that we are now one of the partners of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We see the Global Coalition as a crucial platform to advance Sustainable Development

Goals. At this occasion I would like to highlight our commitment as the employers of Türkiye for achieving the coalition's objectives. Ladies and gentlemen, at TİSK we are committed to promoting sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent work. We are aware that this could be achieved by comprehensive strategies promoting investment and, of course, employment. Sustainable businesses have an important role in providing decent work and social justice. Hence, we maintain our hard work to create better results for the employees, employers and society as a whole. Dear colleagues, as TİSK we are dedicated to providing decent job opportunities with particular emphasis on women and the youth. We have extended our upskilling and reskilling programmes considering green and digital skills needs. We are proud to guide our employers through digital and green transformation processes. We are promoting the use of artificial intelligence and providing technology support to companies to minimize work accidents. We have strong collaborations with United Nations and European Union institutions which resulted in successful projects. Dear colleagues, we have sustained our work in strong dialogue with our government and trade union stakeholders. Last month we came together at the Labour Assembly in the leadership of our ministry. We have showcased an example of strong social dialogue that created valuable results for the labour market. Since 2019 TİSK has annually organized the Joint Dialogue Forum with the motto of 'Possible Together'. The forum unites esteemed representatives from workers, employers, government entities and, of course, international institutions. I appreciate the invaluable contribution of the Director-General and the ILO team each year. Dear ladies and gentlemen, our national actions hold significant importance. However, it is imperative that we unite our efforts to address global challenges. This conference is a great opportunity to join forces around open dialogue, shared experience and common commitment. I deeply appreciate the guidance and support provided by both the global and Türkiye offices of the ILO. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our minister, Mr Vedat Işıkhhan, and presidents of Türkiye's employees' associations for their continuous collaborations. On the other hand, we cannot ensure employment, decent work and social justice without first safeguarding the innocent lives. We express our profound sorrow for the suffering endured by the children, mothers and all people of Palestine. We call for a renewed commitment to peace and humanitarian support. Finally, I extend heartfelt thanks to all delegates for their invaluable contributions to make this a very fruitful conference.

Mr Abdulqader Shehab

Worker (Bahrain)

Your Excellency Director-General, your Excellency Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, may the peace and grace of God be upon you all. I would like to convey to you the greetings of my colleagues from the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions. They all wish you and wish your conference great success. I would also like to commend the Director-General, Mr Gilbert Houngbo. I would like to commend him for his continuous focus and championing of social justice ever since he took office. The world today needs to start implementing the principles of social justice. Given the widening gap and increasing social inequalities everywhere in the world, we need to adopt the principles of social justice in all aspects of life and in all our daily practices so that we can all enjoy the fair distribution of resources, equal opportunities and social welfare. Ladies and gentlemen, this session is held under exceptional circumstances. Indeed, one of the peoples of the world is witnessing a genocidal and ethnic-cleansing war. This war has been waged against these people for over eight months now. I am

talking of course about the oppressed and meek Palestinian people in Gaza and in other Palestinian occupied territories. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip face genocide, famine and displacement. They are bombed, hospitals are targeted and besieged. Medicine is not allowed in. Medical missions, including doctors and nurses, are arrested. Some of them are killed. Medical equipment and facilities are destroyed. Many medical facilities have been forced out of service. Schools and universities have also been destroyed. The disaster unfolding in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israeli practices is huge. I do not have the words to describe them. More than 40,000 people have been killed. More than 100,000 others have been wounded. My confederation calls on the ILO to shoulder its responsibilities. My confederation calls on the ILO to dispatch a fact-finding mission to the Gaza Strip in order to take a close look at the humanitarian conditions and to report thereon. We also call on the ILO to admit Palestine as a full member of the ILO in line with a decision taken by the United Nations General Assembly. This is the least that we can do. This is the least that we can do for Palestinians, this devastated people. The least that we can do for them is for them to have the right to be fully represented in all world fora. To help Palestinians and to provide them with relief, to allay their suffering, we suggest that the ILO creates a fund to support Palestine through which the ILO would provide support and relief to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to address my thanks and appreciation to South Africa. I would like to thank them for their noble position and for bringing a case against Israel before the International Court of Justice. In this case, South Africa accuses Israel of breaching the Genocide Convention in the Gaza Strip. Similar violations have also been committed by the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and within the Green Line. It is our firm belief that the position taken by South Africa is a lofty and noble position and should be adopted by all States which believe in human rights, democracy, human justice and in the defence of the oppressed, wherever they may be. We also thank Spain, Ireland and Norway for having formally recognized the State of Palestine. We value this step. We hope that other UN Member States will follow suit in order for the State of Palestine to become a fact and to become a full-fledged member of the international community. Ladies and gentlemen, if we at the ILO, if the governments, the workers and the employers, if we are not able to include this regime which is waging this genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, if we cannot include it on the list of the countries that commit breaches, then I think that we need to review the entire system. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all success and I hope that you will be able to make the decisions necessary to improve the state of the world. May the peace and grace of God be upon you all.

Mr Syed Hussain Syed Husman

Employer (Malaysia)

Dear President of the Conference, delegates, advisors and observers. I am honoured to stand before you as the President of the Malaysian Employers Federation to address some of the critical issues pertaining to the Report of the Director-General on renewing the social contract. Renewing the social contract is challenging and it involves long-drawn, laborious negotiations. There must be willingness to all stakeholders to relook at the long-outstanding practices that may no longer be relevant to the current needs. Policies and practices that result in a trust deficit include weak governance. Uncontrolled rising costs of living and the mismatches in skills of youths with the requirements of the labour markets must be addressed. Renewing the social contract will involve reassessment of the practice that we developed before the advent of globalization, digitalization and the emergence of new technologies. Malaysia's Unity

Government, formed after the 15th general election, embarked on a journey to review the economic and social policies, including new policies. The Government carried out the Twelfth Malaysia Plan mid-term review and introduced seven bold measures aiming at stimulating Malaysian economic development over the next ten years. Under the Twelfth Malaysia Plan mid-term review, the Government allocated 415 billion Malaysian ringgit to enhance management quality and relocation of resources to cover basic needs. MEF fully supports the 17 new initiatives aimed to catalyse socio-economic development towards achieving a sustainable, prosperous and high-income nation, taking into account the realities of domestic challenges and global trends. MEF is confident that the new initiatives will be the catalyst to ensure that Malaysia will be able to uplift its economic status to greater heights in line with the Madani Economic Framework. The Madani economic policy empowered and accelerated the country's economy for the next ten years. The new shifts include specifically focus on, one, eradicating extreme poverty: 1.5 billion Malaysian ringgit for a programme to increase income. Two, economic structural reforms to areas such as energy transition industries, digital industries, high-value electronic and electrical industries, food security and rare earth industries. Three, leading the Islamic economy with a focus on Halal industries as well as Islamic finance innovation in line with the principles of Sharia justice. And four, focus on exporting services such as global services, creative industries, aerospace and tourism. The Government initiatives are placing importance on proper expenditure planning through sustainable reforms. Governance and government delivery systems will ensure that the 17 new policy shifts are both practical and implementable. MEF is supportive of the Government's initiatives as it takes radical approaches to resolve major issues of the Malaysian economic structure and establish sustainable development. The new policies take into account the views of industries and all stakeholders as well as the country's financial capacity. MEF is happy to report that the Government takes into consideration views of MEF in drawing up the progressive wage system. Initially the Government announced that the progressive wage system is mandatory. MEF expressed the views that it should be a voluntary basis. The Prime Minister Mr Anwar Ibrahim took into account the MEF's views and decided that the progressive wage system is voluntary, incentive-based and linked to performance and productivity. MEF participated actively, shared [vgr INAUDIBLE 103:48] and all technical committees. The pilot project for the progressive wage system was rolled out on 1st June 2024 with 1,000 employers as voluntary participants from five determined economic sectors. The progressive wage system will be reassessed in September 2024 before the implementation to other economic sectors. MEF plays a proactive role to ensure the new policies are business friendly and advance progressive agendas that are beneficial not only to businesses but also to workers and society. MEF is indeed grateful for the assistance rendered by the ILO, especially ITCILO, ILO Bangkok regional office, in strengthening MEF's capacity. MEF is looking forward to welcome some of the Employers' delegates to the climate change and the green economic event organized by IOE in partnership with MEF to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on the 11th and 12th September 2024. I urge all stakeholders to work towards a win-win outcome on renewing the social contract for a sustainable future. Thank you.

Mr Bert Paterson

Worker (Grenada)

Good day all. Greetings from the tiny and most beautiful island of Grenada in the Caribbean. The matter I bring to this 112th Conference does go far beyond our shores

as it can have ramifications for countless workers worldwide. In the Report of the Director-General two very brief passages stood out to me in relation to the theme of this conference. Quoted from Paragraph 4, "To maintain legitimacy and support, social contracts need to be updated periodically to respond to evolving contexts." And quoted from Paragraph 32, "Both States and businesses have a role to play in providing dispute resolution mechanisms and grievance procedures. States must take appropriate steps to ensure, through judicial, administrative, legislative and other means, that when such abuses occur within their territories and jurisdiction, those affected have access to effective remedy." Not being an expert in all of the ILO's Conventions, I am not aware that they contain specific reference to protect workers from a recent development in the social and industrial landscape. That is workers' access to the courts. On March 21st, 2022, the British Privy Council, that is the highest appeal court for several independent countries still being members of the British Commonwealth, including Grenada, ruled in a matter involving a worker's claim of wrongful and unfair dismissal. The Privy Council upheld the ruling of the Caribbean High Courts that, as a local legislation on dispute procedure stated that "where parties to a dispute refuse to participate or does not settle a matter at the Ministry of Labour and refuses to arbitrate the matter, only in cases of wrongful dismissal the law indicated the worker had the right to have the matter remedied by the High Court". But in no other matter, including unfair dismissal does the worker have access to the court to settle a matter, signifying there can be no final and binding resolution or remedy to other disputes as those disputed matters were not specifically stated in the law. Clearly, an irrational judgment. The Privy Council, however, did indicate that if the Government so wishes, it can amend the law. Effectively, the workers of Grenada cannot bring a grievance matter to the courts other than a matter of wrongful dismissal. Workers are now the only citizens who cannot access the courts to settle a dispute if involving an employment relationship or contract. The danger is not localized as it is normal for rulings from one jurisdiction to be quoted and referenced in the court rulings of other jurisdictions. It was always assumed that the constitutions and common law practices of all civilized countries afforded all citizens, including workers, full access to the courts. But this ruling has proven this is not the case. Not wanting to be political, but it is impossible to ignore that Conservative courts across the world since the advent of globalization have been attempting to reverse the minimal worker rights gained over earlier decades. As we consider this lack of access, a matter of human rights, civil rights, right to fair resolution of disputes and right to representation, we submit as most necessary that this ILO Conference consider, either by addition or amendment to existing Convention or if necessary new Convention, that access by all workers to national and international courts be recognized as a fundamental right to be adopted by all ILO Member States. I thank you for your indulgence and trust that this matter, although generally ignored, should be given serious consideration by this tripartite body responsible for the protection and improvement of the lot of all workers, as any renewed social contract cannot ignore the importance of access to the courts by workers and indeed employers, and we would really like to see that happen. Thank you very much for your indulgence.

Mr Salvador Medina Torres

Worker (Mexico)

Ladies and gentlemen, delegates, allow me to congratulate you on the document prepared for this document conference in which you very well set out the need to renew the social contract given the commitments we have made in that direction. The

pressures on social contracts in many countries that are identified in the report reflect the confluence of diverse crises that have called into question peace, governance and the rule of law. Unfortunately, at a world level we are seeing a crisis of democracy and multiple crises of the coexistence of people in a way that affects the world of work and often leads to increased precarity of employment and income. We are seeing informality in employment is among other deficits arising from that, and this is happening in different countries. The greatest guarantor of social contracts in each country is the constitution. However, the universal guarantees provided for constitutions are not always provided for by the actual operation of the government and the courts but are subject to a pressure set out by the report and faced with many obstacles and difficulties in implementing the guarantees of a social contract as required by the constitution, leading to a lack of balance and democratization in the world of work. So we are faced with a historical challenge at different levels of the structure of the state, and the way that the different institutions work together as a whole is a basic index of the quality of their functioning. We cannot address all of the different areas of policy and governance in isolation, as the report said. The public institutions have to respond to financial crises and sectorial crises, and their inability to do that undermines confidence in institutions. As a result of that, part of the population does not see themselves as represented in policies. And in some regions and countries we are seeing an increase in social pressure. For that reason, and other reasons, we are seeing increasing crises of citizens' confidence in governance and legal systems. In some places, we see that the separation of power is breaking down and corruption is increasing and we have seen a rise in extremism. This is leading to armed conflict, which leads to destruction at a world level. We need a fundamental change in the model of development and production to achieve a new legitimate social contract. Given that, the renovation, reinvention, renewal of the social contract is only possible if we have the ability and the will to deepen democracy in real terms. But we have to be aware that at the moment the trend is more towards the liberal approach. In many regions we are seeing austerity policies which reduce freedoms and put pressure on the historical rights conquered by workers. Given that, the objectives for Agenda 2030 will have to be postponed to a longer timeframe, leading to prejudices for many people in many different parts of the world. Addressing that means that we need to look at the toolbox that we use. The policy toolbox that we have had so far is insufficient. We need a qualitative jump in the tools used and the kind of assistance given. We need to address the model of development. We need ones based in a new social contract that takes account of local and national reality. We need a new social contract based on the individual human being and their need for rights and social and decent work. We need social dialogue, respecting human rights, justice, the environment and the fair transition and securing democracy at work. A new social contract and a new framework of convivence and social dialogue continues to be the ideal means of mobilizing all three resources required, but we need the necessary political will there. In Mexico, historically tripartism has been a key social value, and the reform of 2019 made a contribution to putting many things in the right place, contributing to the strengthening of our institutions, to company, sector and national level and leading to the closing of selective bargaining agreements. Our social contract, however, still faces great challenges. We need to improve the framework of labour relationships. We need to focus on gender issues. We need to increase social protection, social justice and rights at work. That means that we need to invest more in social dialogue with a view to renewing the social contract. Union organizations in Mexico are committed to these changes and we would call on the ILO and ACTRAV to do the technical flanking work that is necessary for this end, as an indispensable interlocutor in the process. Thank you very much.

Mr Alfonso José Bustamante Canny

Employer (Peru)

Officials of the ILO, representatives of the workers, governments and employers, special greetings of course to the representatives of my country, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Greetings from CONFIEP, representing the employers of Peru. We bring together 23 business associations from ten production sectors, including small and microbusinesses. We agree with the Director-General that sustainable businesses also need an enabling environment to be able to fulfil their function as a driver of economic growth and decent job creation. The DG's report alarmingly mentions that around 60% of the global workforce is employed in the informal economy. In my country, informality reaches over 71% and affects over 12 million Peruvians who have no work benefits or access to social protection. Informality represents an unprotection of the citizen. Red tape makes the transition to formality costly. Considering the per capita GDP in Peru, our informality rate is 20 percentage points higher than where it should be according to the World Bank. In addition to the huge problem of informality in Peru, today there are 3.3 million more Peruvians in poverty than there were in 2019, and 600,000 more than last year, reaching 30% of the population. We have been fighting against poverty for 20 years. This begs the question, what are the main factors that lead to informality? It is not a lack of regulation but, on the contrary, excessive regulation which is not aligned with reality, coupled with weak institutions, corruption and other factors. We have seen that the generation of productive employment and decent work through incentives for private investment in many countries like Peru is the best way to reduce not only informality but also poverty and the best way to create new opportunities. To do this, it is essential to create the necessary conditions to ensure economic growth and job creation in the formal sector. Let us not forget that the private sector is the best driver of economic growth and is the main source of job creation. In Peru the private sector provides 80% of total investment and 71% of formal jobs. Despite this contribution, the business sector has to face ideologies that distort reality and cause conflicts. Today, more than ever, we recall the principles of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, according to which the promotion of sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all is achieved through, amongst others, policies and incentives which promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the creation and development of sustainable businesses and the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy. The Peruvian employers reaffirm our commitment to social dialogue with results, and we recall that the real social contract is what we create between workers and employers, which is business. But the most important thing is to continue to strengthen this wonderful relationship. Thank you very much.

Ms Joanna Bernice Coronacion

Worker (Philippines)

Friends, colleagues, delegates, on behalf of the Philippine Worker delegation I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to speak before the ILC this year. We applaud the collective effort that went into the ratification of ILO Convention 190. It is a big victory for working people all over. Now the challenge is making sure that the substance of the Convention will be reflected in our national policy which is not limited to a violence-based agenda but includes all forms, such as trade

union harassment and repression. The Philippine Workers' delegation states our support for the movement towards the creations of a Convention and Recommendation for protection against biological hazards. We recognize the urgent need for the comprehensive protection for workers and communities. As a working woman, I strongly believe that care work, predominantly carried out by women, must be properly represented and adequately protected in the world of work. Our delegation aims for concrete standard setting for decent work in care in the coming years. The trade union movement is built on the principle of solidarity. As the saying goes in the Philippines, [foreign 123:27], "A pain in one part is a problem of the entire body." This commitment to workers' common interest, regardless of race, creed or identity keeps the international labour movement relevant. In solidarity, we express our concerns for our brothers and sisters in Myanmar. The ongoing civil war and the continuous brutalization of workers, activists and citizens by the military junta is completely unacceptable. We support calls for the recognition of the National Unity Government, or NUG, as the legitimate government of Myanmar. We urge the ILO to demonstrate its commitment to basic human and labour rights by working with the NUG in all relevant processes under its mandate. We join the calls for the 112th International Labour Conference to expedite the implementation of the ILO Commission of Inquiry recommendations by adopting a resolution on measures based on article 33 of the ILO Constitution. Our delegation is gravely concerned about the situation at home. The Philippines has been in the ILO spotlight and for good reason. More than a year since the conclusive findings of the ILO High-Level Tripartite Mission, we have yet to see any substantive steps towards addressing the systemic roots of precariousness and labour rights violations in the Philippines. The lack of meaningful progress gravely concerns us as it all contributes to the weakening of the ILO's inspection system. Despite claims to the contrary, hostility to trade unions remains the order of the day in the Philippines. The Philippine Government is creating the impression that things are improving for workers. If so, why has not a single case out of the 72 trade union killings been resolved? Why do instances of red tagging and profiling by security forces against unions continue to happen daily, such as those targeting SENTRO and KMU, or forced disaffiliation of unions such as the PNP, the Philippine National Police and non-uniform employees association? How can things be better when none of the High-Level Tripartite Mission's recommendations have been realized in a meaningful way? The name of [vgr INAUDIBLE 125:59] unrealized recommendations, there has been no traction and the proposed formation of a truth commission and presidentially mandated body on freedom of association violations. The presidential commission created by Executive Order 23 is glaringly insufficient. Among its many issues is the complete absence of participation by the social partners. As such, it has yet to deliver anything substantive in terms of giving justice to those harmed nor has it prevented freedom of association violations from happening. Progress on the freedom of association road map has stalled since its submission to the ILO was not endorsed by the majority of workers' representatives. Many of the measures aimed at aligning laws and practices with internationals are languishing in Congress, including the enabling law for Convention 151 and other measures that the President could easily certify as urgent. The President has defied calls to reassess the mandate and function of the National Task Force to End Local Communist. Despite all of those window dressings, unionization rates remain stagnant. This is the true litmus test of full compliance with freedom of association standards. It is no wonder wages have stagnated for years and job quality has yet to improve. This and many other [vgr INAUDIBLE 127:34] are what led to the almost unanimous call by the Philippine labour movement, including the ITUC affiliates in the Philippines, except FFW, for [vgr

INAUDIBLE 127:44] resignation. These are some of the crucial areas the Philippine delegation would like to put into focus. Good day to all.

Ms Verónica Patricia Navia Tejada

Government (Bolivia (Plurinational State Of))

Gilbert Houngbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, President and Vice-Presidents of the International Labour Conference, Heads of State and Government, ladies and gentlemen, representatives and delegates of the workers and employers. We have looked very closely at the analysis of the difficulties of the work of labour that were brought up in the inauguration of this labour conference, in particular data on the reduction of the employment rate during 2024, which has seen a slight rise since 2023. That means that there are more than 180 million unemployed workers in the whole world. Given that, I would like to take the opportunity to set out the strategy and policies implemented by the Bolivian country based in its economic model and the things that have been achieved which have led to a reduction in unemployment by 4% in our country. This has meant that public policies directly and indirectly have made a contribution to the social incomes provided for by the state. That has led to an increase in the number of new enterprises which create new jobs. Our economic model implies the continuity for the construction of the process of social and economic transformation, promoting the institutionalization of primary resources. Let us recall the words of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization saying that poverty is a danger to prosperity. We absolutely support that claim. That is why together we have to ratify our commitment to social justice, helping workers to achieve respect for their rights through protection of work and their right to work, stability of employment, respect for labour rights, and particularly the right to a salary as a precondition for a life in dignity. There the important players are the employers, the workers and, of course, the public authorities. Given that, we also have to express our complete rejection of unilateral blockades and the way that armed conflicts far from our South American continent affect our income. Labour is not a commodity, and so why is it then that some workers are seen as a workforce and not as a force for development in the social and economic development of states? In the analysis that we make in this International Labour Conference, where we talk among the constituents about the right to enjoy the fruits of work and chemical hazards, it is important that we consider the scope of social justice not just so that it is translated into numbers and statistics but so that it would lead to prosperity for workers, doing away with differences between men and women in that respect and promoting equality of access to opportunities for work, to pay and to human dignity, which in our country we refer to as living well. I would like to state that as an integral member of the International Labour Organization we have given a technical opinion on the right to strike as a result of the consultation carried out by the International Court of Justice saying that we recognize all workers' rights to organize in unions and the duty of the state to respect their independence. We also, as a result of that, have to recognize the right to strike, prohibiting any repression of the right to strike carried out by unions as long as they comply with the legal conditions set out expressly for this purpose. We think that this is the only instrument available to workers and the only available instrument for workers in their struggle. Thank you.

Mr Gyula Pallagi

Worker (Hungary)

Madam President, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to address you today at the 2024 International Labour Conference as representative of the Hungarian workers. This event holds special significance as, in the spirit of tripartism, we come together to seek solutions to protect workers' rights and create a world of decent work. Let me also express my special thanks to the work of the ILO office in Budapest which actively supports our work between the conferences. The idea of the social contract which underpins the respect for workers' rights is based on the principles of human dignity and justice. This contract is a mutual agreement that ensures that every worker can perform their duties safely, under fair conditions, benefit from economic growth and play an active role in decisions that affect their destiny. In this context, I would like to draw your attention to two particularly important issues. Firstly, I would like to emphasize the importance of occupational health and safety. A safe working environment is a fundamental human right that must not be compromised. Preventing workplace accidents and illnesses is not only necessary for protecting workers' health but also economic advantages. Investments in occupational safety reduce long-term costs for companies, increase productivity and promote sustainable development. Ensuring conformity with the ILO standards is therefore essential. However, in Hungary we face a number of challenges. We see that the issue of workers' health has recently been treated by legislation as an administrative burden that hinders competitiveness and thus needs to be dismantled rather than as a fundamental right of workers. Therefore, we consider it necessary to maintain occupational medical examinations and proper training in occupational health and safety in accordance with ILO standards instead of deregulating these employer obligations. Secondly, I would like to address the issue of social dialogue and employee participation. As the Director-General points out in his report, social dialogue is the main institutional instrument for renewing the social contract. This contract can only be genuine if workers actively participate in the decision-making processes. Mechanisms for collective bargaining and social dialogue ensure that workers' voices are heard and that labour decisions are fair and equitable. Employee participation increases job satisfaction, strengthens workplace democracy and contributes to social cohesion. Yet in Hungary today, as in many other countries, social dialogue has become empty. Like many of the trade union rights that had been asserted in the past are under threat or attack, workers' voices are not even given a role in decision-making since the absence of dialogue, as the example of occupational health and safety deregulation shows, often goes hand in hand with the violation of workers' rights. The renewal of the social contract must be connected to the establishment of a genuine, meaningful social dialogue. It is our shared responsibility to implement the concept of the social contract into concrete actions. This requires close cooperation between governments, employers and worker organizations. Only through such cooperation can we achieve a labour world that is just, fair and safe for everyone. Thank you for your attention, and I wish the participants of the Conference a productive session. Thank you. Köszönöm.

Mr Igor Feketija

Government (Slovenia)

Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to participate in this year's plenary discussion of the Director-General's report on the renewed social contract. We thank the Office for the well-prepared report and valuable opportunity to contribute to the debate. The debate is even more timely, taking into account ongoing multiple crises, wars, armed conflicts, which all have immense impact on the world of work. Major transformations driven by digitalization, technological progress, demographic shifts and climate crises, coupled with several persistent issues, including poverty, inequalities, informality, precarious forms of work, insecurities, lack of adequate social and labour protection eroded trust in public institutions, and unfair distribution of the fruits of progress call for our consideration for a renewed social contract. As underlined in the report, respect for human rights including labour rights stands at the core of the social contract. Effective realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work is a vital and indispensable part of social justice. Yet, significant deficits continue to persist in its implementation. These gaps must be overcome in joint and intensified efforts with a reinvigorated approach that can be inspired and boosted by the decision of the 110th International Labour Conference to include a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of the fundamental principles and rights at work. As one of the pivotal milestones of the Organization's history, this achievement gained further importance in the context of climate change. In the circumstances of major transformations in the world of work, we must focus on enhancing labour protection and providing adequate social security as one of the pillars of the renewed social contract. Both labour protection and social security systems need to evolve, advance and adapt to the new realities in the world of work in order to leave no one behind. Social dialogue, as proven in the past decades, is central to providing the right solutions to complex realities. Social security systems based on redistribution are gradually being eroded and are under constant pressure of fiscal deficits and public debt. We also feel more consideration should be devoted to pre-distribution, which means a fairer distribution or sharing of the fruits of labour and the progress stemming from it in the first place before inequality emerges, especially through more democratic models of ownership such as employee ownership. We feel this can be more effective than addressing the inequalities through redistribution after the fact. At the national level, in Slovenia we are carefully following and addressing these developments in consultation with the social partners and through broader public debate. To tackle negative consequences arising from the increase of atypical forms of work, the Slovenian Government has just recently adopted guidelines for the preparation of the strategy addressing and combatting precariousness, especially related to atypical forms of work. The final strategy will include concrete measures that will be formulated with the working group consisting of social partners and experts. Furthermore, pension reform is also under consideration. Systemic solutions are currently being developed and discussed in the area of pension and disability legislation with the aim of making the pension system more transparent and sustainable while providing adequate income to those who are no longer able to work. In conclusion, we would like to underline the importance of the normative mandate of the ILO in addressing the identified regulatory gaps and responding to new phenomena in the world of work. The ILO, with its unique tripartite structure and reliance on social dialogue, is fully equipped and rightly placed to set standards at the international level which advance social justice. Director-General, we welcome that this debate will also

feed into the discussion on the ILO contribution to the Second World Summit for Social Development where the ILO should present an impactful tripartite input. The summit will be an opportunity to address the new developments occurring since 1995 and for a renewed impetus to the realization of the 2030 Agenda. We need to jointly find a way to secure and advance the progress made in terms of social justice in recent decades and at the same time to address new challenges in the world of work and tackle the persistent ones. In this respect, we consider positively the constructive proposal, such as the initiative for a global charter of labour rights, as in the ILO's contributions to the upcoming Social Summit in 2025. Thank you all.

Mr Mohammed Attia Ibrahim Elfayoumi

Employer (Egypt)

Chair of the Conference, Your Excellency minister, workers' and employers' representatives, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure for me to wish the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference every success and to emphasize its leading role in the world of work, and I wish our conference every success. The International Labour Organization is carrying out unceasing constructive efforts on the basis of its tripartite structure, which is the main driver of this organization in all its activities, namely the setting up of policies, of labour conventions to improve productivity and to improve and promote decent work, as also to implement all of the rights and obligations of all parties in order to realize the objectives set out. This International Labour Conference is one of the major tools of the ILO, making it possible to create harmony and cooperation between the tripartite partners. We noted with interest the Director-General's report entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. This report sets out a vision to strengthen decent work, productive work, sustainable development and development to the benefit of all, strengthening freedom and economic security. All of these issues are addressed in various ambits in the Conference, and this makes it possible to face up to the various challenges that the world needs to address. We are addressing biological risks. We are addressing fundamental rights at work, decent work and the care economy, among other things, at this conference. The General Federation of Chambers of Commerce represents the employers of Egypt and is also a member of various other organizations at regional and international level and it works to improve social dialogue. We also are involved in efforts with various other parties responsible for activities in the area of labour. And, of course, we work with the ILO, which is a privileged partner for the establishment of labour legislation. And it is also this organization that makes it possible to pursue our various objectives of decent work, of safety and necessary protection for employers and workers to promote sustainable development and economic stability. The improvement of the economic situation in Egypt is palpable. It is due to the efforts of the Egyptian economy to launch large infrastructure projects which are an ideal means for the creation of jobs for young people. The Government has also launched development projects across the whole of Egypt, which has led to improvement in the capacity of Egyptian industry and the skills of workers. Without ignoring the needs of entrepreneurs and of small and microenterprises, other initiatives have been launched targeting assistance to different parts of society. The Government has also implemented various pieces of legislation addressing labour, in cooperation with the workers and the employers. We have worked together to work on the law on unions, passed in 2007. We have also worked on legislation on investment which makes it possible to provide the necessary incentives for investments to facilitate trade and to improve economic governance. We have also provided guarantees to investors through this legislation and

through the setting up of a council for dialogue in industrial relationships. We have also worked on various other pieces of relevant legislation. Ladies and gentlemen, we have to ask the question why the world is not able to protect the Palestinian people and stop the genocide that has been perpetrated against them. Is it not now time for Palestine to become a member of full right in the ILO? Thank you.

Mr Marco Andrade Solis

Worker (Panama)

President of the 112th International Labour Conference, delegates, on behalf of the workers and the Panamanian union movement, we denounce the flagrant violation of labour rights and freedom of association in the Republic of Panama. Firstly we denounce the fact that the bank accounts of the main union in our country, SUNTRACS, affiliated with CONUSI, have been closed, including the account of our cooperative SUNTRACS, R. L. which is about to go bankrupt. This was a reprisal for its participation in the patriotic gesture but against the mining contract which violated 25 articles of the Panamanian constitution and which was declared unconstitutional on the 28th of November 2023. This is an environmental crime committed with mining exploitation in an important part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. What is more, there is persecution and prosecuting of popular leaders, including human rights leaders, environmental leaders, indigenous leaders, farmers' leaders, students' leaders, fishers' leaders and union leaders who took part in this gesture, including leaders Jaime Caballero from SUNTRACS and Diogenes Sanchez from the Association of Professors of the Republic of Panama, ASOPROF. We also denounce the fact that the University of Panama, its authorities, after agreeing and signing the second collective convention with the workers of the University of Panama in the National Union of Workers of the University of Panama, SINTUP, after eight months of negotiation and which represented the only advancement in freedom of association in the public sector, now refuses to apply the convention. The rest of the workers in the public sector do not have their right to collective bargaining recognized or union fee discounts or the right to strike, in the case of the workers in the Panama Canal, when supplementary measures fail. These facts, which are not the only examples, would be enough to denounce the Government of Panama of Laurentino Cortizo as a violator of workers' rights and freedom of association. The new Government of the President Elect José Raúl Mulino, elected on the 5th of May has already announced a series of measures that it will take against the people, including the reactivation of the mining project, increasing the retirement age of women and men, increasing contributions, reducing pensions and other measures in the social security fund, privatization of insurance funds with individual account. Also included is the privatization of water, collection and treatment of waste, repression and criminalization of the social protestors, amongst others. All this will surely provoke confrontation with the extreme right neoliberal government working against the interests of the working class and the people. Minister, listen to what we are saying. We want the rector of the university to respect the convention agreed upon with our union. We also ask the minister for the Government to respects the rights of workers to organize themselves in unions, and we should not be denied legal representation. Long live the fight. Long live the workers of Panama.

Ms Ana Guezmes

United Nations

ECLAC would like to greet this conference, its president, Member States, representatives of workers' and of employers' organizations. We welcome the Report of the Director-General on a renewed social contract. We congratulate the ILO on the decision to incorporate the discussion of decent work and the care economy in this conference and we would like to thank them for the excellent report prepared for that. The Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean have recognized the centrality of care for making advances in gender equality, sustainability of life on the planet and sustainable development. Our States have made advances in statistics, in policies and systems of care, and over the past 47 years, in the regional conference on women of Latin America and the Caribbean, have agreed on the regional agenda. The Buenos Aires Commitment, a pioneering agreement adopted in 2022, is particularly worthy of mention. It is mentioned in the ILO report as well. And in that agreement the region recognizes care as a fundamental kind of work, whether it is paid for or not, and a productive sector with the potential to revitalize economies with the right of people to care, to be cared for and to care for themselves on the basis of the principles of equality, solidarity, universality and shared social and gender responsibility. However, delegates, the future is already here and the demand for care work is growing rapidly as a result of ageing, technological changes and the effects of climate change and there is a reduction of the time available and the number of people available to provide care. We are faced with a disproportionate number of women and children involved, leading to discrimination and feminization of policies. So investment is key, and a society that invests properly in care places not just justice in our hands but profound social change. So investing in integrated systems of care from an intersectional gender perspective, apart from contributing directly to sustainable development and well-being, creates directly or indirectly high-quality jobs in accordance with the officers that the Office itself has given us and the data that we have got together in ECLAC and the ILO in the region through the care simulator [? 156:48]. Apart from that, it makes it possible for women to enter into the labour market, participate in it and stay in it. It includes men in policies and in care, and it generates returns for the state in the form of taxes and contributions to social security and it leads to improvements for society as a whole. The care economy is a core part of the economy. There is going to be a growing demand for workers coming from this sector, men and women who will have to be able to work in decent conditions with proper training and guarantees for full exercise of their labour rights, including appropriate remuneration in decent conditions and with social dialogue. Given the care crisis across the world and also in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC is ready to help the ILO and the tripartite constituents. As José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC has said many times, it is not a time for gradual, timid change but for ambitious transformational change. We are prepared to support the ILO in drawing up standards and statistics in Conventions and Recommendations in the 5R conceptual framework and in conjunction with the development of the care economy. Along with the United Nations, UN Women, the ILO, we will make the necessary efforts to create a macroeconomy and policy to advance in this direction to get proper standards and parental leave of quality but also of longer duration in the future. Ladies and gentlemen, what happens in this conference will be decisive to see whether we face up to the needs, expectations and hopes of current and future generations and provide for the good living that indigenous peoples in the Americas can teach us about. Care is a shared public good of all peoples. It is a local good as well. It is at the base of

sustainability and of life and is a key to achieve social justice. This is not a time for change. It is not an era of change. It is a change in the era. We need to make progress in care, including care for the people who care for us and including care for the planet. The balance between life and work [vgr INAUDIBLE 159:40]. Care renews our hope for a better future for everyone. Thank you.

Mr Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano

International Social Security Association

President of the International Labour Conference, Director-General of the ILO, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to convey to all delegates to this session of the International Labour Conference the greetings of the membership of the International Social Security Association. Bringing together 333 member institutions from 163 countries, ISSA is the unique global organization for social security institutions and government departments. Sharing knowledge and enabling relevant networks, ISSA's mandate has, since its creation under the auspices of the ILO in 1927, been to promote the development of social security systems around the world. I wish to congratulate the Director-General on his report to this International Labour Conference and for his leadership to convene the world of work, national governments and international actors around a crucial question. How to renew the social contract, which is indeed under serious pressure, based on social justice, social dialogue and the values and the objectives that underpin the work of the ILO is of the utmost importance in a world of crises and transformative change. The Director-General's report and the debates at this International Labour Conference provide vital guidance to all of us in moving forward and in the preparation of the World Social Summit in 2025. I would like to echo the Director-General in emphasizing that renewing the social contract is fundamentally about investing in people. This includes, importantly, investment in their capacity to secure employment and productive lives and their capacity to enjoy protection against risks of loss of income and protection in old age. Social justice and investment in people are the core of social security and have been underlying principles for ISSA since its foundation. To promote these principles, ISSA has worked side by side with the ILO and other international partners in the expansion of social security systems around the world. Today, to effectively support individuals and societies to cope with transitions, demographic change, labour market transformations, changing life course, uncertainty and crises, social security systems have evolved and multiplied their functions. Income protection remains, no doubt, the fundamental pillar. However, the objective of modern social security systems to empower people, invest in their health and employment, and support resilience has been one of the key priorities in recent years for ISSA and its membership. To ensure that social security systems can play this vital role for a renewed social contract, we must also redouble our efforts to bridge the persistent social protection coverage gap that affects still too many workers worldwide. There are many positive examples of progress in extending social protection based on an innovative policy and implementation approach. However, we must strengthen our efforts and collaboration to accelerate progress and ensure that a renewed social contract would not only be a reality for a privileged few but for all workers and all population groups everywhere. The Global Coalition for Social Justice is of paramount importance in this regard. After having been one of the first organizations to join the Global Coalition last year, ISSA is fully engaged in promoting and contributing to this agenda. Ladies and gentlemen, ISSA and its members are more than ever committed to be at the side of the ILO in working towards social justice and to contribute to a cross-

sector effort to make a renewed social contract a reality, as proposed in such a timely manner by the esteemed Director-General. Thank you very much.

Mr Atle Høie

IndustriALL

Distinguished President, delegates, I am speaking on behalf of IndustriALL Global Union which has 550 affiliates in 130 countries, representing over 50 millions workers, including in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors. There is no social justice in countries at war or in countries with severe oppression. Recently back from Ukraine, I will start there. The Russian war in Ukraine has already been going on for more than two years. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and injured and there is no end in sight. Notwithstanding, we call on the Government of Ukraine to stop using the war as a pretext to weaken labour laws and to resume social dialogue. The war has taken a huge toll on industry, people are living in constant fear, and our affiliates are clinging to the hope that the war will end and that they can go back to doing regular trade union work and start rebuilding their country. In Belarus, we demand that the Government stop the repression of trade unions and immediately release all trade union leaders and activists who are subjected to violations of their trade union and civic rights. We are extremely concerned about the inhumane conditions they are subject to in prison, including torture. We call on the ILO to demand, under article 33, that the Government implements the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. It is imperative that the Government issues an urgent report on the health status of the prisoners and allows for a tripartite mission to visit the prisoners. In Myanmar the military regime has killed more than 4,000 people, arrested almost 26,000 and suspended civil society organizations, including all free trade unions. The banning of trade unions and the absence of freedom of association has resulted in modern slavery conditions for most workers. This fact is corroborated by the findings of the ILO Commission of Inquiry. It is impossible to conduct due diligence in a military dictatorship. Therefore, IndustriALL continues to demand that companies stop financing the junta and thus responsibly exit the country. Furthermore, we find it unacceptable that the EU countries or the EU continues to grant trade preferences and keeps on supporting manufacturing in Myanmar. We reiterate our call on the EU to reevaluate its policies towards Myanmar. The EU must end its 'Everything but Arms' preferential trade policy and its support to the Multi-stakeholder Alliance for Decent Employment in the Myanmar apparel industry programme. On Argentina, we condemn in the strongest possible terms the attack from the new government and those employers supporting the Milei administration on fundamental and labour and social rights. We demand that the Government stops violating Conventions 87 and 98, in particular the attacks on the right to strike and the criminalization of social protests. It should also end the dismantling and privatization of state-owned companies and the defunding of public health, universities, education, science and culture. Finally, IndustriALL deplores the attack on the right to strike in many countries around the world. At the ILO, employers' representatives have shamefully cast doubt on this essential right for almost a decade. The right to strike is protected under Convention 87 and the ILO and its intrinsic corollary of freedom of association. The supervisory bodies of the ILO have built up an authoritative guidance in that regard over the past 70 years. Withholding labour is a crucial negotiating tool during the bargaining process. IndustriALL, together with the ITUC and other global unions, has strongly opposed the position from the Employers' group on the right to strike. In a landmark decision last year, the ILO Governing Body referred the matter to the International Court

of Justice for an advisory opinion. We call on all governments to side with the workers and support the trade unions' position in the International Court of Justice. And finally, I will come back to Palestine tomorrow, but having come back from Palestine just last week, I will reiterate our call for a free and independent Palestine within its own borders and with its rights to have its seat at this table and other international tables. Thank you very much.

Ms Christine Nathan

International Catholic Migration Commission

The world needs renewed commitment for the care of creation and for solidarity within the human community. Mr President, the International Catholic Migration Commission, ICMC, is pleased to deliver this statement at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, ILC, in response to the Report of the Director-General. Since 1951, ICMC has served migrants and refugees worldwide through its extensive network of Catholic bishops conferences, other Catholic inspired and civil society partners, global advocacy and direct humanitarian and resettlement programming in countries with complex migration and refugee-related issues. We place respect for the rights and dignity of our beneficiaries at the centre of our efforts regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality. We have voiced particular apprehension regarding global, regional, national and local endeavours to establish autocratic regimes, curtail democracy and multilateralism and promote religious, racial, ethnic and religious discrimination and persecution in various parts of the world. There is no question that the most vulnerable persons bear the heaviest burdens, including forced migrants, refugees and informal workers. This year the Director-General's report centres on revitalizing the social contract. It poses the question of how this contract can be renewed across all sectors to establish social justice as the cornerstone of sustainable peace, equal opportunities and a fair transition to more sustainable societies. This framework aligns with our vision and ICMC would like to highlight the following reflections nurturing a renewed social contract to this esteemed audience. Migrants, refugees and their families face significant hurdles in meeting basic needs. It is crucial to advocate for access to fundamental rights such as education, fair employment opportunities with just wages and protection, physical and mental healthcare, housing, and nutritious food. Migration cannot be solely labelled as an emergency. Whether it is involuntary or a deliberate choice, migration is deeply intertwined with the complexities of globalization, demography, human rights and development. In many contexts work can greatly contribute to the integration of migrants and their families as well as to their active participation to the common good of the community. Migrants do contribute heavily to societies that welcome them. For the last seven years, ICMC has convened the global initiative titled 'The Future of Work: Labour after Laudato Si' in close collaboration with a diverse network of Catholic-inspired organizations and other faith actors and grassroot organizations in all parts of the world. We wish to bring to the discussion the approach developed by its partners known as 'Care is Work, Work is Care'. We are convinced that work is to be at the core of a transformation to respond to the call to care for our common home. Furthermore, care is a way of being, doing and existing which implies dignity, generosity, freedom and responsibility. Care is a deeply spiritual human experience. It is always inspired by a concern for unity in the making of becoming one, both humanly and spiritually. Work as a transforming activity is therefore an essential component of care. Let me also highlight that ICMC is a partner of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and pledges its support for an engagement with this multilateral

platform. To close this statement, let me turn to the message of Pope Francis to the participants in the consultation 'Care is Work, Work is Care' adopted on the 8th of May 2024: "The world needs renewed commitment, a new social compact that can bind us together, older and younger generations, for the care of creation and for solidarity and mutual protection within the human community." Thank you, Mr President.

Ms Ruth Wilkinson

Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

Dear Director-General, President, distinguished delegates, guests, observers, ladies and gentlemen. Social justice and sustainability illuminate our vision of a safe and healthy world of work. They have woven into our mission and our strategy. The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, IOSH, is committed to advancing this cause as part of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. As the world's chartered body for professionals who keep workers safe and well, we at IOSH believe decent work under conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity is foundational to human well-being, enabling a sustainable future. Sustained, resilient and inclusive growth depends on fairness and social justice. Yet decent work eludes many, especially those among the world's two billion informal workers who are without social and legal protections. Many, including children, are economically, socially and politically marginalized, subject to forced labour and precarious conditions. Safe and healthy work provides conditions for individuals and communities to flourish. We say embrace the ethos of SDG 8, embrace a safe and healthy working environment and create decent jobs for people, planet and prosperity. Let business models and international and national policies embrace human rights standards regardless of where workers work and the work that they do. We recommend a pragmatic approach to accelerating progress to implementing the Decent Work Agenda at country level. To achieve this, stakeholders should embrace collaboration, joint decision-making and measurable actions promoting social justice, fundamental principles and rights and decent work. We need more sustainable trade strategies, elevating decent work standards as part of worker-centred trade policies and agreements. We also need more accountable, socially responsible businesses who prioritize people's safety and health as much as they do for generating profits. A new social contract should flow from the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work to address major inequalities and challenges in our world. It must embed occupational safety, health and well-being as the foundation of social, sustainable business. It must improve protection for all workers, including all of those who are in disadvantaged groups, those who are vulnerable workers and those who are particularly vulnerable to labour market exclusion and long-term unemployment and those who face increasing challenges when going to work where there are still unsafe and poor working conditions and practices. I guess from everything I have just said, you could hear that all actors must embrace the need for collaboration, policy coherence and joint decision-making to drive that action that advances a just transition to achieve social justice, decent work and fundamental principles and rights at work, which includes a safe and healthy working environment. It is only together that we can foster greater progress. So let us make social justice central to achieving equitable and sustainable growth for all. Thank you.

Ms Lorraine Sibanda

StreetNet International

My name is Lorraine Sibanda. I am the president of StreetNet International, a global alliance of street vendors and market vendors with more than 20 years in existence and representing over 750,000 informal economy workers globally. I would like to start by welcoming the Report of the Director-General of the ILO which clearly states that we need to renew the social contract that takes the needs of informal economy workers into consideration and encourages an inclusive social dialogue. It is commendable to see the informal economy taken seriously by this distinguished international organization, even if many national governments continue to pretend as if it does not exist. Indeed, because street and market vendors are not legally recognized as workers, we do not have access to social protection and appropriate care services. In many countries, most street and market vendors are women, often the sole bread winners of their families, and are forced to bring their children to work with them to sustain their livelihood which results in their children growing up among market stalls, often without any basic infrastructure. And all of them are exposed to violence and harassment as well as all sorts of hazards. I myself started vending in the streets when I was only six years old, and many children accompany their parents as they work because they have no access to childcare centres. Furthermore, we also need proper health and safety services. Street and market vendors are workers in the urban public spaces, but we do not have the appropriate infrastructure for serving the public. Every day we are exposed to infections, contaminated waste, polluted air. Working in the street is not easy, and it often costs us our health, and sometimes even our lives. Not only do we physically suffer from these poor working conditions, we are also psychologically bullied by authorities who refer to us as promoters of disease and persecute us for needing to make a living. Yet when the COVID pandemic was raging, we quickly adapted and became public health agents, a role which was not properly recognized by governments. Street and market vendors' exposure to biological hazards is an issue of human and labour rights and also urban regulation. Authorities must be held accountable and ensure that these workers have access to social protection and occupational health services. In addition, we suffer from disability or old age. We can only count on each other, increasing the burden of care on our families and communities which already are living in difficult conditions and without any legal or social protection. Our solidarity has kept us alive, but given our contribution to national economies, it is unacceptable that we have no proper care services during our lifetime. It is imperative to ensure high-quality care services to all workers, including those in the informal economy so that we can not only just survive but thrive. We once again echo the Report of the Director-General, stressing the importance of inclusive social dialogue that recognizes street and market vendors as workers so that we can ensure our health and safety. We believe it is crucial to adopt a Convention on biological hazards, supplemented by a Recommendation that explicitly lays out the responsibilities of state authorities towards self-employed workers in public spaces, such as street and market vendors, as well as our fellow waste pickers. We commend the ILO Conference for focusing on the important topics of care and biological hazards which have a tremendous impact on the daily life of street and market vendors. We will continue to amplify our voices in these important high-level forums because there is nothing for us without us. Thank you.

Mr Walter Merkis

Confederación de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de las Universidades de las Américas

We have come to this plenary to discuss the Report of the Director-General who has called us to work towards a renewed social contract based on social justice. This has come at a paradoxical moment because the President of Argentina has publicly stated that social justice is an aberration because it means that you must rob from one person to give to another. In Argentina, workers, especially those working in universities, are undergoing a serious and fast loss of their rights due to a government that does not recognize the principles of the ILO and violates international Conventions. It is well known by all that the attempt to implement a decree on need and emergency was currently halted by the justice system, and that implied an institutional dismantling of individual labour rights as well as collective labour rights. At the moment a draft law is being discussed in parliament and it is named the 'Basic Laws' in order to push forward the loss of sovereignty and protective measures. In order to defend our rights, workers from universities have taken part in a large march only one month ago. Over 1.5 million people marched across the country to fight against reductions in funding in universities. Moreover, we are fighting against wage cuts of over 60% that have been implemented over the past six months. The cruellest fact, though, has occurred at the University of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo whose workers have not been able to collect their wages for over six months. In Argentina, more than ever before, we need the active support of the ILO in order to defend our rights, to prevent and curb the destruction of our rights, impose a rational limit to the conflicts caused by the Government, and contribute to relaunching social dialogue and tripartism. However, Argentina is not the only place that is suffering. In Guatemala they arrested and put in jail five different university workers who belonged to the University of San Carlos trade union. They were simply exercising their right to protest. In Panama we have suffered a setback due to the refusal of the Government to record the legitimate collective agreement that had been signed by the University of Panama's trade union. In Brazil the universities' trade union federation has been courageously striking for 90 days and there have been massive mobilizations across the country to defend wage cuts and to promote more budget for the universities. In Honduras the university authorities have tried to fire the Secretary-General of the national autonomous universities trade union. This is clearly a violation of Convention 87. University workers are committed to a solid coalition that promotes decent work and social justice. And that is why we want the universal respect of human rights and the fundamental rights at work. But to do so we need a new social contract that can take form in concrete and solidarity-based actions. Today, more than ever before, we need unity and we need international support. We cannot allow injustice and inequalities to continue gaining ground. The fight for university workers is a fight for the future of our societies, for public education and for a fairer world. Every single strike, every single march, every single protest, we always hope for a better tomorrow. Unity, solidarity, organization and the commitment to social justice are the pillars on which we want to build our future, and together we can achieve this objective. I want to take the opportunity now to state that the 15th anniversary of our university confederation was created (sic), and I want to salute all those who will defend social justice today and in the future. Thank you.

Ms Adriana Paz Ramirez

International Domestic Workers Federation

Distinguished delegates of the 112th International Labour Conference, please receive greetings on behalf of International Domestic Workers Federation, a federation that represents over half a million domestic workers organized into 88 domestic workers' unions in 68 countries around the globe. We welcome the Report of the Director-General and we also welcome the inclusion of the discussion on decent work and the care economy in the International Labour Conference agenda. Care is the foundation upon which life exists and is necessary for humans, societies and economies to function, but it is also crucial for the future of decent work. Care consists both of paid and unpaid. It includes direct and indirect care, as rightly stated in the ILO report on 'Decent work and the care economy'. The current social organization of care reflects profound inequalities that are rooted in the slavery and disenfranchisement of people from the global South. Such inequalities are expressed through differentiation of social and economic status and positions of power that are often used to exploit the labour of [vgr INAUDIBLE 194:00] women, girls, migrant women and migrants working in informal employment. The unequal organization of care is both a driver and an outcome of poverty and structural inequalities, with implications for the rights and the well-being of those who provide and receive care. Domestic workers are a key pillar of the care economy. Considering only those who are only employed directly by the household, they account for 25% of all care workers globally. Around the world there are 75.6 million domestic workers that are aged 15 years and over. Domestic workers have a long tradition of organization and mobilization to recognize care work performed at the household level as work and the rights of workers. This legacy informs the current conceptualization of care work as work, which is also ingrained in ILO Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers, promoting decent work for domestic workers. C189 must be at the core of any care economy agenda and policy at the national level. Despite the relevant contributions that domestic workers provide to the care economy, societies continue to place a low social and economic value on domestic work. It is often considered unskilled and an extension of women's unpaid care work. Compared to those other wage workers, domestic workers tend to have lower wages, fewer benefits and fewer legal and social protections. Very, very few domestic workers enjoy employment contracts. They usually have no maternity leave, healthcare or pension provisions. Temporary migration policies lead to a structural suppression of domestic workers' labour rights. The undervaluation and under recognition of domestic workers must change to reflect their invaluable role in supporting household economies, societies and enable them to enjoy their human rights. ILO Convention 189 sets the minimum standards for decent work for domestic workers. Only 36 countries have ratified this Convention, which reflects how challenging it is to reform the sector. C189 should be recognized as a central pillar of any national care policy. Domestic work is care work and should be fully, explicitly recognized as workers as part of the care workforce and as care providers covered by national labour codes and protected in equal conditions. Pathways to domestic workers' formalization should be prioritized, and their skills acquired through either training or experience should be recognized, valued and fairly remunerated. Care must be seen as a human right. The right to self-care, the right to receive and provide care must be done in conditions that uphold decent working conditions. Care should be recognized as a public good, operating on principles of solidarity, equity and universality and the leadership of the state. Rights-based migration pathways should empower and protect domestic workers through open work

permits covered by labour and social protection regulations while offering permanent residency status in the country of destination and family reunification avenues. Bilateral agreements should be based upon C189, decent work on domestic workers standards. Migrant domestic workers should have access to core labour standards such as freedom of association, non-discrimination, occupational health and safety, fair wages, access to justice mechanisms and protection from gender-based violence. Finally, the domestic workers thank the leadership of the ILO on the work that it has done on care, but there is still much work ahead for the Office and the Office should continue leading the development of standards on the care economy. We often say in our movement that care work, domestic worker, is the work that makes all other work possible. I ask you to always think 'Care for those who care for you'. Thank you.

Mr Emad Hemdan

Arab Federation of Petroleum, Mines and Chemical Workers

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful. Ladies and gentlemen, the Arab union of petrol, mine and chemical workers believes that the ILO has an important role to play in the world of work. In fact, its programmes and recommendations constitute a basis for protection for us and we hope to see further policies put in place. We also want to strengthen this culture of work and strengthen the principles of solidarity and cooperation between governments, employers and workers. We should also like to congratulate and welcome the report of the DG in which the DG outlines a very important issue in the world of work. This report is entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. This report calls upon workers, governments and enterprises to work jointly to strengthen dialogue in all areas of work, to confront the challenges of unemployment and the lack of social coverage and protection for millions of workers throughout the entire world. The DG also presented figures in the report and he called for more solidarity. He presented programmes for social coverage and social protection whilst strengthening social dialogue between the constituents. Here, this is one of the main goals of the Committee of Freedom of Association of the Arab Labour Organization, which is part of the League of Arab States which I have the honour of chairing. We also call for this dialogue to be strengthened and to address the employment gap. We believe that people who are unemployed today in the world have reached about 402 million people in 2024. Now, despite the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, we are seeing a lack of progress when it comes to tackling poverty and unemployment. There are many workers who are still in the informal sector, and we have seen an increase of 1.7 billion workers in 2005 to 2 billion workers in 2024. It is important, ladies and gentlemen, to speak about what is happening in Palestine today. As we are meeting today, making these fanciful speeches, hundreds of thousands of people are falling into the hands of Zionist entities. Thousands of people are dying and are simply left behind. This is a brutal war against the people of Palestine. And as we speak about the future of work and decent work and freedoms and liberties, today we are seeing an atrocious war between the Palestinian people who are seeing their basic humanity trampled upon. This means that we have to assume our humanitarian and even professional responsibilities. We need to take measures against the Israeli entity. We need to insist on the following points. First of all, we need to suspend Israel from the ILO, impose sanctions against the occupying entity, give Palestine a full membership status in the ILO. We also need to provide aid to the Palestinian people who have a right to live in their territory. Ladies and gentlemen, we call upon the ILO to formulate development programmes for workers in Syria and South

Sudan who are also feeling the consequences of this Israeli war. We also are thinking about other countries who are affected by war, such as Sudan and Libya. Over half of the population of those countries have left their countries due to the wars that are taking place in those countries. In this regard, we would like to express our appreciation to the role of the President of Egypt and to the Egyptian people as well who support the Palestinian cause. In fact, the leadership of President El-Sisi constitutes a good basis for work when it comes to dealing with all of the issues that are affecting the Arab region, bringing it into a state of war. And this is why we would like to highlight the role of the international community when it comes to stopping all of these wars and also in providing assistance when it comes to economic integration to end the destruction we are seeing and the terrorism as well. We would like to highlight the measures that have been taken in Egypt, namely, to increase the minimum wage and also to expand social coverage to all of the workers and retired persons. Thank you very much.

Ms Clémence Otekpo

International Coordination of Young Christian Workers

Madam President, thank you for giving us the floor. Allow me to thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the Report of the DG on behalf of ICYCW, the International Coordination of Young Christian Workers. We represent over 40 countries in the world. We thank the DG for his report in which he looks at the need to update the social contract. As a people's education movement which has been operating for almost 100 years in the field of decent work, we share the view that social justice globally cannot be achieved without decent work. We note, however, that many workers in the world today are sharing experiences of work that do not respect them, which do not respect their quality as workers, their ability to meet their basic needs, their desire to build a life. Jean-Luc from Madagascar, 24 years old, he is a young man who was recruited by a Mauritian recruiter to work on the island of Mauritius. But the recruiter did not keep his promises. When he arrived in Mauritius, Jean-Luc did not get the job he was promised and he ended up transporting bags of food in a warehouse. In addition to all of this, he did not receive the minimum wage, which is established at 16,000 Mauritian rupees. The recruiter also took his papers which prevents him from going out because he is scared of being arrested by the police. His telephone is also given to him in a sporadic fashion, according to the whims of the employer. This situation reminds us that Jean-Luc has come to Mauritius to work, to have a better life and to receive better human treatment, but he has ended up in a foreign country and his dignity as a worker and migrant has been trampled upon. Alejandro from Spain, 27 years old. He has two degrees. He has got one in sport and one in social integration. He has been working since the age of 17, even though he has not been able to sign a contract only at the age of 21. Since then he has had contracts for ten hours a week maximum. Currently he is employed in the same enterprise with three different working centres. His working hours are four days a week, two hours Monday and Wednesday, four hours Tuesday and Thursday, in two different centres. He explains that the working conditions are very precarious indeed. Every class is different from the previous one. It is difficult to strike a work-life balance due to the fact that he is always on the go and due to the fact that he does not get much work. He does not want to blame his enterprise in particular because the conditions are the best possible given the situation. For the time being, he does not see any future for himself because his current working conditions and those that he has experienced thus far do not allow him to think about any potential emancipation. In September all of his working hours will change once again, and he will have to completely change his pace of life

depending on what is offered to him. How can we accept the fact that there is a whole generation of young people who are actually worse off than their parents? In our movement, since our international council in 2021, the national movements have taken the initiative to reflect and work jointly on the migration of young people. The report explains that our work experience is an important part of our identity, and we do very much share this view. But what kind of identity is constructed for those people who have no access to education, to work, those who are dehumanized by daily tasks and by fluctuations, those people for whom work is tantamount to survival and have no plans for the future? We also see that there are many injustices which undermine self-confidence and fuel apathy. The social gains that have been achieved thus far are being called into question for the sake of economic gain, and the revenue of the world is concentrated in the hands of a handful of rich individuals. There are many laws and regulations that exist, but the supervisory mechanisms do not allow us to ensure their observance, to the detriment of many workers who do not see their situation becoming any more secure. Labour, a transformative activity which should contribute to care and the dignity of human beings is not fulfilling its role. Workers must have effective guarantees with regard to the right to organize and freedom of association. They must have guaranteed the right to social protection, to not end up in a difficult situation when life goes wrong. They need to have a decent salary to survive, to get an education and to grow. We very much encourage the ILO to work towards the creation of a virtuous circle which places once again human beings at the centre and leaves no one behind. We believe in converging interests and collective intelligence and the capacity to do things jointly. We once again underscore the importance of today laying down the groundwork for a social contract that will allow us to have a societal system that is indeed viable. Thank you very much.

Ms Suntaree Saeng-Ging

HomeNet International

Thank you for this opportunity for me to speak at this plenary. I am Suntaree [vgr INAUDIBLE 211:06] Saeng-Ging. Today I stand here with a strong and urgent message, representing approximately 1.2 million home-based workers represented by HomeNet International which is a network of membership-based organizations with 75 affiliates spread across 33 countries. This year at the ILC we stand in solidarity with care workers and call for affordable, accessible and quality care services for all workers, especially the 147 million women home-based workers. Women home-based workers are often compelled to work from home, frequently juggling tasks such as working, cooking and taking care of children, elderly and sick persons, all in the same insecure environment due to the unfair burden of care work, a setup that is neither safe nor ideal. And that compromises their productivity and well-being. During the COVID-19 pandemic many women home-based workers were pushed out of work due to care responsibilities. Care work provided by women home-based workers is neither recognized nor compensated. We demand decent work and care as a fundamental right as a worker. At the 112th International Labour Conference we have three key demands. First, recognition of home-based workers as workers; ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 177, the Home Work Convention, and ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy by our Member State of the ILO. Second, access to affordable, accessible and quality childcare and elderly care to be a part of social protection for all workers, including our informal economy workers, home-based and domestic workers, waste pickers and street vendors. Third, support and

promote the cooperative and social and solidarity economy of home-based workers and all workers in informal employment to provide quality childcare, elderly care and long-term care. If we are serious about decent work and participation of women in the workforce, we need care for our women workers, including women home-based workers. It is time for change, time for recognition and time for action. Thank you.

Ms Diana Carolina Galindo Poblador

Government (Colombia)

The Government states that we have focused on tripartism in order to reach a balance for generation of employment and social justice. This has been done below the concept of decent work. Over one million new jobs have been created in Colombia. These have been implemented alongside reforms for better work, and this is fundamental in order to move forward towards a transformation of the setup to defend human rights, and we have taken a clear position. The representatives and the trade unions and employers have taken part in dialogue in order to discuss the text, and this has been done at the Congress of the Republic. We are moving forward towards a tripartite compromise, and the role of the Government is to focus on its effort to reduce injustice. Thus, the public policies in place will allow us to defend labour and human rights. Any worker, independently of their formal or informal role in the economy, has effective and true rights, especially in terms of protection and social protection and social rights. Of course, human rights can only be exercised from a legal and labour point of view if the right of association is respected. We can move forward with creating new collective bargaining spaces, including the trade unions in a country with over 15,000 violations and where many people in the population do not have jobs. Trade unionism can be strengthened, as well as the employers, and this will be in favour of the development of sustainable jobs. The organizations are invited in order to move forward in a united fashion, and that will transform Colombia in a force that can be counted with on the global stage for the benefit of all. Thank you.

Ms Béatrice Lestic

Worker Vice-President (France)

Thank you very much. This, therefore, wraps up the meeting today. We have exhausted our list of speakers. Before concluding our work, I would like to remind you that tomorrow we will be starting in the morning with a brief plenary session which will be dedicated to the discussion and adoption of the first report of the General Affairs Committee. The President will announce the vote on the abrogation of the four Conventions, as scheduled in agenda item 7 of the Conference. The vote will be open tomorrow at midday and will be closed at 6 pm. The vote results will be announced on Friday morning. Therefore, the meeting will be adjourned to have a session on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. I would like to remind you that the registration for the special session was closed yesterday at 6 pm. I would like to thank you all for your contributions to our work today. I would therefore like to adjourn this session. Thank you very much.

► Thursday, 6 June 2024: Special sitting on the appendix to the report of the Director-General concerning situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues, I call to order this special sitting of the Conference to examine the appendix to the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. To begin with I would like to make a few remarks. The sitting is held following the decision taken by the Governing Body at the 350th Session in March 2024 to recommend to the International Labour Conference that at its 112th Session the appendix to the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories to be discussed in the framework of a special sitting. As agreed at the March Governing Body session and reaffirmed at the opening sitting of this conference through adoption of the document ILC.112/D.1, this sitting shall be held in accordance with the same modalities and conditions as those applied in similar special sittings on the same subject in the past. The purpose of such discussion is to provide specific guidance to the office of the Director-General on appropriate follow-up actions to the findings of the report. As we have just been reminded during our commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Philadelphia, lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. In this respect, I do believe that we can contribute greatly to the elimination of suffering of the population in the occupied Arab territories and its impact in the region and that our discussion might facilitate the efforts of the international community to provide concrete assistance to the people concerned. I am fully aware of the sensitivity of today's debate in light of the tragic events in Gaza. In order to exchange our views openly and constructively, I invite all speakers to abide by parliamentary language and avoid comments or attacks of a personal nature. Our aim must be to identify measures that may assist the workers and businesses concerned. Thank you for your understanding. I strongly believe you can have strong opinions but still follow the rules. I would like also to inform the Conference of certain arrangements concerning the sitting which are part of the prerogative of the President and of the officers of the Conference. The officers of the Conference decided to make these arrangements in the interest of consistency, objectivity and respecting the legitimate interests of all concerned. They are entirely in accordance of the decisions taken at previous special sittings and should contribute again to the success of this important undertaking. Firstly as regards to speaking times, the interventions will be limited to three minutes, three minutes, according to procedural formalities set out in the document ILC.112/D.1 approved at our opening sitting. A reminder of this time limit will be published in the daily programme. This is particularly important due to the large number of speakers who wish to be accommodated. I would therefore ask you to respect it strictly. Three minutes, no more. Secondly, concerning possible requests for a right of reply during this sitting, delegates may only avail themselves of this right of reply on a specific point in a speech in which the Government has been implicated. This right of reply may not exceed two minutes and will be granted once only at the end of the sitting. It is understood that the President may, if time permits, allow the limit of two minutes to be exceeded if the reply relates to a large number of statements but will not be multiplied by the number of statements to which the speaker interest [? 5:03] to reply. There will be no right of reply to the right of

reply. Thirdly, I would like to add that there is no necessity to stop the debate in order to request a right of reply. If a delegate feels that there is a need to respond to a particular comment, then they must inform the President of the Conference by coming to the podium or advising the clerk on the situation. The right of reply will be granted at the discretion of the President who, assisted by the clerk, will agree with the delegation concerned on the time with which the reply may be made. Fourthly, if a delegate feels that a point or order should be called with a view to ensuring respect of the standing orders or on the question on the general order, they should do so from the floor. Lastly, I wish to address the matter of non-governmental organizations which have registered for this debate but which may only speak with authorization of the officers of the Conference. My colleagues and I have agreed that, in principle, these organizations will speak at the end of the sitting in the order in which they registered and only if their speeches do not result in the special sitting lasting beyond 6.30 pm today. Before I declare the discussion open, I would like to give the floor to the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo, so that he may present the appendix to his report on the subject of the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. But before that, I once again want to urge everybody, in a world where everyone breaks the rule, let us make this effort to respect the rule and still be passionate, still disagree with each other but respect the rule. Director-General, whenever you are ready, you have the floor. Thank you.

Mr Gilbert Hounbo

Director-General of the ILO

Thank you so much, Mr President. Excellency President of the Conference, Vice-Presidents, ministers, ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, this session stems from the Governing Body's March decision recommending that the appendix to the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories be discussed at this 112th Session of the ILC. So today we gather to confront the pressing issues faced by these workers, seeking actionable solutions to enhance their conditions and uphold the principles of justice, the principles of equity and justice for all. Your insights and contributions are essential as we work toward these goals. In the wake of the horrific Hamas-led atrocities against Israel and the ensuing relentless war waged by Israel, the labour market in Gaza has literally collapsed. Today Gaza is in ruins, livelihoods are shattered and work is scarce. Labour rights have been decimated. There is a growing hardship for workers and employers. Businesses are closing and hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost. My report to this conference paints a quite distressing picture. I must confess that this has been the hardest year for Palestinian workers since 1967. Never before has the situation been this bleak. Let me recall, in the context of the ILC resolution underlying my annual report, that resolution was adopted in 1980 by the 66th International Labour Conference. The resolution expressed deep concern about the intensification of Israeli settlement policy. It emphasized the economic and social consequences of the settlements and the detrimental effect on labour rights and employment of workers of the occupied Arab territories. At the time, 44 years ago, there were about 100,000 Israeli settlers scattered around the occupied territories. Today the West Bank is host to an estimated 700,000 settlers. As my report underlines, the situation in Gaza is particularly catastrophic. The loss of Palestinian civilian life is on a scale never seen before in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Entire families have been wiped out. Children have been traumatized and injured for life. People have been denied access to the basics of human survival. Most workers and

employers have been displaced, often multiple times. Most are now homeless. Most workplaces are destroyed. The labour market, already stifled by 17 years of blockade, has largely been replaced by survival activities. The ILO estimates that more than 200,000 jobs have been lost in Gaza since October last year, representing more than two-thirds of total employment prior to October 7, 2023. Labour income losses in Gaza amount to more than USD\$3 million a day. The misery in Gaza has cast a long shadow over the West Bank, which has experienced significant knock-on effects. Access to the Israeli labour market is closed to most Palestinians, while increased settler violence and movement restrictions suffocate economic activity. The West Bank economy, including East Jerusalem, is now in deep crisis. GDP is declining rapidly. Many enterprises have reduced working hours and dismissed workers. The unemployment rate has more than doubled, from 12.9% in the third quarter of 2023 to 27% by the end of 2023. Labour force participation declined considerably as many job seekers became discouraged and left the labour market altogether. Work in Israel used to be a lifeline for many Palestinians, yet daily access to Israel via the checkpoints and crossings was fraught with long and arduous commutes. Since October last year only a very limited few have access to Israel. As described in previous reports to the Conference, the number of Palestinian workers employed in Israel and the settlements has steadily increased over the years. However, working conditions for Palestinian workers in Israel remain of concern. The work permit regime and the associated brokers' practice need to be reformed. Meanwhile, in the occupied Syrian Golan, also in sight and hearing of hostilities in the last month, there is a continuing sense of unequal treatment as the traditional ways of life and work are threatened by increasing numbers of Israeli settlers. The labour market of the Syrian citizens of the occupied Golan is in rapid transition towards non-agricultural activities. Excellencies, in these dark times there have been strong calls on the ILO to step up to the many challenges on the ground. It is clear that there is an important and highly valued role for the ILO, for the ILO's expertise and the rights-based approach. This year my report includes recommendations in its final chapter. Among other things, I emphasize the need to plan for a job-rich and rights-driven early recovery while the humanitarian response is still unfolding. Job creation and decent work need to be put at the centre of the rebuilding of infrastructure and services. In parallel, social protection initiatives will need to quickly be expanded. Social dialogue will be vital in planning and implementing measures for recovery and resilience. Labour rights must be upheld. Of course, none of this will be possible, quite frankly, without an end to the current war and the release of all hostages. Excellencies, as you know, the ILO has already worked with workers' and employers' organizations to provide emergency relief and continues to review and report on the labour market situation. I wish to reiterate that we stand ready to work with all parties in a tripartite manner to pave the way in contributing towards a solid recovery. Our Emergency Recovery Programme for the Occupied Palestinian Territory provides a phased and multi-layered framework based on Recommendation 205. It requires more external financial support. Finally, I strongly believe that even in the short-term there is a way for Palestinian daily workers in Israel to resume their work. The conclusion of a prompt agreement authorizing such action could be, in my humble opinion, a major step forward. Social justice is the way out of the interlinked crises affecting the occupied Arab territories. It is a call for action to all of us, individually and collectively. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Thank you, Director-General. I now declare open the discussion of the appendix to the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. I begin by giving the floor to the distinguished representative from Palestine, Mrs Dahadha, Minister of Labour. Please, madam, take the floor.

Ms Enas Dahadha

Government (Palestine)

Your Excellency President of the Conference, Excellencies Vice-Presidents, ladies and gentlemen, I address myself to each of you and I bring you our greetings. At the outset, on behalf of the three constituents of the production process in Palestine, we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for his continued commitment to send the fact-finding mission to Palestine and the occupied Arab territories and as well as the preparation of the appendix to the annual report on the situation of Arab workers in Palestine. We would also like to thank the Governing Body of the ILO for allocating this special sitting to discuss the annex to the Report of the Director-General. Ladies and gentlemen, for around 40 years the Director-General of the Organization has sent a fact-finding mission to find out what the situation is for the Palestinian workers and the workers in the other occupied Arab territories. And the report, over a number of years, has become a historic document that records the facts unfolding on the ground. But that report has not been transformed into work plans or mechanisms that could be implemented. And therefore the Palestinian economy remained hostage to the policies of occupation, and the indicators of the labour market shows us how deep the crisis is for our workers. Over a number of years the workers of Palestine, those who work inside the Israeli labour market, have been the victims of great violations of their rights and the violations of international labour standards, even Israeli labour standards, until this very day. The Palestinian worker loses three or four hours of his work day just to be able to go through the various checkpoints and the gates and the humiliating checkpoints and inspection points to reach his place of work. Our workers in Palestine continue to work under circumstances and under work conditions that are indecent. These lack the conditions for occupational safety and health. The places of work in Israel have become like a death trap for our workers, and our workers continue paying one-third of the national income to the brokers of permits who work under the supervision of the occupation State. Not only that, the workers in Palestine do not receive wages equal to those of the Israelis, nor do they receive the compensation for extra hours. And still the occupation authorities continue to withhold the rights of thousands of workers since 1970. Ladies and gentlemen, the report by the Director-General this year comes after long months of the war of genocide that is launched by the occupation army against our Palestinian people. The report has shown the reality through an oblique and tragic picture of the devastated Palestinian economy. It reflects indicators of the labour market that have no parallel in the whole world. The DG in his introduction to the report indicated "social justice will never take place under occupation, and the occupation must come to an end". Yes, the occupation has got to end, and our people and the whole of the free world say yes, the occupation has to come to an end. Ladies and gentlemen, the Director-General did well when he appended to the report his recommendations and his final conclusions,

and that which we call for to be translated into practical steps in reality through programmes and through urgent interventions that are necessary to put an end to the haemorrhage and in order to extend relief and to start economic recovery. Especially that the war of genocide that is launched by the occupation army for more than eight months now has left an economy which has nearly collapsed. Ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to enter into the details of the economic situation in Palestine and how that has been reflected on the indicators of the labour market. The Report of the Director-General accurately describes all of that. We in Palestine, as the three constituents of the production process, look forward. First of all, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour of Palestine, we call for the continued discussion of the DG's report annually in the ILC and also to underline the follow-up of the recommendations by the Director-General and also to coordinate for ensuring the review of these through a specialized technical committee. Second, we call for underlying the presentation of a paper that shows the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations, and that through the Governing Body's meetings. Third, we call for the ILO to form a committee to put an end to Israeli practices against our workers, and that to be addressed to the Israeli employers. In particular freedom of movement and safe arrival at their places of work and also to stop the phenomenon of the brokers of permits in order to enable our workers to work in decent conditions. Fourth, to work to compel Israel to recognize the rights of the Palestinian workers that have accrued and accumulated since 1970 and to transfer the funds to the beneficiaries according to the agreements concluded between the two sides. Five, Israel has violated all international conventions by adopting collective punitive measures against our workers, those who are expelled from their places of work and whose benefits have been confiscated as well as their wages. And here once again we would like to underline the right of our workers to their wages and to compensation for the unemployment resulting from measures adopted by Israel. Sixth, to work for compelling Israel to transfer the netting funds to the Palestinian Authority because the continued utilization of those funds for political reasons affects the wages of the state officials as well as the benefits accruing to the private sector in Palestine. The state officials have not received their wages for more than two years or have received reduced wages, so 150,000 of those workers have not received their wages. Seventh, we call for supporting the fund for workers and employers of Palestine, those who have been affected because of the war against Palestine, and which was established on the basis of the Arab Labour Organization decision. This support is necessary, urgently so, in order to ensure funds and income for thousands of Palestinians, and this through a number of sustained projects and programmes in the service of our workers and our employers, in particular for small businesses and SMEs. Ladies and gentlemen, let us work together to give the workers of Palestine hope. It is time for us to act. It is time for us to act so that the ILO would speak to put an end to all the violations against their workers. It is time to act to find the mechanism that gives urgent support to our workers and that contributes to sustained income for them. Now is the time to act to revive our devastated economy through the recommendations of the ILO that is capable of doing so. I bring you my greetings once again. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Hassan Mohamed Hassan Shehata

Government (Egypt on behalf of the Arab group)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Mr President, I am speaking on behalf of the Arab group and making this statement in that capacity. I would like to

begin by extending thanks to the Director-General for his report. Mr President, this special sitting is being held at a time when an unprecedented and ignoble humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes in the Gaza Strip because the illegal occupation and brutal aggression against the people of Gaza is being continued by the occupying forces, the Israeli forces. We have seen bombing, killing. We have seen the use of weapons that are prohibited internationally against the Palestinian people, against Palestinian workers. We have seen destruction of infrastructure. We have seen the forced displacement of a million Palestinians who are today IDPs. The occupying power has also hindered access for humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. That is the backdrop against which we look at this report, and this report gives us a very clear picture of the tragic situation today for workers in the occupied Arab territories and in Palestinian territory. This is the most difficult time for Palestinian workers since the beginning of the occupation. We see that the violation of workers' rights is continuing. The violation of the rights of workers in the occupied Arab territories. The employment market has collapsed. The labour market has collapsed. We have seen unprecedented levels of unemployment. We have seen that infrastructures have been devastated and it would cost around \$20 million to rebuild them. We have seen the impact of all of this on the life of people in the Gaza Strip. We have also seen that 300,000 jobs have simply been lost. We have seen that workers cannot move around. We have seen the problems they have, for instance on construction sites in Israel. We have seen also that there have been huge numbers of deaths and the number of fatalities has increased by 33%. As well as that, in the West Bank we have seen that settlements have been extended and this illegal occupation there is continuing. We denounce this barbaric war against people in the Gaza Strip. We denounce all of these crimes against international law. We call upon the Israeli powers to accept a mission from the ILO, and we call upon the ILO to encourage Israel, indeed, to oblige Israel to respect its obligations in accordance with the ILO's mandate. We would call for the supervisory mechanisms and the ILO to oblige Israel to respect its obligations vis-à-vis Palestinian workers and workers in the occupied Arab territories. We call for respect for fundamental labour Conventions, in particular Convention 111 on discrimination and also 155 and 157. Further, we call for compensation to be paid to all Palestinian workers whose work permits were simply cancelled overnight in an arbitrary fashion. They have to be compensated for all of the damage that they have suffered as a result of this and as a result of the ill treatment to which they have been subjected. Assistance is also needed in the West Bank for 5,000 people whose homes have been destroyed, and we need to help all of those whose lives have been destroyed, whose families are suffering as a result of the war in the occupied Arab territories. We need to help all of our constituents in these territories. The aggression needs to come to an end. We need to focus on cooperation with international donors and backers in order to rebuild what has been destroyed. Further, Israel needs to release the tax revenue that is still being withheld and that is preventing the authorities in the Gaza Strip and in the occupied territories from fulfilling their obligations, from paying salaries and wages, because they are simply not being given the money that they deserve, the money that is being withheld from them. We would encourage the ILO to do everything that it can in ensuring that recommendations are indeed put into effect. We also think we have to look at the status of Palestine in accordance with resolutions adopted by the UNGA here within the ILO. And we call upon the ILO to respect international law and to put into practice decisions from the ICJ, from the UN Security Council and others. We need to guarantee the rights of Arab workers without any hindrance and in order to ensure that they can enjoy their rights to the full. Thank you.

Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve

Government (Belgium on behalf of the EU and its Member States)

Mr President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Ukraine, as well as the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement. We thank the Director-General for the report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. The EU and its Member States are deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and its disproportionate effect on civilians, particularly children, as well as the imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza. We are appalled by the unprecedented loss of civilian lives. We commit to work with partners to end the crisis in Gaza without delay and implement Security Council resolution 2728, including through reaching an immediate ceasefire and unconditional and immediate release of all hostages as well as providing full, rapid, safe, unhindered access to humanitarian aid at scale for Palestinians in need. We recall our previous conclusions condemning Hamas in the strongest possible terms for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attack across Israel on 7 October last year, recognizing Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law and calling for the immediate release of all hostage without any precondition. All parties must respect international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We also stress the importance of respecting and implementing the orders of the International Court of Justice which are legally binding. We recall that the EU urged the Israeli Government not to undertake a ground operation in Rafah which would worsen the already catastrophic humanitarian situation and prevent the urgently needed provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance. The EU remains firmly committed to a lasting and sustainable peace based on the two-state solution. Palestinians and Israelis have an equal right to live in safety, dignity and peace. With regard to the ILO three-phase emergency response programme, which was developed to alleviate the impact of the ongoing conflict on Palestinian workers and employers, we support its continued implementation in cooperation with the other UN entities and other international organizations. Aid needs to reach those in need in a safe manner and through all necessary means. The EU has already quadrupled its humanitarian assistance to Gaza and continues to provide support to the Palestinian Authority, including through the EU's PEGASE programme with a view to contributing to the fulfilment of social rights. I thank you.

Mr Chaudhry Salik Hussain

Government (Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Mr President, Director-General, Excellencies, honourable delegates, ladies and gentlemen, assalamu alaikum. I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Despite our commitment to social justice, we must acknowledge our collective failure to uphold the ideals of the Declaration of Philadelphia on the 80th anniversary. The situation in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in Palestine, represents a failure of the multilateral system at large. Our initial mission was to improve the working conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but our focus has shifted to saving lives, especially those of women and children. Moving from providing humanitarian aid to fostering economic

recovery has proven to be a difficult process. The recent attack on Rafah underscores the dire situation highlighted in the Director-General's report. Gaza lies in ruins, and the effects of the occupation in the West Bank are deepening, leading to mobility restrictions, business closures and widespread unemployment. These issues are intensified by the loss of Palestinian employment opportunities in Israel. Those who are employed often receive partial payment, particularly in the public sector, and the public fiscal space is exhausted, with opportunities for decent work diminishing. More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, including women and children, with over 7,000 missing or trapped under rubble and more than 77,000 injured. Nearly 14,000 children have lost their lives and many others are suffering from injuries and trauma. Approximately 1.7 million people, comprising three-quarters of Gaza's population, have been internally displaced. Gaza's unemployment rate has reached 45%, which is more than three times that of the West Bank. This rate is particularly high among women and youth, indicating dire livelihood struggles and economic collapse. The UN's food security agency has projected famine in northern Gaza with the entire population surpassing acute food insecurity thresholds and 1.1 million facing catastrophic hunger. The recent violence in Gaza has caused an almost 80% plunge in GDP during the fourth quarter of 2023 with widespread destruction, crippling business and agriculture, leaving the population dependent on aid. Daily economic losses across the Occupied Palestinian Territory reached nearly \$19 million. The total daily labour income loss in Gaza is estimated at \$4.1 million due to job losses, partial payment of public sector salaries and reduced private sector incomes, resulting in the collapse of the labour market. Despite the new Palestinian Government's focus on economic recovery, ongoing conflict and infrastructure damage present significant hurdles to effective labour governance. The condition of workers in the occupied Syrian Golan is also very worrying. They encounter comparable challenges arising from the occupation and conflict, experiencing restricted access to jobs and vital services. The economic and social circumstances in the Golan are severe, prompting an immediate call for international attention and intervention. The OIC calls for an immediate ceasefire and the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. It is imperative to develop a comprehensive recovery and reconstruction plan that addresses the root causes of the conflict and promotes long-term peace and stability in the region. This plan must include sustainable international support and a commitment to rebuilding the Palestinian economy and labour market. We take this opportunity to convey our deep appreciation for the continued efforts and important initiatives taken by the ILO to support workers and mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis being faced in Gaza and the West Bank. Mr President, the OIC group calls upon the international community to urgently address the crisis faced by workers in the occupied Arab territories. Immediate action is needed to alleviate suffering, support recovery and rebuild. By working together with sustained efforts we can bring dignity, stability and prosperity to those affected by this prolonged conflict. The OIC stands in solidarity with the workers and reaffirms its commitment to advocating for their rights and well-being, aiming for lasting peace and development in the region. Thank you.

Ms Sheikha Najwa Al Thani

Government (Qatar)

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. President, Your Excellencies, delegates, may God's peace be upon you. Qatar supports the declaration from the Arab group. We would like to thank the administration for the decision that was made during the 350th Session and for creating a special session in order to discuss the situation with

regard to workers in the occupied Arab territories rather than discussing this along the sidelines of the rest of the Conference, and we hope that this continues into the future. We would like to thank the Director-General and the members of the mission for the information that they have provided and that they have included in this report, which is a reflection of the catastrophic humanitarian system with regard to Palestinian workers and all Palestinian people on the Gaza Strip because of the ignoble war that has been launched by the Israeli forces against the brothers and sisters in Gaza since October, the humanitarian losses that have been sustained among citizens and the people who have been killed, wounded or have disappeared. And this includes children and women. We know very well that more than one million Palestinians have been forcibly displaced. We have also seen widespread destruction on an unprecedented scale that has not been seen since the Second World War. We know that human and material losses as well have been exacerbated as the war has gone on. The humanitarian situation is becoming worse and worse. This has caused the involuntary destruction of essential infrastructure as well, whilst targeting healthcare structures and humanitarian personnel. We know very well that those living in Gaza and Rafah, including workers and their families, are dealing with food insecurity at the moment. They lack essential services such as electricity, and humanitarian aid cannot get to them. The report shows that the economic and social situation is disastrous as well as the unemployment levels which are reaching the highest levels ever seen in Gaza. The report also shows that Israel is violating the rights of Palestinian workers by placing restrictions on worker mobility which also then conditions health and safety in the workplace. President, we call upon you to include the recommendations that the Arab group has issued. And we condemn forcefully this barbaric action from Israel which continues against citizens and using arms against families which have been internationally prohibited against the people of Palestine. We ask for measures to be taken to assist the over 5,000 workers in Gaza who have been left homeless and without work. Humanitarian aid must be provided on an urgent basis for the tripartite mandate in the Gaza Strip. We also call upon the social partners and the Member States to use all mechanisms required to exert pressure on Israel to ensure that Israel honours its international obligations with regard to Palestinians on behalf of international law and international humanitarian law and also whilst respecting the fundamental labour Conventions. We call upon you to implement the supervisory mechanism as well in order to supervise and ensure that fundamental Conventions are respected with regard to Palestinians and for Israel to honour its obligations on Convention 111, inter alia. Thank you very much, President.

Mr Ahmed Al-Asadi

Government (Iraq)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Mr President, Vice-Presidents, ladies and gentlemen, peace be upon you. Iraq would like to extend its thanks to the DG for the updated report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories and which exposes the criminal acts of the occupying power and how these affect the lives of people and their livelihood, and that through the acts of killing and destruction, brutal and unknown in history before. All of this has led to the loss of work opportunities, mass migration, mass killings, hunger and the transformation of the places of work into rubble, as well as the deterioration of the economic and social situation and rising unemployment in the Gaza Strip and other Palestinian cities. More than 200,000 jobs have been lost in the West Bank in only a few months because of the stifling measures. And this occupation is now into its 75th year. The ILO has continued

asking for access to be given to the mission to report, but all of that is ignored. In this respect, Iraq would like to condemn in the strongest of terms the brutal attack on the Gaza Strip, and we denounce all the crimes that are perpetrated by the occupation authorities. Crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, the strikes, the ethnic cleansing, the utilization of internationally prohibited weapons against the people and the workers of Palestine, all of that has left 125,000 victims. Some have died and some are gravely wounded, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. The inhabitants of Gaza continue to be displaced and the infrastructure continues to be destroyed, including schools, medical facilities, water networks, banks and installations. All of that has deprived also the workers inside the Green Line of their rights. According to the system of compensation, we call upon the Director-General to bring pressure to bear in order to release the funds held. We welcome the ICJ decisions to halt the attack and to put an end to the operation in Rafah, invoking the Convention against genocide. We underline the importance of the protection of civilians and we support the DG in his report who calls for putting an end to occupation because it threatens social justice. And we call upon the three constituents to bring pressure to bear upon the occupation authority to cease fire immediately and to stop the carnage against the Palestinians and to open the way before humanitarian aid to allow the basic services to be extended. Diseases are rampant as well as poverty and hunger because of the continued operation by the occupation authorities and the military incursions. We call for the release of the netting funds to the Palestinian Authority and the implementation of the ILO standards to the workers of Palestine like other workers inside the occupied territories. Also, we call for supporting the Palestinian employment fund and call upon the ILO to take the necessary measures to extend urgent assistance to improve the situation of workers and the three constituents in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We commend all the efforts made by the ILO to support the labour market and to strengthen social protection through the Decent Work Programme. We also underline the importance of the ILO cooperation programme for development in the occupied territories. And we thank all those States that have participated in supporting the Palestinian territories and we call upon others to do the same. We also call upon the ILO to formulate a strategy to address the continued crisis faced by the social partners in Gaza and the West Bank and the other occupied Palestinian territories and to also present a detailed follow-up report to the Governing Body and to the next ILC on the response of the Organization to the consequences of the attacks on the world of work. Iraq also calls for a report on how to respond to the violations cited in the Report of the Director-General. I thank you, sir.

Mr Vedat Işıkhan

Government (Türkiye)

Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Esteemed Chair, distinguished ministers and heads of delegations, I commend the Director-General of the ILO for convening this crucial special sitting on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. Since October 7, Israel's relentless occupation and aggression has resulted in the loss of innocent lives. Over 15,000 children have perished, 35,000 Palestinians have been killed, 80,000 wounded and two million displaced. The most brutal massacre in human history continues in Gaza. Gaza's economy and labour market have collapsed with widespread unemployment and destruction of infrastructure. The targeting of journalists, UN personnel and humanitarian aid workers also showcases the brutality unleashed upon Gaza. The international community's silence and inaction are a clear indication of the failure of the international system. Distinguished participants, Türkiye

has consistently stood in solidarity with the Palestinian people, working tirelessly to stop the bloodshed in Gaza and counter Israeli aggression. Under the strong and visionary leadership of our esteemed President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye is a leading provider of humanitarian aid to Gaza, delivering 54,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Gaza. The international community can only repay its debt to the Palestinian people by establishing an independent sovereign and [vgr INAUDIBLE 58:36] integral state of Palestine with its capital in East Jerusalem based on the 1967 borders. We commend nations that show solidarity with the Palestinian people and take decisive actions. The recent UN General Assembly resolution and global student reactions indicate growing support for Palestinian rights. Hospitals rendering healthcare services, universities, schools, public service buildings have been bombed in Gaza. What else is a way to speak up and react against? Due to the massacre it commits, Israel has become a burden impossible to be shouldered by the world. It will be impossible to speak of human rights, rights of labour and humanity unless Israel is stopped. Taking this opportunity, we urge labour and employer organizations, international unions, to make another forceful call for immediate ceasefire, humanitarian aid boycott and strike. Let me quote [vgr INAUDIBLE 60:01], "History is shaped by Allah. What we do is only to decide where to stand." I call upon the ILO and all nations to take immediate and [vgr INAUDIBLE 60:17] actions to end this human tragedy. I call on all conscious people across the globe, and labour and employer organizations, to stand with the people of Palestine. Thank you very much. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Ms Catelene Passchier

Chairperson, Workers' group

Excellencies and delegates, I stand before you today with a profound sense of urgency and responsibility. We thank the Director-General and his team for providing us with an excellent report highlighting the devastating impact of the ongoing conflict and occupation on Palestinian workers, underscoring the critical need for international solidarity and intervention. We urge the international community, with the ILO's guidance and support, to provide immediate and substantial assistance to Palestinian workers, women and men and their families. We echo several critical calls to action to provide for, one, humanitarian corridors allowing immediate and sufficient aid without any obstruction. Two, an immediate and permanent ceasefire and full respect for international humanitarian law. Three, the release of all hostages and others held without due judicial process. Four, all workers, including migrant workers, currently trapped due to the conflict to be free to return to their homes. And five, continued funding of the UN Relief and Works Agency without any restraint. Furthermore, we have joined the call on the UN to recognize a Palestinian State in line with our longstanding support for a two-state solution. This is crucial for the long-term peace and stability of the region. As a matter of urgency, the Governing Body of the ILO must discuss and adopt measures to align the status and participation of Palestine in the ILO to recent developments in the UN and WHO, granting Palestine a status equal to that of a full member. Ladies and gentlemen, the Director-General and his team have provided us with this excellent report and we strongly support its conclusions and recommendations. We emphasize the following points. Indeed, the occupation must end and initiatives fostered towards a fully independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian state. But this must also mean an immediate end to and dismantling of the illegal settlements which are eating increasingly big chunks out of the Palestinian territories and are an obstacle to any autonomous, politically and economically viable

development. Also, a sovereign Palestinian State must be a democratic State. Trade unions are an essential element of any democracy, rooted in communities and workplaces and well equipped to provide concrete support during crises as well as reconstruction. Strong and democratic independent unions participating actively in social dialogue are a key building block towards a more sustainable future in Palestine. We must continue to invest in a constructive dialogue with trade unions in both Palestine and Israel, recognizing their critical role in their respective societies. The DG's report calls for a strengthening of the productive base of the Palestinian economy. We propose to invest first and foremost in rebuilding critical infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank with a focus on sustainable job opportunities to restore basic services and support economic recovery. Comprehensive non-contributory social protection programmes must be developed, including cash transfer programmes, unemployment benefits and social security systems to ensure a safety net for all workers and provide immediate relief and long-term stability for Palestinian families. We call once again for the protection of labour rights, ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions and elimination of exploitative practices. Palestinian workers must be treated with dignity and respect with their rights upheld and the international labour standards, wherever they perform their work: in the occupied territories, the settlements or Israel. This starts with providing compensation for lost wages to the almost 200,000 Palestinian workers that were dismissed from their jobs in Israel following the 7th of October disaster. If and when Israel will open again its labour market for Palestinian workers, some strong concerns expressed in previous DG reports must be urgently and proactively addressed and resolved. The abusive practices of labour brokers, the economic and social costs of time spent at border crossings, the high risks of work-related accidents, and last but not least, the millions of shekels contributed over decades by Palestinian workers to the Israeli social security and pension system must now finally be transferred to them in line with the Paris Protocol of 1994 which is 30 years ago. To conclude, we stand in unwavering solidarity with Palestinian workers and their families. The ILO's role is crucial in paving the way for a future of justice, peace and prosperity, and we urge the international community to join us in providing the necessary resources and political will to make this vision a reality. We expect this to be addressed again as a matter of urgency in the next meeting of the Governing Body on the 15th of June with a view to agree on further action. Because this must be our promise to the children of Gaza, desperately hiding from violence and destruction in their makeshift tents with no safe place to go, no food in their stomachs, sometimes even without parents or relatives to protect them. They are human beings like all of us and they deserve a better future. And it is our joint duty and responsibility to make this come true. Thank you.

Ms Renate Hornung-Draus

Chairperson, Employers' group

Thank you, Chair. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Employers' group I thank the Director-General for this important report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We would like to reiterate from the very onset that we stand in unwavering solidarity with all the victims of this devastating crisis. The ongoing conflict has led to terrible and unacceptable violations of human rights faced by the region's inhabitants. We are profoundly saddened and concerned by the scenes of devastation, with families torn apart, communities in ruins and lives shattered by relentless violence. As highlighted in the report, the recent escalation of violence has had catastrophic consequences. Among them, employers and workers in the West Bank,

Gaza and the occupied Syrian Golan face severe tribulations, with entire communities pushed to the brink. Families are plunged into poverty and despair, especially the youth who are left without jobs, education or training. The expansion of settlements and demolition of homes have displaced thousands, creating a humanitarian crisis. In Gaza workplace destruction has forced many into informal labour, and this is severely impacting in particular women with over 90% of the female-employing businesses shut down. These problems are exacerbated by restrictions on movement, lack of access to resources and economic opportunities, which are all well documented and require urgent and effective resolution. In light of this, the Employers' group strongly supports the Director-General's recommendations emphasizing the need for immediate humanitarian aid, an enabling environment and support for small and medium-sized enterprises to enable a job-rich recovery, expanded social protection programmes and, last not least, initiatives on education and skills development to address the immediate humanitarian crisis and also the long-term effects in Gaza and the West Bank. The Director-General's report proposes strong and concrete recommendations for addressing the challenges arising from the conflict and fostering economic recovery in the region. However, it is crucial to underscore that the effectiveness of the ILO during this crisis will hinge on its ability to fully implement the emergency response plan which was initiated during the Governing Body session, which decided in November 2023, and which aims to mitigate the impact of the war on Palestinian workers and employers. Thus far the emergency plan has been sustained using the ILO's reallocated internal resources. As we look ahead to the full transition into the recovery phase, the timing of which remains of course uncertain given the persisting violence and destruction, another significant challenge emerges: the ambiguity surrounding the mobilization of resources to fund the required USD\$20 million budget. This concern was explicitly raised by the Employers' group during the Governing Body meeting of March 2024, emphasizing the lack of new funding since the ILO's call for funds in November 2023. We believe that more proactive measures are necessary to secure the funds needed for the full and effective implementation of this programme as soon as the situation allows. We have noted that a special meeting on resource mobilization with development partners will take place next Monday, on 10th of June. It is imperative that this should be an opportunity that is not missed to clarify where the ILO stands in terms of mobilization and strategy and to develop more concrete solutions to secure the necessary funds. To conclude, the Employers' group reaffirms its unwavering support and urgently calls for strengthened international cooperation to put an end to this catastrophic situation. It is crucial that we unite our efforts to build resilience among the inhabitants of the region, creating pathways to peace, sustainable development and better livelihoods for all. We once again express our profound solidarity with the people of the region. We stand with them in their struggle and their hope for a better future. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Abdulghani Bakur Alsayegh

Employer (Saudi Arabia)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. President, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, heads of delegations, members of delegations, may the peace of God be upon you all. The Director-General of the ILO, in the preface to his report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, states that even before the war it was difficult for the people of Palestine to find employment, and jobs in the occupied territories were extremely scarce. Now the job market has totally collapsed. We see colossal devastation, huge displacement of people, and the rights of workers have been

simply ignored. They just do not exist. And we know that suffering is continuing. It goes on day by day. As we are reading this report to the ILC, calls for a lasting peace still remain a dead letter. And I thank you for those clear comments in your introduction, Director-General. It is true that things were not wonderful in the past, but what is happening now is dreadful. It is worse than any of us could ever have imagined. What is happening now violates all standards, all norms, all principles, all values. We are today at a crucial moment for this organization, indeed for the world as a whole. We have to preserve our values in the light of this situation. It is essential that the ILO plays its rightful role by granting to Palestine status of full membership of this organization. Further, it is important that the Director-General's report be even more explicit as to where we go from here, as to what the next steps are, as to how we put all of the recommendations into practice. Unless we do that, we will not make progress. And we stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine. We know that the Committee of Experts and the CAS need to look at the situation of the labour market in Palestine in greater depth. The Committee of Experts needs to look at all of the violations that have been committed against all of those who have been involved in the labour market. It needs to look at what has happened. Look at the fact that women and children have been killed. And people in Palestine are no longer talking about justice. They are just talking about survival. And we have to understand what is really happening there and the difference between people looking for a job or simply looking to survive. And today that is the choice people have. They can either work or they can survive, and that is the reality for many people in the occupied Arab territories today. In conclusion, I want to thank you for having held this special sitting on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, and it is our hope that this sitting will allow us to preserve life, the most precious thing that we have. Thank you.

Ms Ida Fauziyah

Government (Indonesia)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Chair, Indonesia thanks the Director-General for his report on this agenda item. The report has aptly captured the scale of destruction in Gaza and the misery of Palestinian people. At this opportunity I would like to express my deep sorrow upon learning about the tragic events that have recently affected Rafah, Gaza. On behalf of the Government of Indonesia, I extend heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families during this incredibly difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost loved ones and [vgr INAUDIBLE 78:52] individual and recognition of Palestine. We must also continue the push for a meaningful peace process under the UN. There is no other alternative to create peace other than realizing Palestinian statehood. At the same time we all must uphold international law, including humanitarian and human rights laws to ensure the protection of civilians of the occupied territories. The International Labour Organization should leverage the recent global acknowledgement of the Palestinians involved and alignment with the United Nations and the World Health Organization. It is crucial to utilize this momentum to join the international community in supporting Palestine. Third, ensuring the success of the ILO's recovery and reconstruction piece [? 79:55], we acknowledge the importance of the Palestinian National Employment Strategy for 2021-2025, created in collaboration with the ILO. This strategy aligns with decent work opportunities, social protection and enhanced labour market governance. We urge the expansion of social protection measures and support for jobless workers and war victims in the occupied territories. We encourage the ILO to team up with other

UN bodies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, to ensure targeted deliverance of aid and development programmes. To conclude, we must work persistently together to Israel atrocities and give the Palestinian workers and people, they deserve justice. I thank you. Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Mr Steinar Krogstad

Worker (Norway)

First I would like to thank the Director-General for organizing this session and presenting a well-researched report, despite Israel's refusal to grant access to document the situation. For over 44 years the ILO has detailed the impact of the Israeli occupation on labour rights. Never has the situation been worse. We are witnessing a catastrophe. Nearly 40,000 people have been killed and over 80,000 injured. More than half a million jobs have been lost. The psychological and physical traumas will leave lasting scars. In the West Bank there are almost daily incursions by the Israeli army into refugees camps and frequent raids in urban centres like Ramallah, Hebron and Jericho. Since October Israel has demolished or confiscated over 900 Palestinian structures, displacing over 2,000 people. Illegal settlements are expanding and violence from settlers and the Israeli army is increasing. We need a ceasefire now. Gaza is in ruins with no functional labour market. The private sector in the West Bank is reeling. Before the war in Gaza around 180,000 Palestinians worked in Israel. Now only a fraction still have jobs. Social security coverage in Palestine is limited, covering less than 40% of the population. UN Member States have now disbursed only 31% of the amount requested to meet the most critical needs in Palestine. More aid is urgently needed. Clearance revenues constitute two-thirds of the Palestinian Authority's revenues. Since October Israel has been deducting almost three-quarters of these revenues, forcing the Palestinian Authority to reduce payment to civil servants to 50 to 65% of their salaries and delay disbursements. We must address Israel's illegal withholding of Palestinian tax revenues, a critical issue highlighted in Point 62 of the report. While I acknowledge the Director-General's recommendation, it is evident that Israel shows no willingness to voluntarily comply with the ILO's demands. Therefore, I call upon the ILO and its members to hold Israel accountable according to international standards by implementing concrete measures. Israel cannot have veto rights over Palestinian self-determination. We are proud that Norway has recognized Palestine as a State. Palestinians must have the opportunity to develop their own economy without restriction, including free access to resources, trade and investment. Let us implement the necessary actions to ensure compliance with international standards and safeguard the rights and dignity of these workers. Thank you.

Mr Mohammed Shaher Saed

Worker (Palestine)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Excellency President of the Conference, members of the bureau, Excellency DG. At the outset, we would like to address to you our greetings and appreciation. We address these to his Excellency the DG and his team and to your offices in Beirut and in Al-Quds Jerusalem. Today I stand here before you, and from this podium I bring you the greetings of the children of Palestine and Gaza, the women and the workers of Palestine and of Gaza. I stand here before you as we discuss the report submitted to the 112th ILC, and we hope that from

this session we will reach recommendations and measures that would assist the DG in formulating measures capable of putting an end to the occupation, the occupation that continues to perpetrate those crimes. Our brothers and sisters, for eight months now the people of Palestine and the workers of Palestine have been the victims of a vicious genocide, and that under the very eyes of the world, genocide perpetrated by the occupation army and the war government of Israel. The haemorrhage has not stopped for the past eight months in Gaza. Women, elderly people, children and doctors have been killed, and this haemorrhage continues to leave its imprint on the minds of humanity for the past eight months. I do not want to delve into the details on the background of this war of genocide that has led to the killing and the destruction and the displacement of people. Mosques, churches, houses, schools, hospitals have been demolished, have been destroyed, and the list continues. And our people in Gaza are suffering starvation and health catastrophes. Hospitals and schools and shelters remain without water and without electricity. And in the West Bank there are hundreds of military checkpoints that continue to humiliate the people of Palestine and punish the Palestinians, and also there are the attacks by the settlers under the protection of the Israeli army. Those who live in our occupied land being protected by the Israeli army. And this is what you see in the report submitted by the DG. And the office of the ILO in Jerusalem knows of all of the details. Brothers and sisters, the workers in Palestine cannot go to their places of work because of the acts of the Israeli army. 225,000 used to work inside Israel, and now 120,000 of those workers are without jobs. Long distances and checkpoints are the characteristics of this occupation, obstructing the workers from reaching their places of work. Brothers and sisters, this fascist occupation is lawless. Your laws, your Constitution, the Declaration of Philadelphia, the principles of decent work, the Fourth Geneva Convention are all trampled as well as the Forced Labour Convention. All of these are trampled as the children of Palestine are being trampled and as the innocent people are trampled under the acts of the Israeli army. Our situation is catastrophic. This war has left 500,000 people without jobs for eight months now, and the war government in Israel is the one that bears the legal responsibility on the obstruction of access by workers to their places of work. The war has many facets. Apart from the destruction of the Palestinian people and the displacement, this is our land. In it our grandparents and our grandchildren were born. It is our land and we shall remain steadfast, regardless of the acts with all the world sometimes overlooking those crimes. I would also like to add that thousands have been arrested and have been detained, and until now many of them are still in Israeli prisons. Brothers and sisters, since the occupation of the Palestinian territory in 1967 successive governments of Israel have been controlling the economy of Palestine and forcing us to employ 20 to 25% of our workers inside what is called the Israeli entity. This is not because we want it. This is because we are obliged. And therefore we call upon you to ensure a complete ceasefire and to ensure access for humanitarian and medical aid and to work for building diverse and productive economies to strengthen the policy of employment in Palestine and to continue planning for absorbing our labour force inside the Palestinian labour market as well as to combat the systematic racist policies of Israel. Four, we call upon you to ensure the operationalization of the social security foundation for Palestinians and compel the Government of Israel to pay the allocations for the workers and to stop combatting the Government of Palestine in withholding the netting revenues that would go to pay the wages of the state officials. Most important is to put an end to this war. Finally, I would like to say, as the DG said in his report, there can be no social justice under occupation. And therefore no to occupation, down with the occupation, and yes to the State of Palestine with its capital in Holy Jerusalem. I thank you.

Mr Ali Bahreini

Government (Iran (Islamic Republic of))

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, colleagues, at the outset let me thank the Director-General and the Office for preparing the report under this urgent item which presents a picture of the deteriorating Palestinian economy and its impact on employment, social welfare and sustainable livelihoods resulting from occupation. Distinguished delegates, as the Director-General highlighted in his report, social justice and occupation are incompatible. Recent gross violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, particularly war crimes against humanity, genocide and enforced displacement committed by the regime of Israel have devastating effects on the situation of the Palestinian workers. Since 7 October 2023 the Israeli regime started a genocide in Gaza which has brought about unprecedented death and devastation in Gaza. As is stipulated in the report, prior to the war Gaza did not have many jobs to offer. Already then deprivation was dominant. Now there is little employment left to speak of. The labour market has collapsed amidst widespread destruction, displacement, killing and hunger. Labour rights have been violated. While we are attending this conference the suffering is continuing. The destruction of human and physical capital will have long-lasting effects on workers and employers in Palestine. While Gaza is in ruins, the West Bank has not been spared either. The ever deepening occupation and mobility restrictions have caused business closures and widespread unemployment. Mr Chairman, the deteriorated situation of defenceless and innocent workers and employers in Gaza requires urgent attention and action by the ILO. It is expected that the ILO, which is mandated by its constitution to protect the rights of workers and employers worldwide, takes a strong stance against this human tragedy. As has been stipulated in the report, the current crisis has exacerbated pre-existing issues and created new hurdles for the labour force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. From widespread job losses to dangerous working conditions, Palestinian workers are facing unprecedented challenges that demand urgent attention and action. The ILO is expected to raise its voice loudly and amplify the plight of the people in Gaza, especially workers and employers. The ILO should play its role in enforcing the ICJ ruling to stop the genocide in Gaza. The ILO must also take tangible supportive actions to address the basic and essential needs of affected workers and employers in Gaza. I thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr Moustafa Bayram

Government (Lebanon)

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. Ladies and gentlemen, Your Excellencies, delegates, may God's peace and blessings fall upon you. I have a number of questions for you, questions of human conscience. We are all here and we are all human beings. I have questions not slogans. I would like to speak about humanity and appeal to that part of each one of you. What do we mean by the destruction of houses and infrastructure? What do we mean by the destruction of hospitals in Gaza? What do we mean when we talk about emergencies and removing masks from the sick, the sick who are suffering and need assistance? Where is our conscience among the silence? I hope to awaken that conscience in each one of you. The occupying army must stare in the face. These soldiers from the Israeli army, they are taking photos with pride. They are taking photos of whole neighbourhoods that they have razed to the ground. That is

what is happening in Gaza today. What do we mean when we talk about the destruction of schools, factories? What do we mean when we talk about targeting, the targeting of sacks of flour and trucks carrying them when they are just trying to obtain a few humble crumbs for their survival? We see this directly. We see children, the children looking at us, staring at us from the screen. Children, all they are looking for is their mother's hand, just to find a small amount of security, this security that has been lost while the world sleeps. What does all of this mean? What does it mean that we have thousands of workers losing their jobs, whereas their infrastructure is crumbling, is razed to the ground? What does all of this mean? Are we talking about a jungle? Are we human beings? Are we in the 21st century or not? That is a question that I put to you, to each and every one of you. What do we mean when we know full well that there are two million people in Gaza, two million people living around wars. They cannot go and visit their mother living alongside. They have to undertake journeys of 20 kilometres just to hold their mothers' hands. These are human beings. This is what is happening in Palestine and Gaza. And then in Lebanon white phosphorous is being used for bombing. They have destroyed our olive orchards, our orange orchards. Whole fields have been destroyed. These bombs are raining down upon us. We are being bombarded. And it is almost used as child's play. This is what is happening before the eyes of the world. This is a plague that we are dealing with, a serious plague. The ILO as well as all other international organizations are dealing with a test. This is a test for humanity, for humanitarian victory. We have to put an end to this occupation. We have to say that an immediate end must be put to this genocide, this war of genocide and crimes against humanity. An end must be put to what is happening there. This is a real test for humanity, humanity as a whole. Are we worthy of this humanity or not? As we see today, there are no more geographical borders. We no longer have differences between us. Why? Because of human conscience. That is what unites us. It is this feeling of being human beings, what we have in common. That is the truth. The gospels say that truth sets people free. This is why it is so important for us to be on the side of justice and human beings. All of us. We have seen many, many different pictures. I saw a documentary where an animal was attacked. The animal was playing with its prey and it stopped attacking it because it saw that it was pregnant. This is the law of the jungle. In some of our societies, in Palestine and to the south of Lebanon, we see monsters, monsters attacking fetuses before attacking the mother. But light is there, the light of freedom, the light of liberation and liberty. That light is there. That light should be shone upon our children, our workers and our shared humanity. Thank you very much.

Mr Tovar da Silva Nunes

Government (Brazil)

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, allow me first to extend a warm greeting from Brazil to all of you. We would like to thank the International Labour Conference and the Director-General for the updated report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. The successive reports of the Director-General have described the impact on labour rights of a vicious cycle of occupation and conflict. After more than six months of war, Gaza is largely in ruins with little semblance of any economy or labour market remaining. The death toll is shocking. Nearly 35,000 people have already been killed, and the number of children and women killed is unprecedented. In addition to the personal and material losses, this situation is creating an enormous amount of emotional trauma and mental suffering that will last for generations. It will have an unimaginable impact on the working environment.

Equally disastrous is the effect on the economy and the labour market. Brazil deeply regrets the loss of more than 200,000 jobs in just a few months. On an annual basis the shock of the war has reduced the level of economic activity in Gaza to 75% of its pre-war level in 2019. GDP per capita in Gaza in 2023 was 40% of the level of 30 years earlier. Private sector output in Gaza fell by 85% in the first four months of the war, a loss of USD\$6.7 million per day. If reconstruction does not begin in 2024, Gaza's economy is projected to decline by more than 50% this year compared to the previous year. In the West Bank income losses are estimated at \$18 million per day. But we should not lose hope. The people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank must count on the support of the international community. As stated by President Lula, we refuse to stay indifferent to human suffering. This kind of tragedy should never be seen as normal or acceptable. Brazil supports the revised and enhanced ILO Decent Work Programme for Palestine for the period 2023-2025. We commend the work that has been done by the UN agencies, in particular by the ILO through its regional office for the Arab States, the technical assistance teams and their staff in Geneva. Brazil resonates the call of the large majority of the UN members for an immediate cessation of all hostilities and the unconditional release of all hostages. We will continue to fully engage with all ILO and UN Member States and other partners to fully support the people in the occupied Arab territories. I thank you.

Ms Yeela Cytrin

Government (Israel)

Good afternoon. It is odd that my country is the topic of discussion, yet we are not considered a concerned country for the purpose of this debate. This perhaps exemplifies the blind narrative that is prevalent here today, as if the Gaza Strip was not controlled by a savage terrorist organization that seeks to maximize the suffering of civilians in Gaza. How does this forum presume to address labour conditions in Gaza when terrorists embed their operations in hospitals, schools, UN facilities, in baby cribs? Indeed, when half the forum leaves during the discussion. When Hamas steals humanitarian aid, when it deliberately puts civilians in the line of fire, what exactly will be accomplished here today other than demonizing Israel? The discussion on labour in Gaza, in fact any discussion on Gaza without addressing Hamas terrorism is futile and quite frankly absurd. For 17 years the terrorist organization Hamas has controlled Gaza, redirecting resources meant for the Palestinian people to fuel their machinery of destruction. This terrorist organization has constructed vast networks of tunnels beneath hospitals and schools, turning civilian infrastructure into bunkers for terrorism. In doing so, they doomed any economic prospects for Gaza. There is more. The Palestinian Authority continues to blatantly misappropriate social benefits collected by Israel and transferred to them for Palestinian workers. These funds, rather than improving lives, are diverted by the Palestinian Authority to finance terrorists and their families. Their pay-for-slay policy not only depletes resources vital for economic development but actively incentivizes further violence and terror. Allegations that Israel has violated international conventions are unfounded and untrue. Israel has addressed the Director-General of the ILO directly on this matter. Prior to the massacre of October 7th, thousands of Gazans were employed in Israel, received Israeli wages. Sadly, the very crossings that facilitated the entrance of thousands of Gazans into Israel were targeted on and since October 7th, a calculated move by Hamas to obliterate this economic and humanitarian lifeline for many Palestinians. It is imperative that the International Labour Organization addresses this reality. If this organization and others continue to

remain silent on Hamas atrocities, they simply allow Hamas to perpetuate a cycle of violence that inhibits any opportunity for growth for the Palestinian people: economic, social and otherwise. Do not be mistaken, the session here today will do nothing to advance the labour conditions for the Palestinian population. The path to improving labour conditions does not lie in the delegitimization of Israel. Advancement of labour rights necessitates an honest recognition of all factors at play. Most of all the recognition that a people cannot thrive under the brutal grip of a savage terrorist organization. It also begins with the Palestinian leadership assuming responsibility for the welfare of their people. We are still waiting for the Palestinian delegation to stop representing Hamas and to begin to represent the Palestinian people, to reject terrorism and violence and offer the Palestinian people an alternative, to call for the unconditional and immediate release of our 124 hostages.

Mr Jesús Gallego García

Worker (Spain)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is not easy to take the floor at this moment in time, but I would like to start by congratulating the Director-General, Mr Hounghbo, for his bold report on the occupied Arab territories. Whilst last year the situation in the world of work was described as pure horror, the words of the Director-General this year sketch a scenario that more closely resembles hell when he states that “the labour market has collapsed against a context of widespread destruction, displacement, killing and hunger”. The report that should have been carried out on the ground by the experts from the ILO has collided against the wall of the ultra-conservative Israeli government, which has tried to prevent the ILO delegation from travelling and from collecting accounts and figures, which have now been described as gloomy today. More than two-thirds of jobs have been lost. Over 500,000 people who are unemployed need aid on an urgent basis. It is essential that they receive food and healthcare, whether this is the ILO or UNRWA. All evidence that the ultra Israeli Executive has a serious interest in vetoing any international institution from providing urgent humanitarian aid and from providing assistance to workers so that they can go back to their jobs on any one of the occupied Arab territories. Whilst the ILO Director-General said last year that there were very few reasons for optimism, today we can affirm, to our shame, that we are facing one of the greatest tragedies that the working classes have ever suffered from in the world. Ladies and gentlemen, considering that universal and lasting peace can only be established if it is based on social justice, this is how this house’s constitution begins. It is all of our house. Read in another way, eradicating any possibility of achieving social justice is making it impossible to achieve lasting peace. The two-state solution has been recognized as being fundamental when it comes to achieving lasting peace. One of the States has been recognized internationally. The other one is missing. This is why we are particularly pleased that the governments of Spain, Ireland, Norway and Slovenia have recognized Palestine as a State despite the intolerable threats and the sanctions that have been introduced by the Government of Israel which prevent workers from using our Spanish consulate in Jerusalem looking for the help that they need. I encourage other governments to do the same, to recognize Palestine as the 194th Member State and being able to take part in 2025 at this conference of the ILO as an equal, without further reports from the Director-General and also being subject to the supervisory system of the ILO. I am also happy to see that the Spanish Government has supported South Africa’s case that has been brought before the International Court of Justice. I encourage other governments to do the same. This will all depend on the Israeli

Government and international pressure being kept up so that the occupied Arab territories can speak of equality, growth and reconstruction and peace rather than destruction, collapse, violence and death. Thank you very much.

Mr Younes Firachine

Worker (Morocco)

Ladies and gentlemen, speaking on behalf of the workers of Morocco, I wish to greet you. This sitting is being held at a time when the Palestinian people are living through the indescribable suffering of genocide, a crime against humanity, something that is recognized as such by contemporary history. It is being perpetrated by the Zionist entity against the Palestinian people, and the international community is silent, which makes them complicit in the crimes being committed. Everything that is part of life, everything that the Palestinians can live by is being destroyed. They are being driven into refugee camps. All of this has been going on for eight months, but the occupation has been going on for a lot longer than that, and the occupation has continued during these dreadful eight months. We see that every red line has been crossed. Every value has been trampled upon. And we see that political, financial and military support is being given to the occupying power by its allies, and that is what is allowing it to do this. This is an unprecedented atrocity in modern history. We call here today on the occupying power to put an end to all acts of genocide against the Palestinian people. And all those supporting Israel in what it is doing today are complicit in the crimes being perpetrated. This is a truly tragic situation. The workers of Palestine are living in impossible conditions today. They have lost their jobs. They have lost their income. They have lost the minimum that they would need to survive. Many of them have lost their lives. This is not a question of workers' rights as such. It goes beyond that. It is about the right to life, the right to freedom. How can you talk about labour rights unless you talk about the most fundamental of all rights, the right to life? And the people of Palestine are being deprived of that today. We are appalled by what is happening. And if you read the report, then you get a very clear picture of what is really going on. What on earth is the point of the international community and its institutions today if the international community and its institutions are not able to put an end to this dreadful attack on the defenceless Palestinian people? What on earth is the point of the UN? What is the point of our being here if we cannot do anything, if our decisions just remain a dead letter and the crimes go on? History will judge us for what we are doing, or rather for what we are not doing, for the fact that we are standing by the wayside as men and women and children die. And the history of these days will be written in their blood because we have not been able to put an end to the genocide that is being committed against a defenceless people by the Israeli occupying forces. It is our duty to exert as much pressure as possible on all institutions within the international community to change that, to decide on tough sanctions against the Zionist entity. It is also up to us to give Palestine the status of full membership in all international organizations, including this one. Once again, we stand in total solidarity with the people of Palestine and we want to see a free and independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. That is what we call for loud and clear today.

Ms Maira Mariela Macdonal Alvarez

Government (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

Thank you very much, President. Director-General, the State of Bolivia thanks you for having drafted this report covering the situation for workers in the occupied Arab territories. We express our deep concern regarding the catastrophic situation that is currently unfolding there for Palestinian workers. This is something that we must be absolutely clear about. This situation has dramatically worsened in recent months. But this didn't start last year. It started over six decades ago with the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, with restrictions placed on people's movement, on trade and the multiple serious violations of the rights of Palestinians by the occupying forces of Israel. And we clearly see this from the report. These are scenes that we see day by day in various media. We see the numbers of dead, wounded. Almost 70% of the fatal victims are women and children. Over 7,000 people have disappeared. And more than 1.7 million people have been displaced. This is slaughter on a scale that has never been seen before. The Palestinian people are fighting for their survival in addition to the indiscriminate bombing. The people of Gaza are facing a catastrophic situation. If we look at the situation with regard to workers, businesses are closing and it is very sad to see the negative impacts of this destruction going on over time. Who are the most affected people? Women. In addition to the humanitarian tragedy, infrastructure, commerce, workshops, et cetera, they have all been destroyed as well. Now we see that this is causing so many victims. Employers and workers have fallen into poverty. The interruption of education will have particularly devastating effects for young people, boys and girls, without mentioning the psychological trauma that will mark them for the rest of their lives. Bolivia firmly condemns any attack against the civil population and we call for an immediate ceasefire and respect for international and international humanitarian law. The international community calls for stronger efforts for coming up with a solution, to have an independent and sovereign Palestinian State which is a full member of the United Nations. Bolivia thanks the ILO for the support that has been provided and reiterates its solidarity. Today, now more than ever before, we support the people of Palestine. Thank you very much.

Mr Louai Almonajed

Government (Syrian Arab Republic)

Director-General, I greet you, and indeed good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Greetings to you all. I wish to begin by commending you, Director-General, for all of the work you are doing in seeking to defend the rights of those living in the occupied Golan and other occupied Arab territories, in accordance with international law. We are now talking about very serious crimes that have been committed. This goes beyond violations of rights. We see that crimes have been committed against workers in the occupied Golan. And we wish to express our deep regret about what has happened there and what is happening today also in the Gaza Strip. We stand in full solidarity with all of the workers there and we know what they are suffering at the hands of the occupying powers. The Israeli occupying entity is indeed involved in systematic terrorism in occupied Golan and other occupied territories. We see arbitrary practices that are being used in dealing with Syrian workers. And despite all of that, we in Syria have our workers who are fighting to struggle against that and to live in decent conditions despite the extremely indecent conditions that are being imposed upon them.

on the labour market. We know about the devastating attacks on people there recently, and despite all of that, they are still trying to live in decency and to earn a living. Syria resolutely condemns all of the violations by Israel of all international conventions and treaties in recent times, and we particularly note that the rights of workers in occupied Golan have been totally ignored. They are not able to enjoy the fruits of their own labour, to enjoy their own harvests, and they are not able to work in the way that they should be able to work in accordance with international labour Conventions. We note the contents of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, and we commend the Director-General for having published this report. But it must not just remain a report, words on a page. It has to translate into action. What is happening today is in fact something that brings to mind what we saw back in 1967 when Israel invaded the occupied Arab territories, as they then became, and also invaded part of Syrian territory, which has then become occupied Syrian Golan. We need once and for all to put an end to all of these illegal practices and to these illegal occupations. We need to mobilize resources in order to help workers in the occupied Arab territories today to live in decency, as I have said. And we would call upon the Governing Body to look at this issue very carefully indeed. Further, we call for a lifting of all restrictions that are indeed preventing us from making the progress that we need to make in this area, and we call on the Zionist entity to respect all of the rulings handed down by different bodies within the international community, including the Security Council. We call for implementation of all of the rulings handed down, including recommendations by the ILO. We believe that there should be no discussion whatsoever as to the need to lift the occupation in the occupied Syrian Golan and in the occupied Arab territories. We know that certainly we stand in full solidarity with people living in those territories. And what we need to do today is to put an end to the systemic policy that we have seen for many years, a policy that has simply trampled on the rights of people living there. It is in effect an apartheid policy that is being pursued by the occupying Zionist entity. Thank you.

Mr Wills Rangel

Worker (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Good afternoon. On behalf of the workers of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela we would like to say thank you very much for this report and for the messages that have been conveyed to the workers of Palestine. Citizens of the world, international solidarity. We want to build hope. Today we know the situation is very difficult. It is the most difficult on the planet. We want to see reconciliation but we have seen expressions of neofascism which have harmed humanity. In 80 years of history we have never seen anything like it. And the people standing up for the just causes, the legitimate defence of people and human life, Frei Betto, who was a Brazilian revolutionary, had something to say on this subject. This is a commitment that is made to our key values and our common good. We are not spared the pain of the other. It must be a course of indignation. We must stand up and fight against it, against these massacres against the people. And we are facing the most flagrant violations of international public law. For 75 years this has been inflicted upon the people of Palestine with the complicit silence of the large powers. The people's power is with me, the Bolivarian people who have a deep feeling of freedom. It is a volcano erupting in the form of men and women who are calling for humanity, a truly human form of humanity as well. I convey this in my voice as a worker. There must be an immediate stop to the genocide in Palestine. Global rumours are denouncing in the face of the impotence of international organizations. But

this is compensated by the love of millions of people all across the planet who want to see an end to the [vgr INAUDIBLE 129:24], and people standing up with bravery. We express our deep solidarity to the youth who have been sacrificed in an extraordinary way when coming out to defend their people, to defend against the suffering incurred by the Palestinian people. We wish to express our solidarity with them, to the workers and the people of Palestine. The time has come to break through these comfortable spaces and speak up in a multitude of voices which have never stopped from speaking out nor will they do so in the future. We believe in a different possible world: socialism. To quote our eternal commandant, Hugo Chávez, and Fidel, the commandant of America, "This is a fight for the defence of humanity." And as Che said, "This humanity has said enough is enough." Thank you very much.

Ms Lamia Fathi Abusedra

Government (Libya)

Mr President, members of delegations, the State of Libya associates itself with the statements made by the groups to which we belong. And we thank the DG for his report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories and which gives us an idea about the horrific reality lived by the Palestinian workers and the members of their families in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. And this shows how violence has increased and how it has affected work opportunities and livelihoods in Gaza and the West Bank. This continued onslaught has now come to constitute a humanitarian crisis and an economic and social crisis. We denounce the fact that the Israeli regime has not accepted the mission by the ILO to continue its investigation for the preparation of the DG's report. We call upon the ILO and the DG to bring pressure to bear, as in similar situations, including the supervision mechanisms. We condemn the continued violations of human rights and the violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law and the continuing of the occupation to an unspecified period of time which deprives the people of Palestine of their right to return and the right to enjoy economic and social stability. The people of Palestine in the Gaza Strip, despite the long suffering for many, many years, still during the past eight months they have been living hell on earth. And the world has not succeeded in ensuring a lasting ceasefire despite the killing of 34,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, where 15,000 children were killed during those acts of genocide while 7,000 people are missing or are under the rubble. More than 77,000 were injured and many more are experiencing trauma. Over 1,700,000 people have been displaced. That is three-quarters of the inhabitants of Gaza. And yet we continue saying that social justice cannot take place under occupation and occupation has got to come to an end. But the situation has now resulted in focusing on saving lives, especially women and children, and not sufficient attention has been devoted to the workers, let alone what is happening in Rafah. Unemployment levels are unprecedented in Gaza, especially amongst women and youth. The labour market has collapsed and the economy has come to a ground halt and the infrastructure has been devastated to a value of more than \$20 billion. About 300,000 jobs were lost and the occupation has imposed more and more restrictions on the movement of Palestinian workers. Israel continues its illegal settlement activities in the occupied Arab territories, and the GDP has fallen by about 80% during the last quarter of 2023. And this widespread destruction has caused paralysis of activities in agriculture and industry, making people relying more and more on aid. We call upon the ILO to take all the necessary measures in order to pay the compensation to 170,000 Palestinian workers who should be covered by labour laws of Israel and to compensate them for the moral

and financial prejudice and the ill-treatment that they have been subjected to. We also call for adopting all necessary measures in order to ensure rapid intervention to extend assistance to more than 5,000 workers from Gaza and the West Bank. We also call upon the ILO and supervision organs of the Organization to assess Israel's commitment to international Conventions, including 111 on discrimination in employment and Conventions 155 and 187 on safety and health. And also to assess the implementation of the decisions that have been taken by the ICJ and the Security Council as well as taking all the necessary measures to prevent the obstruction of the implementation of the mandate of the ILO. The State of Libya calls for the inclusion of those comments in our conclusions and to give more clarification on the methods available in order to implement the recommendations contained in the report. In particular as we see that the occupation authorities are not responding favourably to any of the observations or the recommendations by the United Nations family. We welcome the recommendations in the report, in particular Paragraph 172, to make sure that there will be a cessation of war, because this is the only way where reconstruction can take place and where the implementation of the recommendations would become possible according to a specified timeframe under the mandate of the ILO. I thank you, sir.

Ms Somayeh Golpour Chamarkoohi

Worker (Iran (Islamic Republic of))

In the name of God, His Excellency Mr Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, with a great sorrow for the unfortunate death of Mr Ebrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the appreciation of the kind message of the DG, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, to the Iran annual labour summit. As a representative of the Workers' delegates of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in your presence. Humanity today is witnessing one of the biggest cases of ethnic genocide and holocaust in Gaza and usurping [? 137:30] regime which has made the regime the basic of the identify and occupation (sic). And apartheid, as the basis of its policy, has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians in less than a year under the pretext of confronting terrorism. Unfortunately, some major world powers not only do not condemn Israel's behaviour but support it in various ways and back up its action with weapons. As stated in the DG's report, these actions [vgr INAUDIBLE 138:11] to the destruction of work infrastructure in Gaza which results in long-term damage to the employment of the people of this region. Also, imposing various sanctions and restrictions seriously harms Palestinians' work in the West Bank and other occupied areas and violated their rights. Hereby, we declare the solidarity of the Iranian workers along with the other section of the people with the oppressed people of Palestine. We voice our readiness for any kind of support, help and backup, and we hope that in this way we can take the burden off the shoulders of the oppressed Palestinian workers, alleviating their great suffering. Thank you very much.

Mr Juan Antonio Quintanilla Román

Government (Cuba)

President, Director-General, nothing can justify the barbaric acts committed by Israel in Gaza, which have caused the death of over 35,000 Gazans, who have been displaced by force. Over 75% of the population are now displaced. The international community cannot remain inactive given the genocide being committed. Cuba

condemns in the firmest terms possible the massacre of children, of workers, and we call upon the United Nations system to put a stop to the indiscriminate bombing of people in Gaza as well as the destruction of homes, hospitals and civil infrastructure, provision of water, electricity and fuel to the population in Gaza, actions that constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law. We ask for an immediate and permanent ceasefire as well as for the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza with no restrictions. We reiterate that the current situation in the territories is a consequence of decades of Israeli illegal practices of colonization, in flagrant violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people on their own land as well as the extension of the principles on the UN Charter and international law. Cuba supports the cause of Palestine. This is clear. Progress must be made towards a broad-ranging solution on a lasting basis to this conflict. It must guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination. President, the serious repercussions of the current situation and support for Palestinian people have been very damaging for the employment market. However, what we see in Gaza today has reawakened a whole series of concerns about the world of work. This has now gone beyond that. It is a humanitarian catastrophe now. We are seeing war crimes, crimes against humanity with the complicity of the United States Government. Cuba will not cease to stand up against this massacre of the Palestinian people. President, in accordance with the ILO's mandate, we support the tripartite constituents. We call upon the International Labour Organization to guarantee the supply of humanitarian assistance on an urgent basis and in sufficient quantity to the people of Palestine who have been a victim of this situation. We all have to speak up against genocide, and robust measures must be adopted to put a stop to the death of innocents peoples. Any moment of impunity, passivity, et cetera, or silence will come at a cost, a cost of more innocent lives. Thank you very much.

Mr Ishai Pollack

Employer (Israel)

President, members of the ILO Conference, in contrast to the alleged information in the Director-General's situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories report, Israel stands in the forefront of guarding the rights of workers and is committed to including foreign employees, in particular Palestinians, in the labour market. Israel has proven to legislate protective laws, providing a broad cover of protection to all workers, including protection mentioned in article 190, and we have been acting within those laws for many years. If we detach from the issues that originated by the brutal massacre that took place on October 7th by Hamas terrorist, all of the employment challenges that followed, women and children exploitation, safety, low wages, et cetera, all are as a direct result from the Palestinian Authority's lack of action. It is not clear how the Director-General can claim correlation between working relationship and justified war against Hamas' brutal attack until all of our soldiers and hostages have returned home to Israel, especially knowing some of the murderous terrorists were employed in Israel. In the State of Israel, tripartism is regulated within working relations where state labour law audits are one of the strictest audits in the world. Yet employees' and employers' organizations establish a [vgr INAUDIBLE 144:35] for a fast and dignified solution of conflicts. For example, in 2023 in finding a solution for transferring wages as well as pension funds directly to the Palestinian worker's bank account. The Director-General's declaration that sustainable peace is required for a good enabling [? 144:54] working relationship with Palestinian employees is not dependent on the Israeli employers who are craving professional and steady working hands, many of which are of Palestinians

who worked in Israel for many years prior to October 7th. Unfortunately, I did not hear condemnation from members of this conference concerning the monstrous massacre on October 7th by Hamas nor any call to release the hostages held in Gaza. The Palestinian Authority and their shameful conduct in supporting terrorism and the catastrophe that Hamas has placed on the Palestinian population harmed the fundamental trust between two human beings working together to the point of no return, making it impossible to maintain a reasonable working relationship. The Middle East is not the EU. It will take years and courageous Palestinian leadership for us to rebuild any trust that is required to move forward from the massacre of October 7th and restore the habitats, the work area and the way of life around Israel's borders. As a representative of Israeli employers, I truly hope that one day we will be able to resume commerce in general and a working relationship in particular by acknowledging our aspirations for life and not death. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr Walid Obeidat

Government (Jordan)

President, I would like to begin my comments by echoing everything that has already been said by the Arab group and by the OIC. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Director-General for his report on workers in the occupied Arab territories. His report makes it very clear just to what extent Arab workers are having their rights violated in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank today. We commend the recommendations that are made in the report and we call for their implementation. It is our hope that all of this will indeed be taken forward further and put into practice at the next session of the Governing Body, that appropriate decisions will be taken. Sadly, it has not been possible for the group that was supposed to visit the occupied territories to go there. They were prevented from entering the territory. There have been problems in recent months, as you know, with humanitarian aid, with reprisals taken against certain persons. And we know that in the Gaza Strip today we see killings, forced displacement, thousands of women and children being killed, destruction of fundamental essential infrastructure, including schools and hospitals. We see all of this described very clearly in the report. But, in fact, what is going on just reflects the true essence of the Israeli occupation that we have lived with for decades. It is a violation not just of fundamental rights but of all values of humanity, of all values of any civilized society. We therefore call on the international community in general and this organization in particular to exert pressure on Israel to put an end to this atrocious and appalling war. We also believe that they have to put an end to this policy of trying to expel the people of Palestine out of their homeland. And we call upon all those working in the international community to show solidarity and to support us in those goals. The problem is one that did not begin on the 7th of October last year. In fact this has been a problem that has been going on for decades because of this uninterrupted occupation that has resulted in stifling of the labour market, in stifling and suffocation of the people themselves. And there has been an ongoing war on the people of Gaza which has made their life intolerable year after year. We know about Palestinians languishing in Israeli jails. We know about the effect on their health. We know about the total destruction of the infrastructure of Gaza. We have seen this year after year. We know that people have been living in poverty and in hunger, and we know that their most fundamental social and economic rights are not being respected. We all know what has been going on. You can read many international declarations, and you can see just to what extent what is happening runs counter to any fundamental value: the values of the Philadelphia

Declaration, the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. You can see that all of these values have been trampled on over decades by this occupation. We know that we now need, given the appalling nature of this situation, to try to build life again for the people in Gaza. We need to rebuild the infrastructure and to rebuild their lives, calling on all international expertise to allow us to do so. We therefore call upon those who are experts on interventions and emergency situations to do more in seeking to rebuild the lives of the Palestinian workers today. We do not want to end up caught in this ongoing spiral of violence and destruction forever. This illegal, unlawful occupation of Arab territories has to be brought to an end, this occupation by Israel. We have to give Palestinians their fundamental right to self-determination, to a viable Palestinian State that is independent with East Jerusalem as its capital, going back to the 1967 borders and in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative. That is the way forward. That is the way we can achieve peace. Thank you.

Mr Naser Alhayen

Government (Kuwait)

President, Director-General, Excellencies, delegates, my delegation wishes to echo the statement made here by the Arab group, and we support the recommendations that have been made. We also support the statement delivered here by the OIC. Further, we thank the Director-General for his report, the report that we are discussing right now. And if you look at Paragraph 177 it calls for an end to war, an end to occupation, and we fully endorse that. This special sitting is being held because of the intolerable suffering that we witness today in the Gaza Strip. And yet the occupying power is continuing to commit atrocious crimes against civilians. Blood is still flowing there. We know about the huge numbers of peoples that have been forced to leave their homes, to move, and we know that the occupying powers are continuing to put pressure on them and to attack unarmed civilians, using every weapon at their disposal. We know what is happening. We have seen the destruction of infrastructure. It is going on, and the occupying power is continuing to organize, for instance, the Al Quds [? 152:30] march which is something that we fundamentally condemn to organize a march like that on a day like this when all of this is happening. We know that the situation is only getting worse in Gaza. The suffering of Palestinian workers is only getting worse. We know what is happening. We know that the labour market has collapsed. Economic activity has come to an end. Unemployment levels have skyrocketed and reached unprecedented levels. More than 200,000 Palestinians simply lost their jobs overnight. And yet violations are continuing, and this is something that flouts all relevant international instruments and agreements, all international rules, including the Constitution of this organization, the ILO. The occupying power is preventing a mission from this organization going to visit the occupied Arab territories. That is yet another proof of the way in which they are violating fundamental values and principles. We see criminal systematic activity being carried out by this occupying power that is trying to deny the reality of the situation. We therefore call upon the international community to do its utmost to exert pressure on the occupying power and to ensure that the visit from the ILO can actually take place. We congratulate countries that have recognized the statehood of Palestine. Over the past month we have seen at least some glimmers of justice there. International Labour Day was celebrated recently, and in fact this coincided with the anniversary of the Philadelphia Declaration, this year the 80th anniversary of that. And we know that it makes it very clear that social justice and equality has to be the bedrock of any kind of progress. And it is sad to see that we are marking anniversaries like that of the

Philadelphia Declaration when an unprecedented tragedy is unfolding before our eyes, the tragedy of the Palestinian people today. These people have lost hope. They have no stability they can count on. Nothing. They have no security. And when all that is happening at the time when we are celebrating anniversaries like the Philadelphia Declaration, the whole credibility of the UN system is called into question. We support the rightful cause of the Palestinian people and we support all programmes to assist the Palestinian people within the framework of this organization and in other frameworks also. Thank you.

Mr Luc Triangle

International Trade Union Confederation

Today I stand before you on behalf of the ITUC and our 200 million workers to address the grave and urgent situation faced by our Palestinian brothers and sisters. The situation of Palestinian workers is a pressing humanitarian and economic issue that demands our immediate attention and collective action. I could witness that myself as I was in the West Bank just one week ago. 235,000 Palestinian workers, who once relied on their jobs in Israel, have been left without salaries and compensation. These workers who support extended families now face financial ruin due to the recent conflicts and closures. The economic collapse of the Palestinian territories not only affects individual households but also the broader economic stability of the region. Many workers have been forced to sell their houses or personal belongings to have money for simply buying food. The ongoing violence and military actions have exacerbated this situation. The blockade on Gaza, now in its 17th year, and the recent attacks on Rafah have created a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions, leaving thousands of families homeless and without basic necessities. The psychological impact of this ongoing conflict is profound, affecting not only the current generation but also the future of Palestinian children who grow up amidst constant fear, insecurity and violence. I have met workers last week from Gaza, now surviving in the West Bank in temporary locations. They lost their jobs. They lost their homes. They lost everything. And as I could experience myself, Palestinian workers endure long journeys through crowded checkpoints, and despite contributing significantly to Israel's economy, they face systemic exploitation and rights violations. They are often denied social rights, fair wages and safe working conditions. And the lack of enforcement of Israel's progressive labour laws further worsening their situation, with many experiencing unlawful dismissals and being left without any compensation during periods of conflict. Moreover, the Palestinian economy is on the brink of collapse due to the inability of these workers to earn a living. And this not only affects individual households but also the broader economic stability of the region. We must also recognize the troubling trend of replacing Palestinian workers with migrant labour, a practice that began already in the 1990s. And this not only undermines the livelihoods of Palestinian workers but also exacerbates their vulnerability and marginalization. The ITUC, we call for an end of the occupation and the recognition of Palestine as a sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital. We emphasize the importance of promoting decent work opportunities for Palestinian workers and urge States and businesses to cease activities related to the illegal settlements. And in collaboration with our trade union, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, we have witnessed the severe consequences of the recent escalation. Since October 7th, thousands of Palestinian workers have been stranded, their work permits revoked and many deported. The PGFTU has been working tirelessly to provide immediate relief, including temporary housing, food and essential

healthcare. However, the continuous influx of displaced workers has created significant financial pressure on the PGFTU and other stakeholders. But our commitment to solidarity with Palestinian workers is unwavering. And to further add to our efforts, I call upon all partners to support fundraising initiatives. Engaging with the ILO's Decent Work Programme for the occupied territories, which has already collected significant international support, is crucial. Contributions from governments and organizations are vital to ensuring the continuation and expansion of these essential programmes. Let us rally together to secure additional funding to accelerate investments in jobs and social protection, paving the way for a sustainable future for Palestinian workers and their families. Shukran.

Mr Alexi Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Thank you. Now I would like to give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference to provide additional clarifications on the voting procedure.

Mr L Bormioli

Clerk of the Conference

Thank you, Mr President. Just to remind distinguished delegates that, as mentioned this morning, the vote on the abrogation of the four Conventions started at 12 o'clock and will be closed at 6 pm today. The email with all the necessary explanations was sent to all the persons entitled to vote. Please convey this information to your delegations and we look forward to seeing the votes coming in this afternoon. Thank you.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Now, with this, we conclude the speaker list for this morning. We will resume the special sitting this afternoon at 2.30 sharp in the same room. I thank you for your participation, and the sitting is declared closed.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Good afternoon. Dear colleagues, welcome back. Please take your seats. I call to order this special sitting of the Conference to examine the appendix to the Director-General's report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We will resume the continuation of our list of speakers, and I want to remind everyone, all distinguished speakers, to limit their interventions to three minutes maximum. Thank you. With that being said, I now want to give the floor to Mr Maddouri, Minister of Social Affairs of Tunisia, who will address us through a video link.

Mr Kamel Maddouri

Government (Tunisia)

In the name of God, the most merciful and compassionate, Your Excellency the President of the Conference, Your Excellency DG of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, we are delighted to join today the special plenary sitting with regard to discussing the DG's report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, which is held exceptionally this year within the current violent aggression against the Gaza Strip and the growing violations in the West Bank by the occupation forces, which has led to a devastating humanitarian catastrophe, amounting to crimes against humanity and in a blatant violation of all international legal texts and international humanitarian law. The genocidal war has devastated many aspects of life and left behind a grave social, economic and humanitarian crisis which destroyed the Palestinian economy and the whole economic cycle, which requires the international community to adopt a relief and response programme to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the Palestinian workers and employers. Ladies and gentlemen, the ILO DG shows through this report the results that were met by the ILO's mission to assess the situation of workers in Palestine and highlights the catastrophic situation being lived by the Palestinians and which led to the loss of jobs and the rising unemployment due to the restrictions on the freedom of movement and trade, in addition to the situation suffered by the Palestinians in terms of famine and the lack of food security and the halting economic cycle. In this regard, we would like to commend the recommendations in the report, which is one of the first initiatives showing how preoccupied the ILO is with regard to the Palestinian cause. And I would like here to reiterate Tunisia's position of principle. The people in Tunisia and the leadership of Tunisia call for the immediate cessation of aggression and to allow the Palestinian people to enjoy self-determination, guarantee the access of relief and humanitarian aid, and uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, which is inalienable and does not fall within a statute of limitation, to establish their own State, fully sovereign on its land with East Jerusalem as its capital. The international community is in front of an ethical cause that has to be upheld. We salute the steadfast workers in Palestine for the great price they are paying. Long live Palestine and greetings be upon you.

Mr Simon Masanga

Government (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe acknowledges the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. Regrettably, this year's report comes at a time of great suffering for the Palestinian people because of the war in Gaza. We condemn all violence and hostilities, including the indiscriminate and intensive bombing, ground operations and heavy fighting in Gaza which has destroyed lives, workplaces and livelihoods. In this context, we support the DG's call for urgent and massive reconstruction and recovery work. It is anticipated that the cost of sustainable recovery will be steep and will require stronger international support and cooperation. We see the work of the ILO being prominent, now more than before, in job creation, promoting decent work opportunities and enhancing social protection for workers. We therefore urge development partners to increase their funding for development cooperation projects in the occupied Arab territories. Mr President, as the ILC this year discusses the need to renew the social contract within the framework of the DG's main report, we recall the Philadelphia Declaration that universal and lasting peace can only be achieved if it is based on social justice. Zimbabwe therefore underscores that, in the quest to rebuild a resilient economy within the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, life and livelihoods require and indeed deserve peace, security and massive international investment and support. We urgently call for a ceasefire and the protection of all civilians, particularly women and children as well as the medical and humanitarian personnel in the occupied Arab territories. For Palestinian workers to regain their full dignity, it is of utmost importance that the legal and brutal occupation be addressed by the international community. This is a critical component of any solution to the complex situation within the occupied Arab territories. The Zimbabwe delegation deplores the continued oppression of the Palestinian people and the construction of illegal settlements in the occupied territories, in violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2334 of December 2016 which clearly condemned the settlement activity, incitement and all acts of violence and terror in the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. We would look to reaffirm our conviction that lasting peace will only be possible through the recognition of the State of Palestine's right to statehood, sovereignty and self-determination in line with several UN resolutions. The new momentum for the two-state solution should therefore be supported. I thank you.

Ms Bathsheba Crocker

Government (United States)

The United States joined Governing Body consensus to recommend this sitting due to the severe economic and labour market impacts of the ongoing conflict. However, we reiterate our position that holding plenary special sittings on this report is inappropriate. We thank the ILO mission and the Director-General for this report, including its observations and recommendations, but do not support many of the report's legal assertions. The conflict sparked by Hamas' brutal terrorist attack on October 7th has decimated the already limited labour market opportunities in Gaza. The conflict with Hamas has also seriously affected livelihoods in the West Bank, in part due to new security measures inhibiting workers from accessing workplaces. As President Biden said, we are focused on a durable end to this war, one that brings all the hostages home, ensures Israel's security, creates a better day after in Gaza without Hamas in

power and sets the stage for a political settlement that provides a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike. A surge in humanitarian support and planning for recovery and reconstruction go hand in hand. While the ILO is not a humanitarian organization, its expertise will be critical as we plan for a better day after. The ILO should be guided by Recommendation No. 205 which provides a road map for jobs-rich and rights-driven recovery approaches. The ILO should advocate for these approaches and for a clear gender perspective wherever recovery is discussed in the UN. The Palestinian Authority has a responsibility to continue to reform and improve its governance to support the Palestinian people's aspirations. This includes strengthening labour market governance institutions to support Palestinian workers and businesses in both the West Bank and Gaza. Action is needed to pass pending social security legislation, establish the Palestinian social security corporation and review the Palestinian national employment strategy. At the same time, Israel must be a partner to Palestinian leaders. Extremist settler violence carried out with impunity, settlement expansion, demolitions and evictions, the withholding of clearance revenue payments, these actions do not advance peace. Ensuring decent work and labour rights also necessitates reform of the permit regime, including the elimination of recruitment fees and related costs in line with the ILO's general principles for fair recruitment. In closing, I remind that this organization was founded on the belief that improving conditions of work is necessary for lasting peace. Israelis and Palestinians equally deserve to live and to work in safety, dignity and peace. Thank you.

Mr Ergün Atalay

Worker (Türkiye)

President, distinguished delegates, it is an honour to appear to you on behalf of the workers of Türkiye and the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions. This special sitting is covering an issue which is of great importance for us. The Palestinian territories have been under occupation now for more than 75 years. The occupation has been transformed into a more aggressive form as of October 7 last year. Dear delegates, all of the trade unions of Türkiye stand against this relentless genocide and the occupation. The workers of Türkiye have a shared attitude and take shared action against the regional policies of warfare and the operations of the war. We cannot speak about labour rights, decent living conditions and human rights under a situation of ongoing warfare. There can be no excuse for such bloodshed. The PGFTU has regularly been releasing informative bulletins on the situation of the workers under occupation over the past few months. These bulletins show that there has been incomprehensible oppression and carnage in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the past few months. According to the most recent figures, at least 15,000 children, 10,000 women, 152 UN employees, 142 members of the press and 492 medical professionals and 200 doctors were killed. Seven churches have been damaged, and 371 out of the damaged 564 mosques have been completely destroyed. The massacres committed consequently in Rafah refugee camp are crimes against humanity. Everyone has to hear the cries of the Palestinian people. The people of Palestine have been trying to survive under these heavy attacks and under siege by the occupation forces since last October, in particular the people of Gaza. Dear delegates, the occupation has to be stopped immediately. The occupied regions of Gaza must be returned to their owners. The necessary aid must be immediately delivered to the region. Palestine must be rebuilt, and the Palestinian people must be returned to their homes. The international community has to be just and fair in its dealings with the Palestinian issue. Imperialist and expansionist targets

have to be abandoned. The two-state solution promoted by the UN must be implemented without wasting any more time. As a concluding remark, history is the best teacher there is. It teaches us not to make the same mistake twice. A people that suffered so grievously must have learned much from their own experiences. Thank you very much for your concern.

Mr Abdellah Boutadghart

Government (Morocco)

Your Excellency Director-General, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, this special sitting takes place in the midst of a difficult hardship and unprecedented suffering being visited upon the brethren Palestinian people due to the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the unprecedented devastation. And there are victims in the tens of thousands as well as displacement and a full blockade. And here we call to allow the access of humanitarian relief to the Strip with the promotion of the protection of civilians in preparation for a just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution. We look at the ramifications on the occupied Arab territories with regard to the labour market and which is going against the basic tenets of this organization. And in this regard the Kingdom of Morocco highly values the efforts by the ILO in the midst of this crisis, calling for their intensifying. And we thank the DG for the appendix shedding light on the humanitarian situation of our Palestinian brothers and sisters. In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco calls upon the Member States to uphold their commitments with regard to the freedom of movement in these territories. Mr President, considering the difficult situation of the Palestinian workers, we all have to immediately intervene to achieve the following priorities. First, intensifying efforts to support the tripartite constituents in Palestine in order to create better jobs and employment in conjunction with decent work. Second, to provide technical support for MSMEs in order to lead to a job-rich early recovery and providing commodities and local services with affordable prices. Third, to have a comprehensive strategy with regard to upskilling and professional training. Fourth, to enable the Palestinian workers working in Israel to regain all their earnings and taking into account the necessity to reform the permit system and avoiding middlemen and providing a smooth transition to promote OSH. Sixth, remittances and clearance revenues to be released by the Israeli authorities without blackmail or extortion. Seventh, to reactivate the social security cooperation to be self-sufficient. Eighth, to mobilize the donors to submit and provide necessary funding for all reconstruction efforts after the aggression. In conclusion, we look forward to outputs after this sitting to lead to an important resolution by the Governing Body that gives the Director-General and his office all the necessary means to intervene and help mitigate the devastating effects in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Thank you very much.

Ms Amanda Gorely

Government (Australia)

Australia is gravely concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. A humanitarian ceasefire is urgently needed. We call on partners to agree to the ceasefire deal on the table. There must be an increase in rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. Hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. This devastating crisis underscores the need for a negotiated political solution to the long-

running Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is affecting all areas of life, including an almost complete regression to informal and unpaid work. The severe economic and labour market impacts are felt by workers, employers and the civilian population as a whole. Unemployment is at an all-time high and economic activity in Gaza has ground to a halt. There will clearly be lasting repercussions for Palestinian workers and employers. We are gravely concerned by physical and mental health risks to workers and employers, the increase in children engaging in informal work and the increased vulnerability of all workers to labour law abuses, including to forced labour. Australia commends the ILO for its ongoing work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We acknowledge the hard work of ILO staff and reiterate the importance of ensuring their access, safety and security so they can deliver the ILO's mandate and implement the emergency response programme. We welcome the ILO's forward planning for recovery and reconstruction of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, acknowledging the importance of social dialogue and decent work. Any recovery policy planning should include specific consideration around empowering women's economic participation and eradicating child labour. Thank you.

Mr Fayçal Bentaleb

Government (Algeria)

Allow me at the outset to thank the DG for having prepared this report, which included facts reflecting the catastrophic situation that was reached in the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip and the occupied territory due to the continuing practices of the Israeli occupation and their brutal practices against the Palestinian people. Algeria is cognizant of the difficulties that were faced by the ILO's team in preparing this report due to the restrictions imposed by the occupation forces against international organizations working in the occupied territory. Mr President, the ongoing aggression by the Israeli occupation against the Gaza Strip and the crimes committed against civilians being witnessed in killings, displacement and famine as well as destruction of the infrastructure, the latest manifestations of which is the ground invasion of the Rafah camps. And therefore we would like to condemn with the strongest words these practices against the Palestinian people which were not deterred by the ICJ and ICC recent decisions as well as the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, which are pointed out in the report. Mr President, the Palestinian workers and their families are living in catastrophic situations in the Gaza Strip because of the loss of jobs and the complete cessation of the economic cycle as well as the job market. And this is leading to an increase in the hardship of the rights of the Palestinians. And the situation is no different in the West Bank where Palestinians are suffering from a dire socio-economic situation due to unemployment and the cancellation of permits as well as restrictions on the mobility of workers. And this has led to the increase in casualties and violence. And in the midst of this humanitarian crisis, Algeria calls for the immediate intervention of the ILO to implement emergency plans and support to the tripartite constituents in order to provide the basic needs, especially to the workers from the Gaza Strip who are stuck in the West Bank and the families who have become homeless, in order to mitigate their suffering. Mr President, to witness the current humanitarian crisis being suffered by the Palestinian people, the Algerian delegation calls upon the DG to visit the occupied territory and engage in dialogue with the tripartite constituents in order to set up a plan for support of the Palestinians and compensating their damages. It is important to find the necessary means to implement the recommendations of this report and call upon the DG to present a briefing to the

next GB session with regard to their implementation. In conclusion, Algeria calls upon the constituent parties of this organization to enable the State of Palestine to fully participate at the ILO according to United Nations resolutions. Thank you.

Ms Shanchita Haque

Government (Bangladesh)

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I would like to register my heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for the Director-General and his mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory for the report presented to the Conference. Despite having no permission to visit Palestine, the report captures the catastrophic impact of this genocidal war by Israel on the people, children, women and men of Palestine, impact on the economy, enterprises, employers and the workers. Mr President, Bangladesh would like to express its profound concerns over the massive job losses and soaring unemployment in the Gaza Strip as well as in the West Bank. The illegal war against the civilian and non-combatant population of Palestine has caused shrinking of the Palestinian economy by 81% in Gaza and by 19% in the West Bank. Blockade to food, necessary life-saving medicine and humanitarian assistance goes against Israel's obligation to international law dictums. Labour market governance institutions, labour administration, social protection, social dialogue got irreparably affected. Israeli occupation of more than half a century has been escalated to a level of total destruction and total elimination of Palestine. Mr President, facing such a genocide and crimes against humanity, the people of Palestine need global attention and recognition first. Allow me to unequivocally reiterate that Bangladesh recognizes Palestine as a State in the fullest meaning of the term and considers Israel as an aggressor, illegal occupant of the State of Palestine. Bangladesh condemns Israel for the crimes and atrocities they have been inflicting upon the people of Palestine, and we urge Israel to stop the genocide and allow humanitarian assistance. We agree with the report that the end of the occupation is the only solution to the deep distress of the Palestinian people, and for that we urge the Security Council to recognize Palestine's statehood immediately. Israel has to comply, as the occupying force referred to in the 2004 advisory opinion, to the orders issued by the International Court of Justice on 26th January 2024, as binding orders, and the 28th March 2024 additional provisional measures. Mr President, Bangladesh supports the ILO initiatives for a human-centric recovery and reconstruction of the Palestinian labour market. In the spirit of the Philadelphia Declaration, Bangladesh believes it is high time we ensure the conditions of freedom and dignity of the Palestinian people. And the ILO, being the key enabler of social justice, may take lead as it is mandated. Bangladesh aligns itself with the OIC's statement delivered on this agenda. I thank you, Mr President.

Mr Fermin Mesa García

Employer (Cuba)

Chair, we would like to express the support of the Cuban employers to the Palestinian workers. I would like to take this advantage to do that. We have unrestricted support on the part of Cuban employers for the employers and the workers of Palestine as this year we recall the 80th anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia, according to which permanent peace can only be based on social justice. It is an unpardonable error to think that the conflict began on the 7th of October. Let us not talk about 1880

when the first Zionist colonists arrived or what happened in 1948 when the Israeli leadership put into operation the Dalet Plan to destroy villages and to realize operations of Palestinian extermination. Today we can say that Israel, with the assistance of the United States and its allies, is carrying out a genocidal war against the Palestinian people, provoking ethnic massacres and crimes against humanity. That is what the witnesses that have been heard by the mission of the ILO have heard from workers, employers and representatives of the government in Palestine. In conditions of complete impunity, the Zionist military forces continue to work against a civilian population, leaving the occupied country in ruins, with restrictions on mobility, more than 200,000 jobs destroyed, companies closed and general unemployment. A complete crisis with lack of opportunities of decent work. Total destruction. It does not seem to be possible to negotiate a ceasefire or humanitarian aid in the middle of the war. In the Philadelphia Declaration it was recalled that all human beings have a right to pursue their own material well-being and spiritual development in conditions of liberty and dignity. And in 2024 we call on Israel to make the way free for an end to hostilities, the indispensable humanitarian aid, assistance for development and the consolidation of peace. In the ILO we call for Palestinian workers to be able to have decent jobs, better social protection, and humanitarian and financial support from the international community so that they can survive the holocaust. We call for the implementation of the ILO emergency response plan for the occupied territories so that early recuperation, resilience and reconstruction of infrastructure can happen. As employers, we call urgently on the international private sector to support Palestine in the production of food, to create jobs and livelihoods in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and the value-added chain of the food industry. We also see a need for financial transfers to the most vulnerable groups, capacity-building and the formulation of policies and projects which will promote business initiative and investment in strategic sectors. Chair, President, it is quite clear that with an occupation there can be no social justice. Thank you.

Ms Mabel Gross

Worker (Italy)

Distinguished guests, Director-General, I take the floor on behalf of the Italian trade union confederations, CGIL, CISL and UIL. The ILO DG's report on the situation of workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory portrays an appalling reality that demands the strongest condemnation, especially after October the 7th. Italian trade unions reiterate their condemnation of the Hamas terrorist attack but also the disproportionate military response promoted by the Israeli Ultranationalist Government that has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians, including more than 14,000 children, since that day. More than 77,000 civilians have been wounded and over 2.3 million have been forcibly displaced and the provision of essential aid to civilians severely disrupted. The International Court of Justice has held that it is plausible that Israel is committing acts of genocide in Gaza and requested immediate and decisive action. The severe livelihoods and human loss, the estimated generational traumas and social costs of the 75-year-long occupation and violation of human rights are having devastating effects on workers, trade unions and communities. Italian trade unions believe that it is only through effective enforcement of international law that the world can restore peace and put a definitive end to these and many more massacres that thrive on the deliberate disregard of international law. As reiterated in the conclusions of the DG's report, peace is feasible but cannot be achieved without an end to the occupation and without

international engagement. It is urgent now to foster initiatives which allow progress towards a fully independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State. Italian trade unions support the recognition of the Palestinian State, following the path taken recently by Spain, Norway, Ireland, Slovenia joining the group of 143 UN Member States that recognize Palestine as a sovereign State based on UN resolutions. Italian trade unions also call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and welcome the Italian Government's and the EU decisions to re-fund UNRWA. We call on all governments to join and support the ILO fund to promote a swift recovery and rebuilding of the socio-economic infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Italian trade unions, finally, also urge the ILO to engage all tripartite constituents into promoting world disarmament for the full achievement of ILO Recommendation 205. The war industry must be defunded and reconverted, and the ILO should play an active role in promoting reconversion efforts. Thank you.

Mr Nasr Al Hosni

Government (Oman)

In the name of God, the most merciful. Mr President of the ILC, Excellencies, Vice-Presidents, Mr Director-General of the ILO, Excellencies, heads and members of delegations, distinguished participants. At the outset, I wish to congratulate the President of the Conference and the vice-presidents for their election to chair this ILC. Wishing you all the best and success in your work. I also wish to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Director-General of the Organization and all the staff of the ILO for preparing this valuable report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. And we wish to extend our sincere condolences to our brothers in Palestine and to the families of the victims who died as a result of the criminal and violent attacks perpetrated against them, and we wish a speedy recovery to the wounded and injured. Mr President, Oman aligns itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Arab group. We express our appreciation to the work of the ILO and its efforts to strengthen the labour markets and social protection in Palestine. We would like to express our concern regarding the damage to the Palestinian workers and infrastructure in Palestine as a result of the violence and as a result of the deteriorating economic and social situation. We also express our concern with regards to the high levels of unemployment which undermines the livelihood of Palestinian workers, particularly women and the youth. Mr President, the world has followed the tragic events in Gaza, which have undermined the efforts aimed at improving the situation of the Palestinians, including the efforts by this organization through the development programmes and other programmes and initiatives aimed at alleviating the suffering of workers and their families as a result of discriminatory policies. In this regard, we condemn in the strongest possible terms the Israeli aggression against Gaza. And we condemn all the blatant violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupying powers, such as the bombing and killing of unarmed civilians, the use of weapons that are internationally banned and prohibited, which has caused the displacement of 1.7 million individuals, which is equal to three-quarters of the citizens of Gaza, who had to leave their homes due to the Israeli bombing and had to seek refuge in places of worship, hospitals, schools, such as schools belonging to the UNRWA which have also been targeted by the bombing and shelling of the Israeli occupying forces in clear violation of international humanitarian law and international conventions and instruments, starting with the resolutions and decisions of the ICJ. These ongoing violations undermine international principles of the international humanitarian law and undermine their credibility and

have serious repercussions on the Palestinian labour market where Palestinians have lost more than half a million jobs since the start of the Israeli aggression. The Israeli occupying forces have completely undermined what humanity has learned throughout history in terms of respect for human rights and values. And they have completely undermined and violated the principles of justice and equality. We do not know how the universities and academic institutions all over the world, how they can teach students about international law and its principles in light of these violations. The world's trust and confidence in justice and equality have been completely undermined. We no longer have faith in law. It is as if we live in a world that has failed to learn from past experiences and where the law of the jungle prevails. We call on the ILO to take the necessary measures to protect the rights of Palestinian workers and we call for granting Palestine full membership in the Organization. We call on the ILO to take the necessary measures to put an end to the practices by the Israeli Government and to put an end to the policy of collective punishment that is being perpetrated against Palestinian workers and against the Palestinian population in general. Thank you very much for your attention, and may the greetings and peace of God be upon you.

Mr Pieris Pieri

Worker (Cyprus)

Honourable members of the presidium, dear colleagues, dear delegates, in recent months humanity has witnessed the genocide of the Palestinian people by the State of Israel which, despite the global outcry, with the tolerance and support of its allies, continues to violate every principle of humanitarian law, to flout the rulings of the International Court of Justice. Thousands of innocent Palestinians have been killed, including many children, while many others were buried under the rubble. Tens of thousands are injured without access to medical treatment after the Israeli army destroyed all hospitals. As identified in the report we are debating today, the situation of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is extremely critical. The Israeli [vgr INAUDIBLE 41:17] preventing the access to humanitarian supplies have resulted in an extreme humanitarian crisis. The economy and labour market have collapsed. Workplaces are in ruins, and nearly one and a half million Palestinians are forcibly displaced into Rafah into inhumane conditions. The situation is also tragic in the West Bank where the economy is also in deep crisis, where thousands of jobs have been lost and the Palestinian workers need humanitarian aid. Humanity cannot remain indifferent to genocide, to war crimes and the violation of every human value by the State of Israel. The ILO must play a leading role in the current situation for the immediate termination of brutal crimes and the genocide against the Palestinians by the Government of Israel. Humanitarian aid must be channelled immediately to the people of Palestine in accordance with the Geneva Convention. On behalf of the workers of Cyprus, we express our unwavering support and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their right to an independent State on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Hfaeidh Hfaeidh

Worker (Tunisia)

Mr President, Mr Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, the Israeli occupying power has been waging a war for the past 243 days. It is a genocide war and a war that has been ongoing for 77 years, an aggression where all weapons have been used,

including weapons that are internationally prohibited and banned. This has led to more than 50,000 martyrs, most of whom women and children. This has also caused more than 100,000 injured and wounded and the complete destruction of the infrastructure, schools, hospitals, bakeries, and completely destroyed Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of Gazans who are already refugees since 1948 have had to seek refuge in new areas. And all this is taking place in light of a complete media blackout, during which more than 148 journalists have been targeted, in order to continue this killing without the world watching under the slogan 'Silence, murder is ongoing'. The destruction and killing of a complete population is ongoing in order to put an end to this just Palestinian cause and in order to realize the prophecy that says, "A land without a people for a people without a land". But the Palestinian struggle continues and represents all the free movements around the world. It continues to recover its rights, its land, its sovereignty to install peace and stability. The struggle of the Palestinian people is similar to the struggles that took place in Vietnam, Africa, Latin America and in other parts of the world. We must recognize the right of the Palestinian people to fight and to resist like all the other peoples of the world. We commend South Africa for its initiative and for the case that it brought before the International Court of Justice. We thank Spain, Ireland, Norway and other countries who recognize the State of Palestine. And we express our gratitude to the democratic forces around the world, particularly the students who have showed momentum and expressed their full support of the Palestinian people in the face of this Israeli Nazi aggression. They have tried to exert pressure on the world. We are now faced with a new generation that aims to put an end to this new colonialism. In the end, from this forum and from the International Labour Organization that is based on the values of peace and social justice, we call for an immediate cessation of this aggression, for opening the border crossings and allowing the unimpeded access to aid. We call for allowing the refugees to return to their homes, for the release of thousands of detainees in Israeli prisons. We call for recognizing the State of Palestine and giving it full membership in international organizations, including the ILO. We call for prosecuting the war crimes from the Israeli army on charges of genocide against the Palestinian people. There can be no peace as long as the Palestinian people do not recover their legitimate right and create an independent State with East Jerusalem as a capital. Victory to our martyrs. Victory to Palestine. Long live the Palestinian people.

Mr Ahmad Alenezi

Worker (Kuwait)

Mr President, dear representatives of governments, workers and employers, brothers and sisters, dear participants, may the peace and blessings of God be upon you. The world has painfully been following the escalating situation and the military operations perpetrated by the Zionist occupying forces against the workers and employers of Palestine in general and against Gaza in particular. We have all witnessed the genocide that led to the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, most of whom children, women and the elderly. We have witnessed the complete failure of basic necessities such as food, electricity, water and the complete destruction of hospitals, mosques, churches, houses, and the forced displacement and excessive use of internationally prohibited weapons. The Zionist occupying forces have targeted healthcare workers, journalists, and all of this was preceded by an unfair blockade that led to starvation and complete destruction. You are all aware that these aggressions and these practices completely violate international humanitarian law and international resolutions. Dear participants, in support of the Palestinian people and the workers of

Palestine, the general federation of workers in Kuwait has been in touch with international organizations and federations to call on them to uphold their responsibilities and exert pressure in all means possible to put an end to these brutal aggressions. We called for a statement that condemns these criminal operations that are targeting the people and workers of Palestine. We called for the expulsion of Zionists from the membership of international organizations and international federations, and called for the immediate access to humanitarian aid. In conclusion, the workers and workers' federations of Kuwait commend the position of principle of the Government and people and workers of Kuwait in full support of the Palestinian people to allow them to recover their legitimate rights and the creation of an independent State along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as a capital. We are present here today to reiterate our previous demands during this important sitting dedicated to the discussion of the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. We stress the importance of holding this sitting in future Conferences. May the souls of the martyrs of Palestine rest in peace. May the peace and blessing of God be upon you.

Mr Khaled Fanatsah

Worker (Jordan)

In the name of God, the most merciful. Mr President of the ILC, Mr Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, first of all we wish to thank the Director-General for his report. We are meeting here today to express our full solidarity with the Arab peoples in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in Palestine. The Palestinian cause is not simply a political cause. It is a humanitarian one that requires our full support and solidarity. Palestine is a state for a number of people who are under occupation. Palestinian people live in difficult and catastrophic conditions and are subjected to daily violence and persecution. They require our full support and solidarity to recover their freedom and justice. Jordan fully supports our brothers in Palestine in their struggle in their country, and their homeland and in their defence of Jerusalem and the Muslim and Christian holy sites. His Majesty King Abdullah has reiterated Jordan's refusal for any displacement of Palestinians. We have repeatedly denounced Israeli violations in the West Bank, particularly in Jerusalem and in Gaza as well. Settler violence and the escalation of violence will lead the region to the brink of despair. As representatives of workers in Jordan, we call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. This should be a priority in light of the catastrophic situation in the Strip. Israel must allow the immediate access to humanitarian aid all over Gaza. And here I would like to reiterate that Jordan is sparing no effort to support the Gazans and is working to put an end to this war, an unjust war and a war of destruction. It is clear that there is a change in international positions against the practices by Israel. In this regard, we stress the importance of a permanent political solution to achieve peace and the two-state solution. Under the aegis of His Majesty, we call on the international community and international organizations to put an end to the occupation. We call for an immediate ceasefire in the genocide against Gaza. We call for the opening of border crossings and allowing the humanitarian aid without any hurdles. We call for not dissociating Gaza and the West Bank. A just solution for the Palestinian people should allow the Palestinian people to establish an independent State along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as a capital. In conclusion, we call on the international community and international organizations to exert efforts to put an end to the occupation and the violations against the Palestinian people. We should work together for the creation of an independent

State. Let us speak in one voice, in full solidarity and support of the Palestinian people. Let us work hand in hand for a better world where we can enjoy peace and equality for all. May the peace and blessing of God be upon you.

Mr Utoni Nujoma

Government (Namibia)

Distinguished members of the presidium, Chairperson, since this is my first time to take the floor, I congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Conference. We thank the Director-General for the report and express our deep concern about the chronic socio-economic and humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Chairperson, in December 1978 the UN General Assembly reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in times of war of 12 August of 1949 applies to all Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem. Nevertheless, in 2024 the world continues to witness Israel's non-adherence to the principle of respect for the human person and for the basic rights of individuals. The past eight months have been the hardest for Palestinian workers since the occupation began in 1967. The devastating war in Gaza has wrought enormous death and destruction on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and caused loss of livelihoods. Over two million people live under intense Israeli bombardment. Over 34,000 deaths and 77,000 injuries have been recorded in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The statistics paint an alarming reality where innocent and defenceless women and children account for most of the fatalities. The Palestinian people have been experiencing the deliberate prevention of the provision of electricity and limited access to humanitarian supplies, including basics such as water and food. Hospitals and other crucial healthcare infrastructure have been deliberately targeted and rendered non-functional. These actions have resulted in an extreme humanitarian crisis. This is unconscionable. The hostilities must cease immediately. It is a painful reality that the war and humanitarian crisis have resulted in a shattered labour market: virtual destruction of the private sector, job losses of more than half a million jobs, lack of social protection and increasing violation of labour laws, of forced labour, of unpaid work, of informality, of use of barter system and mental health risks both for employers and workers. All the aforementioned are indicators that decent work has been completely disseminated and almost eliminated. The current situation requires the fostering of massive initiatives to rebuild, to create jobs and greatly expand cash transfers. Therefore, Namibia calls for the immediate ceasefire to allow for the reconstruction of activities to commence and for economic activities to resume as the current state of affairs is unacceptable under the watch of the international community. Chairperson, with the robustness and responsiveness of the body of international labour instruments in constantly changing patterns in the world of work, Namibia is confident that the ILO Recommendation No. 205 will provide overall guidance on how employment creation and decent work should be replaced at the forefront of recovery efforts and how to strengthen peace and resilience. Namibia supports the recommendations contained in the DG's report. In conclusion, our call for the two-state solution all along has not been in vain. This is evident in the new momentum within the international communities supporting full Palestinian statehood. A luta continua; a vitória é certa. Thank you.

Mr Alexander Yanez Deleuze

Government (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

We appreciate and would like to express our thanks for the very valuable report presented by the Director-General on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories which sets out the context in an impartial and objective fashion covering the complicated situation of Palestinian and other Arab workers. As the report states, the conflict, violence and tension continue to permeate the world of work in Palestine and have become an integral part of the life of workers. The report also warns us that the situation is most critical in Gaza. Workers in the blockaded enclave are trapped in poverty with few prospects of employment and even fewer opportunities for decent work. Of course we understand that the report was drawn up before the genocide that the occupying power is perpetrating against the Palestinian people. But the tragic circumstances of today oblige us to ask the question is it morally acceptable for the international community to come today to talk about the right of Palestinians to work when they cannot even be guaranteed the right to life? Is it possible to talk about the labour rights of people who are already condemned to death just because they are Palestinians? Mr Chairman, we think that the very significant discussion that we have been called on to enter in today has unfortunately been overtaken by the irrationality of the occupying power. And we could even say that this discussion ceases to make any sense given that negation of the right to exist of the subject that we are talking about is being maintained as policy and as action. We are talking about labour rights in the occupied Arab territories. But in the case of Gaza, the territory essentially does not exist. It has been submitted to the law of scorched earth. And as a result of that, in our view, in the light of the situation on the ground, it seems necessary not just to limit ourselves to talking about labour rights, because these rights at the moment are subordinate to the right to life. Today, where do the Palestinian people work? In what factory? In which market? In which hospital? In which office? Are we talking about labour rights among the ruins, the ashes and the bodies of children, women and men? I repeat we should first be talking about the right to life of Palestinian men, women and children. We should be talking about the right to life of the humanitarian workers who are being indiscriminately bombarded in the course of doing their duty. As our president Nicolás Maduro Moros has constantly stated, we in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continue to stand by the Palestinian people in its struggle and we join our voice to the continuous denunciations of the impunity of the crimes which are being committed there every day by the Western powers. To conclude, we join our voice to the words of the Director-General in the preface to his report: there is indeed no way that there can be social justice under the occupation. And we would add that today the occupation has turned into an exercise of extermination aiming to the elimination of any subject for whom rights could be demanded. Action has to be taken immediately. We are all responsible. We all have to call for and work for peace. Thank you.

Mr Igor Feketija

Government (Slovenia)

Esteemed Chair, Excellencies, colleagues, Slovenia thanks the International Labour Office for the report and adds the following to the statement by the EU, with which it in principle aligns. The plight of Palestinian workers has been a longstanding issue. The events of the past months, particularly following the Hamas attack on October 7 which

Slovenia has condemned, have aggravated an already dire situation and the predicament of the Palestinian workers. Even before the war, as noted in the Director-General's report, Palestinian workers were deprived of their basic rights that should be inalienable. They were denied free access to work. They were denied social security. They were obstructed when seeking justice before the courts of law. They were discriminated against in terms of wages and otherwise, and they were exposed to huge physical and mental health risks. These issues will remain pressing and urgent even once peace is restored. But at a time when countless workers, employers and their families have been displaced, rendered homeless or even killed, it is difficult to talk about labour relations or labour market at all. The devastation brought by the war in Gaza extends far beyond the world of work. The humanitarian situation is beyond words. Famine is spreading from north to south, and the healthcare system is on the brink of complete collapse with a disproportionate impact on civilians and the most vulnerable. Immediate and unhindered assistance is crucial. And with the world's attention focused on Rafah, we must not ignore the conditions elsewhere in Jabalia, Nuseirat, other parts of Gaza as well as the West Bank. Slovenia has been advocating for an immediate ceasefire since the beginning of the war. In the latest course of events, we also condemned the initiation of deadly operations in Rafah and we continue to insist that these actions must cease immediately. All parties must uphold the UN Charter and fully respect international law, including international humanitarian human rights law. There needs to be accountability for all violations and abuses of international humanitarian human rights law. I am pleased to report that on Tuesday this week, two days ago, Slovenia officially recognized the independent and sovereign State of Palestine, becoming the 11th EU country to do so. And we hope that this step, along with the actions of other countries that have recently recognized Palestine, sends another clear message of urgency of ceasefire, peace and political solutions and encourage further international support in that regards. Thank you.

Mr Francisco Carvajal

Government (Chile)

Chile would like to thank the Director-General for his report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories which tells us about a grave and persistent crisis characterized by violence, the displacement of a population and the deterioration of the economic situation and the working situation of Palestinian workers and their families. Faced with the aggravation of this crisis, the Chilean Government makes an urgent call for international action to restore social justice, decent work and the labour rights of the Palestinian people. Chile maintains its historical position on a peaceful solution to controversies and conflicts, promoting the two-state solution and the right of Israel and Palestine to live in peace, in safe frontiers recognized internationally, with full respect for human rights. Chile has unequivocally condemned the terrorist actions of Hamas, calling for immediate and unconditional release of the people that have been taken hostage. We equally categorically reject the violent actions perpetrated against the civilian Palestinian population, particularly women and children, and we express our profound concern about the military operation in Gaza. My government reiterates that the exercise of force in the framework of the legitimate defence of a State has to be guided by the principles of proportionality, discrimination and caution, established by international humanitarian law. In this context, Chile calls on the international community to work in the multilateral system to face up to this crisis, calling for an immediate cease of hostilities in Gaza, and we call on the parties to respect international

humanitarian law. In particular, Israel should comply with the provisional measures required by the International Court of Justice. Chile values the actions that have been engaged in by the ILO and various United Nations agencies as part of the emergency response plan. We also entirely agree with the Director-General's report that social justice is an essential condition to achieve lasting and universal peace. From the multilateral system, we would promote collective actions to find responses together which will provide for prosperity for workers and their families. Given that, it is essential to continue implementing coordinated measures with other agencies from the United Nations systems to respond to this humanitarian crisis in its various dimensions. We express our thanks for the efforts carried out to find a lasting solution to this crisis. In the framework of the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025, we would call for a renovation of the social contract which will make possible the advance of social justice in our societies. Thank you.

Mr Ortelio Palacio Cuesta

Worker (Brazil)

Director-General of the ILO, Gilbert Hounbo, on behalf of our delegate Miguel Torres, the President of Força Sindical, and on behalf of the other union organizations of Brazil, we congratulate you on your significant report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We are of the view that hate, the persecution of a people, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza and the genocide against the Palestinian people are incompatible with the development of humanity. We agree with you, Director-General, that these developments are incompatible with the fundamental standards and principles of the International Labour Organization. We, the Brazilian workers, absolutely reject the genocide, violence, persecution and the inhumane actions perpetrated against the Palestinian people. We also call for and demand the immediate and unconditional liberation of the hostages who have been taken to Gaza where they are being held, we presume also in inhumane conditions. We make an urgent call to the United Nations and to the international community to make every effort necessary to stop this massacre so that the massacre comes to an end, the massacre of the Palestinian people. Mr Director-General, we absolutely have to have a diplomatic solution and immediate recognition of the Palestinian State with its inalienable right to sustainable development and to live in peace with all other States and countries of the world. We, the majority of people of good judgement, have to struggle and work indefatigably for peace, for decent work, for sustainable development, for social justice and for peaceful and harmonious coexistence between peoples. Ladies and gentlemen, Director, President, it is not possible to let this small number of destructive people prevail. The peaceful people are the majority. Let us recall history. The ILO was founded after the disaster of the First World War, and the UN was created after the disaster of the Second World War. And in the course of the 21st century, now humanity is still threatened by the same destructive minds. That is what we cannot allow to happen, Mr Director-General. This conference should be turned into a cry for peace in the world. Thank you very much.

Mr Per Olav Skurdal Hopsø

Government (Norway)

President, Director-General, ministers, representatives of workers and employers, representatives from Palestine and Israel. The international community is faced with tremendous challenges in addressing the developments in the Middle East and the war between Israel and Hamas. Norway has condemned Hamas' heinous terrorist attacks in the strongest possible terms and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages. We have repeatedly called for a ceasefire in Gaza, demanded unhindered humanitarian access and have issued a strong warning to Israel to refrain from a military operation in Rafah. We are appalled that yet another school in Gaza has been bombed and that many civilians have once again been killed. We welcome the efforts for a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire in Gaza presented by President Biden. We encourage all parties to negotiate and implement in good faith. The ILO assessment is that the Palestinian unemployment rate has ascended to 57% during the first quarter of 2024. A loss of more than 500,000 jobs in Gaza and the West Bank sheds light on the socio-economic impacts on the State of Palestine. Unemployment in Palestine is high and the daily income loss is so grave that we see an economic and social crisis. The lack of food, electricity, water, medicines and healthcare is a disaster for the people of Gaza. Businesses have been destroyed, the population is starving. The Norwegian Government announced on 22nd May that Norway will recognize Palestine as a State, in effect from 28th May. This highlights the long-held Norwegian position that a lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East can only be achieved through a two-state solution. Mr President, we would like to thank the ILO for their important work on the very challenging circumstances in Palestine. We believe that it is crucial that the ILO continues its efforts in order to respond to immediate needs and calls for urgent assistance from workers and employers in Palestine. To conclude, Mr President, the dire situation for Palestine tells us that the suffering will not end when the war finally does. The long-term contributor to the ILO's unearmarked, voluntary funding modality, the RBSA, we value how the RBSA allows the ILO to respond quickly to rapidly changing contexts such as the ones we see in Gaza today. Thank you, Mr President.

Mr Noel White

Government (Ireland)

President and distinguished guests, Ireland aligns with the statement by the EU earlier today. I want to thank the Director-General, Mr President, for his report. We are, of course, disappointed that Israel would not accommodate the annual ILO mission, and I want to acknowledge the efforts that the Office has made to gather the data presented. Ireland calls on Israel to facilitate future ILO missions so that the Organization can properly carry out its mandate. As is noted in the Director-General's report, prior to the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, the labour situation was already challenging. But since then, of course, the labour market has collapsed and labour rights have been decimated. The negative consequences have devastated workers' rights, including those set out in the international labour standards. At a time when we are discussing the fundamental principles and rights at work and social justice, labour standards in the Gaza Strip have fallen to the lowest point and social justice is but a distant hope as workers and employers struggle for very survival. The ILO and its constituents will be vital to restoring decent work and social justice, in rebuilding labour standards in the

Occupied Palestinian Territory. Ireland supports the Director-General in his recommendations that Israel should consider reopening its labour market to Palestinian workers. As stated, it is essential that trust is rebuilt to the benefit of both sides. Ireland calls also, Chairman, for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire, a massive scale-up of humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip, reaching those who need it most, and for the unconditional release of all hostages. Ireland reiterates that the protection of civilians must be paramount. It is an obligation under international humanitarian law, and it is essential that there is accountability for civilian deaths. Ireland urges Israel to comply with the provisional measures made by the International Court of Justice. President, in conclusion, the Declaration of Philadelphia asserts that lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. We must now work with renewed vigour to achieve it. Thank you.

Mr Jérôme Bonnafont

Government (France)

Mr President, France aligns itself with the statement made by the EU, by the Belgian presidency, and thanks the Office for its report which draws attention to the dramatic situation which Palestinian workers in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem are living in. And in doing so, it places our organization before its responsibilities. The current tragedy must be placed into context. France reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of the terrorist attacks of Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel on the 7th October and calls for the immediate release, without exception or condition, of all hostages, a point which should require no discussion. The legitimate right of Israel to defend itself to ensure its security is one that Israel should exercise while respecting international humanitarian law, as should all parties. France is very concerned by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Given the scope of this tragedy, France calls, and has done for a number of weeks already, for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire which would allow for the protection which the civilian population needs. Given the urgency of the humanitarian situation, it is essential to ensure safe transit and unhindered distribution of humanitarian aid. International humanitarian law must be respected. Given the indescribable suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, France is fully mobilized with international organizations and its partners in the region to provide the necessary humanitarian aid to them. When speaking of workers, France is aware of the devastating impact of the conflict, of the destruction, deprivations, the violence, the deaths and the end of all economic activity and the forcible unemployment of workers in Gaza as well as those in the West Bank who are working in Israel. France welcomes the commitment of the ILO, and in particular that of its agents who have been working tirelessly to provide immediate aid to workers and their families, to follow as closely as possible the impact of the crisis on the labour market, employment and businesses. Furthermore, we support the efforts of looking to the future and preparing for the day after, looking to the conditions for reconstruction based on international labour standards and decent work within the framework of the emergency response programme. The situation of workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory cannot be considered without bearing in mind the urgent need for peace and for a political solution with regional and international partners, including the United Nations Security Council. France is mobilized on the diplomatic level to achieve a sustainable political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which gives each of these peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, the benefit of all their legitimate rights on the basis of the two-state solution. Thank you.

Ms Aïssatou Abdoulaye Tondi

Government (Niger)

Niger would like to thank the Director-General for organizing this special session and for his report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. My delegation is appalled by the content of this report. It is an affront to our humanity and it calls upon a collective conscience. Our organization, the mandate of which is to promote social justice both in peacetime as well as during war, is therefore acting within its mandate by taking up this matter. And as the Director-General has said, social justice is incompatible with the occupation, an occupation that is taking place through an air and land blockade, transforming Palestine into an open-air prison with restrictions on the freedom to come and go, humiliation, suffering, physical violence and daily killings, the enslavement of women, men and the children of Palestine, as well as the destruction of vital infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, businesses and homes. For today and for tomorrow, this occupation and its dehumanizing consequences, including the violation of international law, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, the violations of ILO Conventions and destruction, devastation and massacres that are still ongoing in Gaza, we must say that it is only the occupying power that is responsible for this. Such a situation must end immediately and give rise to a permanent ceasefire in order to give hope to rebuilding the labour market and implementing the Decent Work Agenda and providing a lasting and definitive solution to the conflict. To that end, Niger calls on all ILO constituents to implement or to contribute to implementing the recommendations contained in the Report of the Director-General. Niger also calls on the Israeli authorities to provide unhindered access to the ILO team so that they can provide adequate assistance to the Palestinian people. Finally, Niger expresses its profound solidarity with the State and people of Palestine. Thank you.

Mr Simon Manley

Government (United Kingdom)

The UK, like so many others in this hall today, wants to bring the conflict in Gaza to a sustainable end as quickly as possible. We are shocked by the sheer scale of the loss of lives and livelihoods of both Israelis and Palestinians. Back on the 7th of October last year Israel suffered the deadliest terrorist attack in its history, and almost 250 days later and Hamas continues to hold countless hostages. In Gaza, as we all know, the situation is desperate. Palestinian civilians face a devastating and growing humanitarian crisis. We again urge Israel to let humanitarian aid enter Gaza through all available crossings, including Rafah. Mr Chair, the UK is grateful to the Director-General and all the staff of the ILO for their vital engagement. In particular, we commend the ILO staff who have been working tirelessly to implement the emergency response programme under the most extraordinarily challenging circumstances. And we of course regret, like others, that the annual mission could not take place in its usual format. Both Palestinian and Israeli labour markets have been affected by this crisis. The absence of a functioning labour market in Gaza, rising rates of unemployment and the effects on vulnerable workers, not least women and those with disabilities, is of course particularly concerning. This has only been compounded by the destruction of businesses. Chair, colleagues, if we are to stop the loss of life and allow the rebuilding of the labour market in both the West Bank and Gaza, the fighting needs to stop now. The fastest way to end

the conflict is to secure a deal which gets the hostages out and allows for a pause in the fighting in Gaza. We must then all work together to turn that pause into a sustainable, permanent ceasefire. Chair, the UK supports an irreversible two-state solution that guarantees security and prosperity and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The UK has offered support to the Palestinian Authority to implement much needed reforms, and we encourage labour and social policy reforms to be resumed at the appropriate time. An effective Palestinian Authority is vital for lasting peace and progress towards a two-state solution. But just as the Palestinian Authority must act, so must Israel. That means releasing frozen funds, halting settlement expansion and holding to account those responsible for extremist settler violence. The UK has already moved to ban those responsible for violence in the West Bank from entering our country and announced new sanction designations against four extremist Israeli settlers. So, Chair, in closing, let us join together today in this hall at this conference to renew our collective commitment to end the suffering, end the violence and reach a long-term solution to this crisis. It is well beyond time for it to end. Thank you.

Ms Milexsy Guizado Faez

Worker (Cuba)

Director-General, delegates, Chair, on behalf of the Workers Central Union of Cuba, its national trade unions and Cuban workers, we wish to thank the organizers of the 112th International Labour Conference for the opportunity to express solidarity and full support to our Palestinian brothers and sisters. The world of work is facing an increasing number of challenges in the Arab region. They can only be addressed and resolved by means of joint efforts and alliances that are multilateral. The Global Coalition for Social Justice is an initiative that recognizes the importance of pooling efforts in order to achieve a more socially just world. Chair, the ILO has the constitutional duty to step up action to put an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to free all hostages. We demand peace and justice for the Palestinian people and urge all those here present to express their firm opposition to the brutal, excessive and disproportionate Israeli aggression. Indeed, it has caused the death and suffering of thousands of innocent people, mainly women, children, healthcare and humanitarian personnel. Cuban workers condemn extreme violence against the Palestinian people and demand that the Israeli Government listens to the international community's call for a ceasefire. We reiterate our belief in the urgency of a far-reaching, just and long-lasting solution to this conflict so as to guarantee self-determination for the Palestinian people. It is time to act and join the fight, to mobilize international public opinion and join people of good faith from across the globe to put an end to 75 years of exile, occupation and conflict which has caused the loss of means of subsistence and jobs in Gaza and the West Bank, which has damaged both workers and their families. We demand that there be unity, that we unite to reflect and mainly take strong action. There is nothing to justify the fact that Israel may continue violating all the resolutions in place and the demands of most nations. It is unacceptable to remain passive in the face of such barbarity in the middle of the 21st century. If we remain silent, then we are complicit with genocide and crimes against humanity. Thank you.

Ms Nadzirah Osman
Government (Malaysia)

Malaysia takes note of the Director-General's report on the dire situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. It is deeply regrettable that the ILO report yet again illustrates the solemn truth of the precarious situation of the Palestinian people. The Israeli regime's relentless, merciless and deliberate genocidal actions against the Palestinians violates the ruling by the International Court of Justice and has brought unimaginable destruction that led the already fragile Palestinian labour market to further collapse. The international community must hold Israel accountable for its actions and ensure that the rights of Palestinian workers are respected. Palestinian workers deserve to enjoy the same rights as everyone else, as provided by the international labour standards and ILO fundamental principles. Mr Chair, given the severe depletion of resource due to the war, the international community's support in this regard is utmost crucial to rebuild and enhance the Palestinian economy's human capital. Without this support, the long-term recovery and sustainable development of a self-sufficient Palestinian labour market will remain unattainable. To this end, Malaysia calls for the National Employment Strategy 2021-2025 to be reviewed to accommodate new needs in the Palestinian labour market following the devastation in Gaza and its impact on the West Bank. Malaysia earnestly hopes that the ILO will continue to support reinforcing the Decent Work Agenda and social justice for all Palestinians during this critical time, albeit facing unprecedented challenges and constraints due to the unrelenting attacks and severely deteriorating situation. Malaysia also call on new and renewed funding from donors to sustain the ILO's activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to yield positive outcomes towards the enhancement of employment and livelihood opportunities for Palestinian workers and their families. Mr Chair, Malaysia supports Palestine's commitment to have close cooperation with the ILO in various initiatives and believes that this will pave the way forward in strengthening Palestine's national capacities. Malaysia firmly believes that development cooperation, technical assistance and capacity-building provided by the ILO and international partners remain crucial and should continue to be strengthened to mitigate and assist the Palestinian labour sector. However, these efforts can only succeed with an immediate cessation of hostilities and a permanent ceasefire. Chair, Malaysia reiterates its unwavering support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital as well as the admission of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations. To conclude, Chair, Malaysia supports the concluding observations and recommendations stated in Paragraphs 172 to 189 of the Director-General's report. I thank you, Chair.

Mr Nasser Abdulaziz Aljaryad

Worker (Saudi Arabia)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. His Excellency the President of the Conference, Your Excellency Director-General, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the coordinating council of labour unions and committees in the Gulf Cooperation Council, I am pleased to praise the report of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories which highlighted the suffering of Palestinian workers under the Israeli occupation. We also appreciate the Organization's efforts to support Palestinian workers and call for making every possible effort to improve their situation. We strongly condemn the Israeli

occupation forces' continued crimes against Palestinian workers and people, which constitute a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We call on the international community to assume its responsibilities to stop these violations against the Palestinian civilians and workers. Ladies and gentlemen, the coordinating council of labour unions and committees in the Gulf Cooperation expresses its rejection and condemnation of the heinous crimes committed and being committed by the Israeli occupation forces against our fellow workers and the people of Palestine in Gaza, including the horrific massacres targeting civilians, which is a crime against humanity. These horrific crimes have led to the martyrdom of thousands of civilians, including children, the elderly, women and many others wounded and injured. While the council rejects attacks on peaceful civilians in any form, it affirms the condemnation of these brutal attacks on hospitals and health facilities which are a flagrant violation of all international laws and norms including international humanitarian law. It also expresses its condemnation of the Israeli occupation's failure to stop its continued attack against civilians, despite many international appeals. The council calls for lifting the siege on our brothers in Gaza, protecting its workers and evacuating the injured in response to the distress calls launched by countries and organizations to deliver food and medicine to civilians besieged in Gaza and to adhere to international laws and norms, international humanitarian law, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly. The council affirms its solidarity and full support with the people and workers of dear Palestine in their great hour of need in the face of the heinous crimes against the people of Gaza. At the same time it extends its sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and the injured, asking the Almighty's mercy for the martyrs, and may they rest in peace, and solace to their families. Finally, the ILO, which has its long history and firm commitment to workers' rights, is able to play the pivotal role in addressing this challenge by strengthening, monitoring an inspection mechanism, providing technical assistance and training to workers and trade unions, and cooperating with international partners. The Organization can contribute significantly to improving the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We call on the international community to assume its moral and legal responsibilities towards workers in the occupied Arab territories. We must all work together to ensure that the rights of these workers are respected and they are protected from exploitation and discrimination. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that achieving just and comprehensive and lasting peace in the region will not be achieved without guaranteeing the rights of the workers in the occupied Arab territories. It is a basic human right and it is a basic condition for achieving development and sustainable peace. Thank you.

Mr Jorge Bermúdez

Worker (Uruguay)

Chair, we have taken note of the report that was presented by the Director-General of this conference and we express our great concern because it contains information about the fact that the State of Israel has refused to receive the annual mission of the ILO. This has prevented this mission to enter in direct contact with the situation in the West Bank, in Gaza, Israel and the Syrian Golan Heights. The situation is generating a situation in which this long-term conflict has been relaunched due to a terrorist attack and the hostage taking by Hamas last October. Then there was the indiscriminate military response by the State of Israel which means that the civil population of Palestine is suffering greatly. The workers of Uruguay demand the following. An immediate stop

to the massacre committed by the State of Israel by means of its armed forces, because it is attacking the Palestinian people, mainly women and children. Two, the immediate release by Hamas of the Israeli hostages. Three, a stop to the support by the United States who aim to protect their military and economic interests in the region and for whom the State of Israel is its main ally. Four, the United Nations must take the lead to demand the ceasefire in the region in order to reopen the route to dialogue and to find a final solution to this conflict. And five, the full respect of the right to self-determination of all peoples. In this case it means that we need to defend the right of the Palestinian people to construct a free and sovereign State. The PIT-CNT shares the thoughts of the Director-General in his report when he says that social justice and occupation are not compatible. Occupation must end. Moreover, the solution to this long-lasting conflict must be based on the constitution of a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine, who may coexist in peace and in security. There is no other alternative possible. Chair, to uphold the ILO's precepts of social justice and decent work, it is necessary to urgently put an end to the violent conflicts in the world today as well as those who are in the making and to prevent the environmental disaster that is currently threatening human life on the planet. Thank you very much.

Mr João Barreiros

Worker (Portugal)

Thank you, Chair. The CGTP-IN in Portugal has always held solidarity with the Palestinian cause. This is not a debate about what has happened over the past eight months. It is a debate about the important report about what is going on year after year and the consequences of decades of brutal Israeli occupation. The report talks of the consequences of the occupation and the non-opening to access to the occupied territories. The consequence of the aggression of Israel against Gaza has caused over 35,000 deaths, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations has said, and there is no comparison to this. We denounce the genocide that is ongoing. We cannot ignore decades of oppression and violence that the Palestinian population is undergoing. The report of last year spoke about high unemployment levels, but today we are talking about Israeli bombs that are destroying lives, their futures and also practically all employment in Gaza. Moreover, there is a policy of apartheid which is imposing high levels of unemployment to the Palestinian workers in Israel and that stops them from going home. They are humiliating and discriminating against the Palestinian people, and this is also written in the report. In the West Bank too there is an increase of aggressive military action, violence and persecution, humiliation and the destruction of jobs, which is increasing. We cannot ignore the military support, financial support and political support of the United States and its allies. Portugal, 50 years ago, freed itself from a fascist dictatorship and from colonial wars. It created its constitution and gave the people the right to self-determination and independence. We believe in the abolition of imperialism, colonialism and all forms of aggression and the exploitation of the different peoples. Unfortunately, different governments in my country have not put enough effort into stopping the brutal aggression against Palestine. We now demand a ceasefire and long-lasting peace and the recognition by Portugal of the State of Palestine. We believe that, thanks to solidarity and the support of the ILO, we will be able to achieve peace in Palestine and there will be a free Palestine which is independent and sovereign and it will be a full-right member of this house. Thank you.

Ms Deirdre O'Connor

Worker (Ireland)

Mr President, it is an honour to speak to this 44th Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories on behalf of the workers of Ireland. It is crucial that this house, so committed to social justice, retains a focus on what is happening in the occupied territories, especially at a time which the report correctly calls a catastrophic situation. Since the horrific attacks by Hamas on October the 7th, the Israeli response had killed more than 36,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including women and children, injured and maimed thousands more and traumatized the whole population. The education and health sectors are destroyed and livelihoods are shattered. Unemployment is at an all-time high. All of this is imposed on a population that has been subjected to a 17-year blockade by land, air and sea. Over the years, reports of the DG have noted how laws applied in the West Bank and East Jerusalem systematically discriminate against Palestinians. This is clearly a system of apartheid, as human rights groups, including in Israel itself, have concluded. The report draws attention to the international law context of the situation, including unprecedented rulings by the ICJ that Israel has a prima facie case to answer under the Genocide Convention. Further rulings have since been issued calling on Israel to halt the attacks on Rafah, and applications for arrest warrants have been filed at the ICC. All have been ignored by the Government of Israel. Mr President, in a very welcome move, our government recently recognized the State of Palestine, an important affirmation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and sovereignty. We also welcome our government's request, with the Government of Spain, for a review of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and the decision of the EU to convene a meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council to assess compliance with its human rights obligations. Trade with Israeli settlements, which we have now formally declared to be part of the Palestinian State, must now stop and our government must reconsider its position on the Occupied Territories Bill. Failure by the international community to impose sanctions has created Israeli ability to act with impunity and led to this catastrophic situation. We now urge the Irish Government to take leadership on sanctions. Failure to do so will see the continuation of Israel's impunity. Thank you.

Mr Mohammed Alobaidli

Gulf Cooperation Council

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. Distinguished Director-General of the ILO, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, participants, may God's peace be upon you. On behalf of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and Kuwait, on behalf of all of these countries I would like to express my gratitude to the ILO for preparing this excellent document, particularly after having received the confirmation that the occupying authorities prohibited the ILO mission from carrying out its duty. Ladies and gentlemen, we need more than just a few words to express our disappointment regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation, in particular the situation of workers and the destruction of livelihoods and entire lives in the Gaza Strip. This is obviously something that can make us lose all faith in international institutions. Social justice, which was emphasized in the Report of the Director-General, is incompatible with the occupation which destroys livelihoods and which has been carried out by the

destructive machinery of the Israeli army and which prevents all development from taking place. These actions are not sustainable. That is what the Director-General said in his report. He said that the period covered by the report is the most difficult period experienced by the occupied Arab territories since 1967. This is why we need more consultation and cooperation between different regions of the world to bring an end to this situation and to consolidate stability and peace and to move progressively towards development and growth. This has been going on for decades now, and we must call upon the international community so that we are mobilized and we stand together with the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This is how we can deal with the situation, otherwise the situation will not improve. We have seen the successive wars that Gaza has experienced over past decades, and we are waking up too late, unfortunately. We can see that there are a number of threats occurring at the moment, and we must save human life and bring an end to this war and mitigate the humanitarian crisis which has been worsened by the war so that international organizations can first assess the humanitarian situation and then work to establish a situation of lasting and fair peace. It is vital to demand that the occupying authorities respect all labour standards in the occupied Arab territories, particularly those linked to the fundamental principles and rights at work and to ensure a dignified life. Thirdly, we call upon the ILO and its relevant mechanisms to demand that the occupying authorities respect its Conventions. And we would like the Governing Body, during its next session, to inform us of the implementation of the recommendations in the report. And we demand that the occupying authorities comply with different international decisions and recommendations, including those taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council, and this will help us to implement ILO decisions. And compensation must be paid to Palestinian workers who have been dismissed from their work, including those people who have been displaced in Gaza. Thank you. And I would also like to commend the work of the relevant mission. Thank you.

Mr Stephen Russell

Worker (United Kingdom)

We welcome the ILO's report and the clear recognition that the past months have been disastrous for Palestinian workers. Last week the Trades Union Congress' General Council issued a new statement which I have been asked to share. It called again, *inter alia*, for an immediate, permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages unharmed. We unequivocally condemned the attacks by Hamas on 7th of October and called for the respect of international law. Thousands of Palestinians have been killed or injured through Israeli military operations. Public infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, has been targeted. Workers, including journalists, health and aid workers, have been killed while doing their jobs. Famine is rife in northern Gaza and is spreading. Children are dying. The ICC has accused leaders in the Israeli Government and Hamas of alleged war crimes and the Israeli Government of using starvation as a weapon of war, prohibited under the Rome Statute. The Israeli Government must allow UNRWA to continue providing humanitarian aid across Gaza. The ICJ has issued binding provisional measures which include that Israel takes all measures within its power to prevent acts prohibited by the Genocide Convention and that it takes immediate and effective measures to enable humanitarian relief for Gaza and to immediately halt its military offensive in Rafah. States have obligations to prevent and punish the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity. We condemn also the increase in settler violence and expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank. We have asked our government

to, and I list, call for an immediate, permanent ceasefire; enable prompt, effective access to humanitarian aid with funding to UNRWA resumed; work to secure the safe release of all hostages unharmed; work with the international community to ensure that international law is upheld and applied consistently, including ending the occupation of Palestinian territory; insist that Israel complies in full with the measures issued by the ICJ; take action to ensure that it is not complicit in any war crimes; stop direct arms sales to Israel, along with all collaboration between our armed forces, and encourage partner governments to do the same while working with unions in our defence sector to protect our wider defence alliances and partnerships in order to support jobs in communities that will be impacted by any action; recognize the State of Palestine; ensure that decent work and quality public services are prioritized in the rebuilding of Gaza; halt trade talks with Israel and ban the UK's trade in settlement goods; and protect the right to peaceful protest in solidarity with the Palestinian people. There must be a just, lasting and comprehensive peace that is consistent with international law and is based on a two-state solution and which promotes equality, democracy and respect for human and labour rights. We stand with the millions peacefully protesting, including in Israel, for a ceasefire and for democracy and human rights everywhere. Thank you.

Ms Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar

Government (Mexico)

Mexico is sorry about the occurrences in Gaza. Over 36,000 people have died and many have been injured, including women and children, and millions have been displaced. The hostilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the indiscriminate attacks against the civil population must be stopped immediately because they are a violation of international law. This has also been dictated by the International Court of Justice. Restrictions must also be lifted for the movement of goods and of people to protect the population of Gaza and allow them means of subsistence. Moreover, the permanent opening of the borders through which humanitarian aid can pass must be guaranteed. There is a serious crisis that is ongoing at the moment that is having a severe impact on the labour market in Palestine, and this is impacting the workers and their families. There is also a loss of practically all jobs in Palestine, including in the Gaza Strip. The ILO was unable to send its mission. And we demand that the workers' rights be defended as well as the employers' rights as fast as possible, indeed immediately. The three different stages in the report have been described, and we demand that a solution be found so that jobs be found again. The coordination of the humanitarian action and other players must be guaranteed in order to preserve the security of workers as well as that of the ILO workers who are in the territory. There is terrorism and violent extremism in all forms that must be prevented, and we demand the immediate release of all hostages. Israel must also act in full respect of international law. The basic principles of international law must be respected and the causes of the conflict must be analysed. We will continue witnessing such cycles of violence and destruction unless the root causes are addressed. A full solution to the conflict must be found that will put an end to the occupation and ensure the security of the populations in both Israel and Palestine, ensure that economic subsistence is ensured, and this must be done in respect of the resolutions of the UN. Thank you very much.

Mr Tuur Elzinga

Worker (Netherlands)

Social justice and occupation are incompatible. The occupation of the Arab territories must end, and a solution of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security must be pursued with renewed vigour. There is no alternative. One can only agree with these words of the Director-General as we have no words for the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and its disproportionate effect on civilians, in particular children, with already tens of thousands of victims. We call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and full compliance with international law, with the aim of a lasting peace. Resolution 2728 of the UN Security Council calling for a ceasefire must be respected. All hostages held by Hamas following the terror attack of October 7th must be released unconditionally. Due judicial process that conforms with international law must be established for detained Palestinians. All workers, including Palestinian and migrant workers, who are currently trapped due to the conflict must be free to return home. We call for compensation for the more than 10,000 Palestinian workers who lost their jobs overnight in Israel after October 7th. We strongly condemn Israel's intention to declare UNRWA a terrorist organization. On the contrary, it is an internationally respected UN relief organization for over one million Palestinians. Already more than 170 staff members of the organization have lost their lives due to military violence. Therefore, we call upon governments to maintain and increase their support as UNRWA fulfils a crucial role in the aid and support given to the Palestinian people. As stated in the DG's report on the occupied territories, prior to the war Gaza already did not have many jobs to offer. Deprivation was already dominant. What was left lays in rubble. Jobs and labour rights seem like a luxury between destruction, displacement, killing and hunger. The only words I have left are cease fire now.

Ms Cathy Feingold

Worker (United States)

Mr President, I want to thank the Director-General for creating this important space for dialogue. The AFL-CIO, the American union federation representing 12.5 million workers, joins the global community in expressing our deep concern regarding the crisis in Gaza, including the indiscriminate targeting of innocent workers and their families, the majority of whom are children. While we have repeatedly condemned the October 7th attacks by Hamas, we continue to mourn the senseless and tragic loss of tens of thousands of Palestinian lives during this crisis. We join the global labour movement in demanding an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is cruel, unjustified and must end now. We also support the global labour movement's call for the release of all the hostages as well as others held without judicial process, the creation of a humanitarian corridor, support for the continued work of the ILO, and we call on Israel to open the crossing to allow for the safe passage of desperately needed shelter, food, medicine and other humanitarian assistance to defenceless workers in Gaza. I echo the words of ITUC General-Secretary, Luc Triangle, during the recent global union delegation to Palestine, "Trade unions are part of the global peace movement. We stand for peace alongside such important values as democracy and humanity." Our stance is deeply rooted in the core principles of the American labour movement and the global labour movement. We fight for social and economic justice for all workers. We stand for peace and we stand up for the rights of

the oppressed and all working people around the world. However, as the Director-General's report notes, this is impossible under war and occupation. We dedicate ourselves to overcome oppression and cruelty in all their forms. We resolve to fulfil the yearning of the human spirit for liberty, justice and community. We stand by the International Trade Union Confederation's long-standing positions against illegal occupation in favour of a just and durable peace through the full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. We reaffirm and strongly express our support for a two-state solution for long-term peace and security. The global community must act with urgency to ensure a hopeful and just future for all working people and their families. Ceasefire now.

Mr Hassan Fakhri

Worker (Lebanon)

Distinguished President of the Conference, Director-General, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, no social justice can be achieved under occupation. And I begin with what was said by His Excellency the Director-General in his report. If occupation is the worst form of oppression, what about an occupation that has lasted more than 70 years, which is the occupation of Palestine by Israel? As I come from Lebanon, a country that has suffered and continues to suffer from the Israeli aggression and occupation, unwarranted, illegal and heinous, we wanted to take the Director-General to see in his own eyes the affected areas. However, we welcome the resistance and all the free forces that stand by the freedom of people against occupation. The ILO, on the basis of its constitution and its principles, is required to provide more than one emergency programme to redress the effect of the aggression. It is also required to deal with the roots of the problem, which is the occupation. It is required to reflect this in all its activities, resolutions and texts until the occupation is withdrawn and democracy and legality is restored. The south of Lebanon, which suffers the destruction of its infrastructure, its fields, its crops, its fruits, when they have used cluster bombs, all sorts of burning bombs and the demolition of their homes and their fields and their livelihoods, today they have nothing. Today we ask everybody to stand in solidarity with the martyrs of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria in order to push back this aggression and this brutal occupation. We hope that our voice today will be heard. Ceasefire now and restoration of rights.

Mr Abdou Idrees

Employer (Palestine)

Greetings from Palestine. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, President of the Conference, Director-General, heads of delegations and members of delegations, warm greetings from Palestine, and we wish this conference every success. We seize this opportunity to extend our deep thanks to all the free thinkers in the world, to all the trade unions, to all the civil society, to the governments who have refused to accept this aggression on the Palestinian people, to the ILO and its sectors. And we hope that the Report of the Director-General will be translated into concrete actions on the ground to improve the situation of the workers in Palestine and to put an end to the inhumane practices of the Israeli army. We hope that, on the basis of the international legality. As Palestinian people, we have the right to enjoy freedom and independence, to have the right of movement, the liberty of expression. 70% of the land of Palestine is separated

by the heinous wall which disrupts trade and work and progress as well as what is called Area C. And this Area C contains the majority of the natural resources of Palestine as well as the possibility of having an industrial area to create job opportunities for the youth and for the future. Today the genocide against the Palestinian people has entered its ninth month. 120,000, the majority of them children and women, have died. Moreover, no need to mention the demolition of hospitals, schools, homes, infrastructure, factories. I believe 70%, according to the latest statistics, have been completely destroyed in the private sector in Gaza by the Israeli army. And moreover, we must not forget what is taking place in the West Bank. Since before the war, and since the 7th of the October, and before that, there have always been incursions and deprivation of the Palestinian people of enjoying secure employment. And we in Palestine suffer daily aggressions everywhere in the West Bank against our people in Palestine by the Israeli occupation forces. Confiscation of land, confiscation of finances, confiscation of resources, withholding of the taxes that are accrued for the Palestinians which Israel is withholding and depriving the Palestinians from it, which is causing dire need. Israel, being the occupation force, does not allow the workers' and employers' organizations to work in peace, does not allow them to progress, and there are millions of dollars. More than 500,000 employee is not workers (sic). Unemployment has reached 45%, plus the destruction of all the enterprises. Today we are sure that we are facing an economic catastrophe. Today we call for immediate ceasefire. We call for the cessation of this war and aggression against the Palestinian people. We call for the non-use of starvation against a peaceful civilian population. And we call for you to call for the due process to take place as far as supporting and being in solidarity with Palestine. How many more people need to die before we can all say our word to stop the war? Every day we are losing women, children, workers. The Palestinian people are one of the most peace-loving people and sustainable development is their desire. However, we need this war to stop. We need this aggression to stop. We need to sign a peace treaty. I believe that I can speak on behalf of the Palestinian workers and say we need peace today. We need this aggression to stop today. The United Nations, the ILO, the OHCHR, they all need to work in earnest to realize the social justice that they speak of and to allow the Palestinian people to enjoy their human rights, their economic rights, their right to life, the children's right for a good childhood. Thank you.

Mr Tawfik El Abbar

Employer (Libya)

Chair, as a representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Libya, I would like to thank the Director-General for his report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. This report reflects the bitter reality of workers in Palestine and in the occupied Arab territories. This report highlights the continued escalation of violence and the collapse of the labour market and of livelihoods in Gaza and in the West Bank. This continued offensive has caused an economic, social and humanitarian crisis that has paralysed all aspects of economic life in the country. We condemn the gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law and the continued and endless occupation. All of this deprives the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination, its right to return and to economic, social and cultural development. Despite the suffering of the Palestinian people for a number of years, today they are living in hell on earth and have been doing so for almost eight months now. The world has not been able to ensure a permanent ceasefire, although more than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed, the majority of which are women and children.

More than 15,000 children have been killed during this genocide, and this has caused the displacement of around 1.7 million people who have become IDPs, and that is more than three-quarters of the entire population of Gaza. We often hear that everyone pays great importance to social justice, and we call for compensation to be paid to Palestinian workers as a result of the Israeli occupation. And we also call on rapid intervention, and we call for immediate support to more than 5,000 workers in Palestine who do not have a home or employment. And we have also seen that labour accidents have significantly increased in the area and the GDP has reduced by almost 80% in the last quarter of 2023, and thus, residents are really dependent on assistance. We call upon the Director-General to contain these comments in the conclusions of this meeting and to clarify how we can implement the recommendations contained in his report because the occupying powers are not responding to any decisions or recommendations issued by the UN. And we urge the Director-General to visit the occupied Arab territories so that he can see first-hand the situation of workers in those areas and so that he can determine the obstacles that prevent the implementation of these recommendations and so we can support constituents in the occupied Arab territories. We particularly commend his report for asking for an end to the war, and we think that this is the only way to rebuild the country. And we insist on the need to implement mechanisms to guarantee the execution of these recommendations within a clear timeframe and in line with the mandate of this organization. Thank you.

Mr Hassan Hamid Hassan Hamid

Government (Sudan)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Sudan presents this declaration as a nation. We join our voice to that of Egypt. We wish to thank the Director-General for his report. Chair, in view of the catastrophic situation in Gaza, this year can be considered the most difficult year ever for the Palestinian people and for the Palestinian workers. These workers have lost their means of subsistence. Work is becoming a very rare commodity. Everything is completely paralyzed in Gaza. Unemployment rates have reached record levels, and this is due to the illegal war of Israel against the Gaza Strip. Gaza and the West Bank have lost well over a million jobs, and this impacts the life of both the workers and employers. International laws prohibit the Israeli practices. Indeed, the Israelis are using weapons that have been banned on the international stage. Palestinian workers should have the right to work. And there is a policy of destruction and confiscation of land. There are strict measures that impede the access of workers to their places of work, and this is a violation of labour law. It severely impacts the lives of workers and their families. In this manner it is impossible to resolve the problem. These practices are making the economic situation of Palestinian workers worse than ever. Sudan calls the international community to take on its responsibilities by exercising pressure on the Government of Israel to stop the attacks and to ensure the influx of aid in an unconditional fashion into Gaza. Support must be given to the Palestinian workers, and we support the workers and demand that they be able to enjoy all their rights, including the right to have opportunities in terms of work. They should have the right to work in a healthy atmosphere and the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Sudan calls the members of this organization and the social partners to uphold their responsibilities and respond to the demands that were made by Egypt on behalf of our countries and to provide Palestine with its own status in line with the resolutions of the United Nations. Thank you.

Mr Ghazi Al-Janabi

Employer (Iraq)

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my country, Iraq, I will greet you all. We condemn the genocide against the Palestinian people. The Chamber of Commerce of Iraq was created a number of years ago and this looks at the economic activities of the private sector. This activity contributes to economic development and also complies with laws that are currently in force in Iraq. We have a number of offices in different provinces of Iraq. Our union is delighted to be able to participate in this dialogue on the risks faced by workers and employers. In particular, we are thinking about the lack of adequate protection which can lead to accidents or even fatalities of some employees. This is particularly true in some sectors as a result of unsafe behaviour. And we note that there is a lot of danger and risks in the workplace, and we call for the implementation of international Conventions to that end. We are talking about essential principles at work to guarantee every individual the right to carry out their profession. Employers must also organize training programmes for workers, and it is necessary to comply with fundamental workers' rights and to facilitate the creation of jobs while guaranteeing the rights of all workers. And thus we are insisting on the responsibility of governments that are responsible for creating these jobs. Our union has played an important role in drafting the new social security law, the scope of which has been broadened. Employers have a role to play in taking decisions that have a positive impact on the lives of workers and employers. Mr Atol Hussein [? 154:24], the President of the Union of the Chamber of Commerce would like to also send to you his greetings. Thank you.

Mr Atle Høie

IndustriALL

Distinguished President, I am speaking on behalf of IndustriALL Global Union, which has 550 affiliates in 130 countries, including Palestine and Israel, representing over 50 million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing sector, to call for a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through peaceful means. Our executive committee adopted a resolution on the 29th of November in 2023 and again on 24th of May in 2024 calling for an immediate and lasting ceasefire together with an unconditional release of all hostages, ensuring their safety, and the delivery of relief at a level corresponding to the humanitarian needs of the people in Gaza. Furthermore, IndustriALL calls for an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the lifting of the blockade imposed on Gaza. We demand that both parties respect international law and that all war crimes are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted. In this sense we welcome the provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice under the application of the UN Genocide Convention on 26th January 2024. We fully support the call from the global labour movement to consider and pursue all possible options to target and pressure companies, employers and investors that are involved in or that facilitate the expansion or continuation of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for the resumption of negotiations to achieve a just and lasting solution to the conflict, which can only be attained through peaceful means based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and in full accordance with international law on the basis of a two-state solution. Ladies and gentlemen, we are seeing possibly the most grotesque

war and occupation in my lifetime, and we all know what we have to do. It is time to do it.

Mr Petros Petrou

World Federation of Trade Unions

Dear delegates and colleagues, the WFTU considers the Governing Body's accommodation to discuss this report in the framework of a special sitting to be the least we could do amidst the current developments. The Palestinian cause has always been a priority for us, and we remain firm and proud of our principle positions and action. During the last months, our federation launched and implemented four international campaigns and several solidarity calls in which millions of workers were mobilized under the WFTU flags, while a WFTU solidarity visit to Palestine of a high-level delegation will take place in the last week of June. The WFTU strongly condemns the genocide, ethnic cleansing and daily crimes conducted by Israel in Palestine with the provocative tolerance and support of the USA, EU and their allies. We regret to note that not everyone can feel proud within the international trade union movement. Some, unfortunately, have lost their voice and remain silent or insist on an equal distance stance equating the perpetrators with the victims. This report confirms and records the conducted crimes and unacceptable conditions in the Palestinian land. With tens of thousands killed, nearly half a million Palestinians need humanitarian aid and thousands are jobless in the West Bank. And it goes without saying that the situation in the Gaza Strip is indescribable and constitutes a shame for whatever remains of human civilization. We welcome the report's references to the international legal obligations of Israel in occupied Palestinian land, and we agree and we underline the imperative need to stop attacks and violence. We demand the immediate address of the life-threatening conditions faced by the Palestinians. However, we note the absence of any effective measure against Israel while in other cases there are excessive relevant reports and decisions, something that once again underlines the political criteria and selective sensibilities within the ILO. Nevertheless, it is clear that there can be no justice, no dignified life and no work for the Palestinians as long as the Israeli occupation continues. We reiterate that the crucial precondition to secure and consolidate peace in the Middle East is the immediate end of the Israeli occupation and settlements in the occupied Arab territories, the guarantee of the right to return for all refugees and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you very much.

Mr Jamal Kadri

International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions

I wish to thank the Director-General for the invitation. Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, delegates, we wish to express our thanks for the Report of the Director-General. However, it is high time for the world to act against the genocide of Israel against civilians who are dying at the hands of the Israeli war machine. It is high time to act to defend the rights of workers in the occupied territories, and this organization must apply sanctions against Israel. This attack by Israel would not have happened if sanctions had been implemented against the country, as has been done in other States. The ILO must freeze the accession of Israel to the ILO and apply rule 33 of the Constitution, i.e. stop all investments in Israel and urge all the bodies of the ILO to force

Israel to respect international law. The report highlights the clear violations of Israel, or breaches of law against the Palestinian people. Famine is used as a weapon of war. This violates the decent work principles of the ILO. Such practices go against human life. Palestinian families are pulling the bodies of their dead children from under rubble. A few comments regarding the workers in the Syrian Golan Heights. There have been altercations between Hezbollah and Israel. Violations of international law are committed against the Syrian territory. Residential areas are being bombed and civil infrastructures are being destroyed. Recently there was an offensive against a region close to Damask, and this led to the destruction of the Iranian embassy and killed several people. The violence is escalating, and this will just push the region towards greater violence. It must be noted that many young people in the Syrian Golan have Israeli nationality and it is one of the practices of the Israeli state to coerce people into adopting their nationality. This is in violation of the Geneva Convention which prohibits the practice according to which an occupied territories' people is forced to adopt the occupier's passport. The participation rate in the northern region of Israel and the occupied territory in Golan is approximately 58% in terms of unemployment. It is much lower in the other regions. This is problematic. The figures are problematic. Resolution 467 must be respected, and we must defend the Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights so that they may be free forever. Thank you.

Mr Albert Emilio Yuson

Building and Wood Workers' International

Thank you, Chair. Peace in Palestine is our collective demand. The 12 million members of the construction, building, wood and forestry workers, represented by the Building and Wood Workers' International, will continue to mobilize for the struggle of the Palestinian workers. To achieve lasting peace, we must first silence the thunder of weapons. This crucial step paves the way for a sustainable solution that acknowledges the State of Palestine and affirms the right of its people for their homeland. Only through such recognition can we hope to build a future of stability, decent work and harmony for all. Justice will not be served until Palestinian workers are safe, free from fear and able to make a livelihood and provide for their families. Israel's construction sector has relied on Palestinian construction workers for decades. More than 80,000 construction workers have been denied their outstanding wages and benefits following the October 7 attack. We pledge to do everything in our power to recover the unpaid wages that tens of thousands of Palestinian workers rightfully earned. All measures aimed at creating unemployment or restricting the opportunities offered to the Palestinian workers need to be addressed. This includes the replacement of the barred Palestinian workers with migrant workers. This will have a long-term negative impact on the possibility for building a stable peace in the region. War cannot be a justification for denying labour justice, pitting workers against each other and using them as commodities. Next to this we want to integrate the demands made by many at this special sitting. We call on the immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. We support the UN resolutions calling for a safe, secure and sustainable State of Palestine. We call on the ILO to afford Palestine a status equal to that of a full member. We call on the ILO to continue and intensify its support for the Palestinian workers, for the Palestinian trade unions, their immediate needs, their right for jobs and their social benefits. We stand for peace. We stand for justice for the Palestinian workers. Free Palestine. Thank you.

Ms Eman Karakotly

Government (Saudi Arabia)

President, I am making this statement on behalf of Saudi Arabia. We also support the statement of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab group and the IOC and most of the members of the Asia Pacific group. At the outset, I would like to thank the Director-General for his report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. This report shows the serious repercussions of the practices of the Israeli occupying power on the lives of Palestinians. This also has consequences on the socio-economic situation and an increase in unemployment rates. Saudi Arabia condemns the continuing practices of Israel against Palestinian workers. This has caused a paralysis in economic activities and an increase in unemployment, in particular in Gaza. Infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has also been destroyed, and the labour market in the West Bank has also been affected. The number of jobs has reduced by 300,000, and restrictions are imposed on the movement of workers. We have also noted that accidents in the construction sector have increased by 33%. We condemn the violations of Israel against the Palestinian people, in particular the attacks that have taken place in Rafah. The Israeli forces are violating all conventions and international laws, and this is taking place with a deafening silence by the international community. This is aggravating an unprecedented crisis, and this threatens international credibility. Saudi Arabia reaffirms its position that security in the Middle East requires a global solution to the Palestinian issue in line with the Arab Peace Initiative, thereby guaranteeing Palestinians an independent State in line with the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you.

Mr Gilbert HOUNGBO

Director-General of the ILO

Thank you so much, Mr President. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, our special session is coming to an end, and I would like to thank you for what, I hope you will agree with me, has been a very rich discussion on a topic of utmost importance and urgency. Today you have provided critical insight and guidance on how to address the manifold challenges facing workers of the occupied Arab territories. You have also reaffirmed the ILO's central role and mandate. We have noted a very large support of the report's analysis and recommendations. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation, including through our presence on the ground and in accordance with the 1980 ILC resolution. I hear from you a very strong call for collective action to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian workers and employers. There is a role for the ILO. In fact, there is a role for each one of us. I can commit the ILO to do its very best to implement the recommendations that you have supported in strong collaboration with other UN agencies. We will continue to advocate for the need to plan and achieve the plan for a job-rich and rights-based early recovery while the humanitarian response is still a priority. Given the scale of devastation and destruction witnessed to date, reviving the economy and the labour market will be an immense task. But it is our duty and one from which we cannot and we will not shy away. This will require creating jobs, upholding workers' rights, reinvigorating the private sector, help building employment labour rights and social protection institutions and governance and promoting social dialogue. As a first step, we are convening next Monday, 10 June, a meeting of development partners which is expected to involve a broad alliance of more than 30 donors. Allow me

to call upon all of you to support us in this endeavour, both in spirit and in substance. As part of our normal practice, the Office will present to the Governing Body at its November 2024 session the report on our development cooperation with the occupied Arab territories. I believe this will be a good time for all of us to follow up on the progress that hopefully we will be making in implementing the proposed three steps recovery programme that will be discussed next Monday, June the 10th. With this I would like to thank all of you, and I remain confident of your unwavering support for ILO work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Thank you, Director-General. Ladies and gentlemen, this brings us to the end of our business for today. In accordance with the decision taken by the Conference in its opening sitting regarding the modalities of the special sitting, it would be inappropriate to adopt any formal decisions, any formal conclusions at the end of this special sitting. However, much of importance has been said, and I have no doubt that the action to be taken by the ILO will be inspired by many ideas put forward today. I declare this special sitting closed and I thank you all for your contributions. Thank you.

► Friday, 7 June 2024

Mr Rajeev Dubey

Employer Vice-President (India)

Good morning, distinguished delegates. It is my honour to declare open the eighth sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. This morning I shall begin by announcing the results of the record vote on the proposed abrogation of four international labour Conventions which was held yesterday from noon until 6 pm. We shall then resume our general discussion on the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. We begin with the results of yesterday's vote. Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to announce the results of the record vote as follows. Number one, on the proposed abrogation of the Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935, No. 45, the results are as follows: votes in favour 410, votes against 7, abstentions 7. The quorum of 286 is reached, as is the two-thirds majority of 279. Accordingly, the Convention is abrogated. Thank you. Number two, the results of the vote on the proposed abrogation of the Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937, No. 62, are as follows: votes in favour 407, votes against 8, abstentions 9. The quorum of 286 is reached, as is the two-thirds majority of 277. The Convention is hence abrogated. Thank you. The results of the vote on the proposed abrogation of the Convention concerning Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work, 1938, No. 63, are as follows: votes in favour 406, votes against 10, abstentions 8. The quorum of 286 is reached, as is the two-thirds majority of 278. The Convention is, accordingly, abrogated. And finally, the results of the vote on the proposed abrogation of the Labour Inspectorates (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947, No. 85, are as follows: votes in favour 402, votes against 11, abstentions 11. The quorum of 286 is reached, as is the two-thirds majority of 276. The Convention is, accordingly, abrogated. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, with that announcement we now turn our attention back to our discussion on the reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body. Before we go any further, most humbly and respectfully, I would like to remind you that, according to the arrangements approved at our opening sitting with regards to the modalities for the special sitting on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories, the appendix to the Director-General's report on this topic was discussed at the special sitting yesterday. I therefore encourage you to please focus your interventions today on reports I(A), I(B) and I(C) only. Thank you. Likewise, I would like to encourage you to please adhere to the principles guiding our discussion in terms of parliamentary language, starting our plenary sittings on time and adhering to the five minutes time limit for speeches. With your permission, we will try and stick to those time limits. Lastly, I would like to address points of order and rights of reply. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order or to exercise the right of reply in the plenary do not need to interrupt the proceedings. Instead, they should simply raise their nameplate. A member of staff will then approach them in the room and attend to their request. In the case of a right to reply, I ask that you clearly inform that member of staff the intervention in respect of which the right of reply is sought. Please be reminded that a right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes, and it should be delivered in respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice in our organization to allow a right to reply to a reply. Without further ado, let us begin with our list of speakers for this sitting. It is my privilege to give the floor to Mr Alawar, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization, United Arab Emirates. Sir.

Mr Abdulrahman Alawar

Government (United Arab Emirates)

Chair, Director-General of the ILO, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may God's blessings be upon you. We are meeting today in a moment of optimism given investment in renewable energy and green energies as well as all the efforts to achieve sustainable development globally. All of this has also been made concrete through the alliance for social justice. And this affects our vision for sustainable development in my country which is seeking to invest in humans because that is the most important investment for sustainability and this will enable humans to be at the centre of all our initiatives. And people are also at the centre of our goals to achieve success. The United Arab Emirates are continuing the path towards transition on the basis of knowledge and innovation for a diverse economy. These are our goals and our vision for 2060. We have been able to achieve sustainable development through legislation of the labour market which is competitive and flexible, and we have created millions of decent jobs and the UAE is now a destination to live and work and invest. We have quite a lot of prospects for broad economic growth, and jobs have increased by 10% and green jobs have also increased by 11%, according to the observatory that we have recently established. The UAE was the first country in the Middle East that wanted to achieve climate neutrality in its investments, and this amounts to 600 billion dirhams in the green economy. And we have reduced unemployment and it stands at 2.9% at the moment. And we have adopted a strategy for social protection to protect the unemployed, and eight million workers have been able to benefit from this. We have also adopted a programme to provide assistance to workers and voluntary saving schemes in which it is possible to invest the bonuses of workers, particularly for those who are approaching retirement. We also have adopted a system for health insurance for all those who live in the United Arab Emirates. And we have launched projects and assistance schemes, and this has played a key role in achieving social justice. We have also contributed to providing food assistance through our contributions to the World Food Programme, and we have launched initiatives to ensure good health and education in the same context. We are working within the Abu Dhabi Dialogue to talk about the governance of transition and to undertake efforts through bilateral and regional cooperation and to lay the foundations for partnership so that workers can benefit from prosperity and so that there are benefits for Member States as well as a result of this dialogue. To conclude, I would like to wish you every success in your work. Thank you.

Ms Doris Zapata Acevedo

Government (Panama)

Chair of this ILC, Director-General of the ILO, delegates, I would like to present to you the salutations of the Government of the Republic of Panama who salutes you on the occasion of the 112th ILC. We do recognize the progress that has been achieved within the framework of the Philadelphia Declaration that has established the objectives of the ILO and the principles that should underlie the policies of its Member States. On the occasion of the 80th anniversary, we must reassess the relevance of the principles of the ILO in Latin America and the Caribbean. We welcome the Report of the Director-General which calls us to discuss the priorities for a renewed social contract. We agree with this objective. Indeed, social justice requires our most urgent attention. We count on tripartism and social dialogue which are efficient tools to face the challenges and

transformations that are ongoing in the world. We agree with the new social contract and the fact that it should be based on national social agreements and that it should adapt to the circumstances and priorities that are specific to every country while at the same time, of course, being in line with the joint global framework. The aim is to achieve an inclusive, just, resilient and sustainable world of work for all. Our Minister of Labour and Development pays great attention to the cross-cutting principle of equality of Convention No. 100. It is pushing forward the law on employability and integration of young people and women in socio-economic situations of vulnerability. The aim is to create a social pact. We also have approved the wage equality plan for 2022-2025, with 28 measures that are pushing forward wage equality in all the country's sectors which reflects our representation in the Equal Pay International Coalition. We have also established the national council for gender equality which aims to economically empower women. We recognize the multiple discriminations that domestic workers face and so we have passed Law No. 431 of the 25th of April of 2024 which establishes a national care system. In line with the mandate of the ILO, we commit to promoting a decent work agenda and we have signed a tripartite MOU which has pushed forward the collective development of the Decent Work Programme for Panama 2024-2027. By means of the executive decree No. 3 of 22nd of April 2024, the public employment service aims to make the job intermediary system more efficient, and this is in line with ILO Convention No. 88. These are only some examples that Panama has implemented, and they will most surely pave the way to building a new social contract in our country. Director, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the President of Panama, Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, and on my own behalf, I would like to thank the ILO for its professionalism, for its advisory services and for the work that has been done for the benefit of my country. We also would like to thank our allies, employers and workers because we have joined hands to attain our objectives based on tripartism. I would also like to most especially thank the Director for having entrusted our administration, the Ministry of Labour and Development, with this task. We are committed to promoting, guaranteeing and complying with the principles and objectives of the ILO. And our founding mission is that social justice is an essential basis for universal and permanent peace. I believe that a better world of work in the future is possible, and our new authorities in the country, as from the 1st of July in Panama, will most surely continue working with the same endeavour, the same responsibility and the same enthusiasm in collaboration with the ILO. We wish to join hands in order to create a more just and inclusive Panama. Thank you.

Mr Gerardo Martínez

Worker (Argentina)

... of financial, and this would promote the defence of human dignity and equality with social protection in mind. The Americas have many challenges that are structural, such as informality, poverty and inequality that exclude many people from human development. We denounce the attacks against the leaders of trade unions. There are also problems in terms of governance. In Argentina policies have been problematic for the country. There has always been blame on others and it has not been possible to achieve a policy of development. Today the message remains the same: confrontation. The current government has demands in terms of economic and social terms, but it does not promote policies for employment, for financing the health system, education is ignored, and so on. The private sector has been given the role of the public sector and that goes against the values of social justice. There is no doubt there is no state without

a nation. And the electoral process has really taught us something important that we must respect. The message of the people forces us to find different ways so that we can resolve the problems that have been true in the world of work over the past times. Our country has great productive potential but there is practically 60% of our population that live in poverty. We are committed to reducing high levels of inflation, and for that we work very hard as trade unions. Inflation is an imposition on poverty. Our trade union movement has a very long history, and in our country we are facing the destruction of labour rights, social rights and trade union rights. At the moment there has been a great problem in terms of trade unions and they have been silenced. This action has also been followed closely by civil society. Public policy requires the help of all political and social actors, and we must defend the needs of those who most require it. Society must focus on reducing inflation, and that should be a shared effort and shared objective and not the simple sacrifice of the workers and the sectors that have been the most affected. We demand from the Government to stabilize the economy without ignoring the terrible situation of poverty and inequality that the country is suffering from. It is undergoing a profound recession that is already having a severe impact on the real economy and on employment. Unfortunately, the poor are the ones who suffer the most as well as workers. Workers demand that we continue remaining committed to defending our rights to participate in the design of more social justice and a hopeful future. Nobody should be speculating regarding our reality and our future. We will continue to focus on achieving an agenda of dialogue for an Argentina that focuses on development, production and work that is solidarity based, inclusive and based on equal opportunities. Thank you.

Mr Per Olav Skurdal Hopsø

Government (Norway)

Ministers, representatives of workers and employers, let me start by saying that it is a privilege for me to attend this plenary today and to be able to discuss the Director-General's report on the new social contract. The report addresses a number of important issues that represent grave challenges in a pressed and changing world of work: rising inequalities, several conflicts with devastating effects on working life, new technology shaping forms of work, climate change and an evolving lack of trust in several societies. The present situation is dire for too many people around the world. For more than a hundred years, the ILO has been a driving force behind the creation of binding international regulations aimed at ensuring workers' rights, social justice, active tripartite cooperation and equal conditions of competition. The ILO's mandate and work are needed more than ever. We need to enhance social dialogue and secure decent work for all around the globe. This occasion gives me the opportunity to emphasize Norway's strong support for the ILO's work, its agenda and the goals the ILO strives to achieve. President, the report presented by the Director-General is an important contribution to the agenda for the ILO in the future. Norway especially appreciates the focus on social dialogue as an important part of the renewed social contract outlined in the report. The four thematic points for discussion are important. Number one, the universal importance of the new social contract is apparent. We all live on the same planet and we are interconnected in different ways. It is our shared responsibility to develop international standards and norms that are responsive to a changing world of work and that will secure decent work, for instance by establishing a certain number of guarantees and protection levels for all workers, for example on working time, so that we can enhance decent work for all. And number two, the social contract is under

pressure. We are all aware that we are lagging behind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all is an important national, as global, goal for our government. Norway is in the lucky situation that we have high participation in working life and a low unemployment rate. But we also have our national challenges. For instance, we have experienced that too many young men are falling behind, dropping out of school and work, and we are taking action and developing policies to combat this sad development right now. So for the third, should we adapt or reinvent a new social contract? Well, the social contract is in some ways like a marriage. It must be cared for and be reinvested in on a continuous basis, exactly as the social dialogue between workers, employers and governments needs to be a systematic arena where the tripartite participants are listening actively to one another to find common ground. And that leads me to the last point, how should we renew the social contract? We could, for instance, invest even more in decent and sustainable work and develop new jobs both in the green economy and the care economy. At the same time, we must respect work-life balance, give special attention to vulnerable groups, fight against all forms of discrimination and have a continued focus on good governance in the labour administrations. These are only a few of many important topics we must address in the working life of the future. President, to conclude, history tells us that our Nordic models have served us well. Our dialogue between government and the social partners has given us important reforms to secure a sustainable society and has made us able to continuously renew our social contract. I would like to thank our social partners for our good collaboration, even though at times our preferences are also diverse. Thank you, Mr President.

Mr Hideyuki Shimizu

Worker (Japan)

Distinguished delegates and all participants, thank you very much. I am Hideyuki Shimizu of JTUC-RENGO. It is a great honour for me to be given this opportunity to speak to you as a representative of Japanese workers. Chair, we feel a strong empathy with the report of the esteemed Director-General, Mr Hounbo. The report points to the fundamental philosophy of the ILO, namely social justice will be realized through a renewed social contract based on contemporary issues. We sense that the ILO is strongly determined to lead the way in efforts to promote the renewed social contract and we are aligned with the ILO in this endeavour. The report also states that the social contract must be realized through social dialogue. I recognize that the Global Coalition for Social Justice, an initiative of the Director-General, embodies this idea. We at JTUC-RENGO support the spirit of the Global Coalition and intend to participate in its activities. It goes without saying that the right to organize is the foundation for realizing social dialogue. In Japan, however, the right to organize has not been granted to firefighters. This is an extremely unusual situation when one considers that the right to organize is granted to firefighters in almost all of the member countries of the ILO. It is our long-felt wish to realize the granting of the firefighter's right to organize and to welcome them into the circle of social dialogue. The ILO Dryer Commission played a major role in Japan's ratification of ILO Convention No. 87 in 1965. The commission's report states that any responsibility for failure will clearly rest with anyone who now fails to rise to the challenge of this great opportunity. We call on the Japanese Government to work together with us now towards granting firefighters the right to organize. Peace is the cornerstone of the realization of social justice through social dialogue. However, when

we turn our eyes to the conflict and strife in Ukraine, the Middle East and other parts of the world, we cannot help but recognize that we are living in a world that is far from peaceful. In addition to that, looking at Asia, the military authorities in Myanmar continue to repress democratization and the labour movement. The attitude of the military authorities continues to be called into question by the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body. Despite recommendations issued by the Commission of Inquiry, established under article 26 of the ILO Constitution, the military authorities have totally failed to respond to ILO approaches and have shown not the slightest hint of sincerity. We at JTUC-RENGO strongly condemn this behaviour and will continue to support the CTUM and other pro-democracy forces in cooperation with the ITUC and ITUC-AP. Finally, I would like to conclude my speech by pledging that we, the Japanese trade unions, will continue to be actively involved in the activities of the ILO and we will work to solve issues and strive for the realization of peace through social dialogue. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Ms Olta Manjani

Government (Albania)

Dear President, dear esteemed participants of the ILC, the European integration is the most important political and strategic goal of the Republic of Albania and its legal, economic and political systems. The EU integration process represents a path for the democratization of Albania, the consolidation of institutions and the rule of law and the ongoing processes of fundamental reforms towards the European Union and towards full membership. Our government is continuously committed to carry out the process of aligning the Albanian labour legislation with the *acquis* of the EU and the ILO Conventions in the field of legal labour relations. The labour legislation includes the established principles of the ILO Conventions on equality in remuneration, the obligation of the employer to pay the employee equally for the same work or work of equal value without discriminating directly or indirectly not only on the basis of gender but also because of race, age, religion, health, social status or sexual orientation. The Albanian Government has recently approved the National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2030 whose vision is quality employment and lifelong training for all. The main objective of this strategy and its action plan is to identify and outline appropriate employment promotion policies in the country through skills development and better matching of demand and supply in the labour market for more employment while enabling decent employment both for women and men. The action plan of the strategy focuses on increasing opportunities for decent work through efficient labour market policies, through reducing the skills mismatches for all the occupations, increasing the skill level of women and men of working age, and also ensuring better functioning of the labour market for all while at the same time addressing the fast technological developments and the twin transitions: the green and the digital transitions. Another focus of the employment policies of the Albanian Government is targeting youth unemployment, and we have a specific dedicated programme for that, which is the Youth Guarantee scheme that is another reaffirmation of the commitment of the Albanian Government to support youth employment. The Youth Guarantee scheme is the most innovative, significant and challenging policy in the field of youth employment that has ever been implemented in Albania. Inspired by similar schemes in the European Union, the Youth Guarantee is a commitment to support every young person in Albania under the age of 30 who is not in work, education or training. And this commitment gives young people the opportunity to receive a good quality offer for employment, for

training, for internships or continuing their education within four months of leaving school or losing their job. Another important milestone for Albania is the ratification of the ILO Convention on violence and harassment, 2019. And Albania is one of the first countries that has actually ratified this Convention and the ILO will continue to support the harmonization of the national legal framework with C190. Major efforts are needed to disseminate the existing laws and build the capacity of law enforcement and inspection bodies to achieve higher enforcement. For this purpose, we will launch an awareness raising campaign and information in coordination with employers' and employees' organizations. These actions will be coordinated through the National Labour Council and will be implemented jointly with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Anti-discrimination Commissioner, the Ombudsman, and employers' and employees' organizations. Another important milestone is also the signing of the Decent Work Country Programme 2023-2026 between the Albanian Government, the employers' and employees' organizations and representatives of the International Labour Organization in January 2023 with the aim of promoting and developing cooperation for decent work in Albania. This programme is the sixth for Albania and it shows the sustainability of policies for ensuring decent work. This document is in line with the other previous documents and the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2030 in Albania where three of its objectives are closely related to decent work: improving the efficiency of inspection at work, promotion of social dialogue in the labour market and improving decent employment policies. As for improving the efficiency of inspection at work, during the last year there has been an increase in the number and the quality of inspections thanks to the support and the collaboration of the ILO throughout this process. However, there is always more to do as the quality of the working environment is also the main guarantee of decent work. The state labour inspectorate will further strengthen its capacity to fulfil its mandate to improve safety at work and to combat undeclared work. This will be supported by raising awareness of employers and employees regarding the importance of risk assessments in the prevention of accidents at work and diseases due to work. Currently, with the support of the ILO, we are drafting the National Strategy for Safety and Health at Work 2024-2030. The efforts of the Albanian Government during the last years have evolved its perspective of economic, political and social development towards the European integration and in the vision of [vgr INTERRUPTION 37:20] is closely linked to the development of social dialogue, social justice and social cohesion. Also, the country decent work programme is fully harmonized with the cooperation framework for sustainable development of the United Nations organizations through its strategic priorities which are the foundation of the UN cooperation in Albania. In conclusion I wish, on behalf of the Albanian Government, to once again express my best greetings and wish a productive 112th Conference session for the International Labour Conference. Thank you.

Mr Luca Cirigliano

Worker (Switzerland)

Chair, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, we welcome the Director-General's report about the renewed social contract that has been presented to this Conference. Thank you very much. Here at the ILO there is practically nothing that is more important than the so-called 'Contrat Social' of Rousseau. But what is this renewed social contract? It is the understanding of our collective responsibility for one another. And this is reflected in the standards that take form in institutions and policies and that integrate

the promises of the Philadelphia Declaration, i.e. that every human person independently of their race, religion and sex has the right to material wealth, to development in freedom and dignity as well as economic security and that they must enjoy the same conditions. Indeed, this is no commodity. This social contract is more than just a theory. It is the foundation of our joint efforts for a fairer and more solidarity-based society. It requires from us all to remain committed to the cause, and we must always verify that we are meeting our promises. Ladies and gentlemen, Chair, Excellencies, let us keep this social contract as a guideline and let us work towards meeting the ideals of the Philadelphia Declaration so that they may be transformed into reality. This is the only way that we can ensure that humankind will enjoy its rights and opportunities in a free and fair society. It is fundamental in this context that trade unions take over a central role so that the collective voice of workers may be heard in the formulations of this social contract. It is also important in this report to note that we must strengthen and renew a global social contract. Now let us speak about the Second UN World Summit for Social Development in 2025. The Swiss workers welcome this endeavour and also defend it. Our social contracts are under great pressure at the moment, including in Switzerland. In Switzerland, for instance, the provisions against dismissal are excessively weak for those who engage in collective bargaining in defence of social partners and tripartism. This is the fact for workers' committees when they are negotiating collective agreements in their own branches but also on other levels. However, collective agreements should be the foundations of social contracts, as per the ILO's objectives. Goal 8 of the SDGs in the agenda for 2030 demands effective protection against unfair dismissals. And this is where we must act together. There cannot be any old or new social contract that does not respect the rights of trade unionists to fight for their rights, and they must be protected against unfair dismissal and unfair reprisals. The central elements of a renewed social contract are also crucial. There are elements that must be respected such as protection against accidents, illness, invalidity, and means of subsistence when unemployed must be guaranteed. These rights must all be ensured also for people who work in new forms of work, such as platform workers where some employers try to declare their workers as being self-employed. This is unacceptable. Employees are employees, whether they work for platforms or not. In this country the trade unions have taken some of these companies to court. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Alexis José Corredor Pérez

Government (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Salutations to all. Thank you very much, Chair, for giving us the floor. On behalf of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Venezuelan people, we wish to address this conference, the 112th ILC, and we are announcing now a brotherly and solidarity-based salute. The ILO is now speaking of a renewed social contract focused on social justice. There is also the appendix that concerns the situation of the workers in the occupied Arab territories. We wish to express our solidarity to those workers. Venezuela is at this conference here in order to promote its diplomacy for peace. The presidency of Nicolás Maduro is working towards structural improvements in the country and the establishment of a state of justice which is the objective of the Government which includes socio-economic equality that is solidarity based. We also wish to denounce the sanctions against our country. There are hundreds of such sanctions that are illegal, that are criminal and that are not legitimate. And they are having a negative impact on the entire Venezuelan population, and this is affecting the

right to work in the public and the private sectors, and it is severely impacting Venezuelan families. The unilateral impositions on our country are a violation of the right to sovereignty of the nations. No sovereign State or democratic institution should be the object of such sanctions. At this conference we now demand that these sanctions be lifted because they are severely affecting the country. The impact on our people and the coercive and unilateral measures are affecting the world of work in our country. Nicolás Maduro Moros, president of our country, is committed to dialogue, and he has stated that in the second semester and in the upcoming years this will be the object of even greater focus. Social dialogue will be consolidated, our commitment towards peace, our commitment towards the well-being and fair labour in our country. We have organized a social dialogue forum, and the ILO coordinated it with us and also participated in it. We have also organized meetings that have allowed us to discuss with various social partners, i.e. employers and workers. We have respected the legislation, the institutions and our common objectives in order to establish long-term objectives hand in hand with employers and workers so that the entire nation may benefit, and the Government is focusing on this. There are commissions that have been established in order, for example, to focus on hazardous risks, focus on the impact of the pandemic, and we have offered our knowledge to this conference. Our legislation is very well-advanced, and it will doubtlessly help the discussions here. Moreover, the care economy in Venezuela is the object of legislation which will guarantee social well-being. Our objective is peace in the world, and we wish justice for all peoples. We recognize our position in multilateralism and we believe in the future of humanity. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will continue making progress despite adversity. We will win our fight. Now, on behalf of the Group of Friends in the Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, which has been signed by 19 nations, we wish to ratify the move to lift the sanctions against our country, and we will continue working on constructive measures in order to allow the workers in our country and elsewhere to work properly and ensure world peace. Thank you.

Ms Enas Dahadha

Government (Palestine)

Excellency President of the Conference, Excellency President of the Governing Body, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen heads of delegations, ladies and gentlemen attending the meeting, I bring you greetings. Our Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish said, "On this land and on this earth there are things that are worthy of life." There is a people that is fighting death to create life. I speak to you and I bring to you the greetings of Palestine and the people and the Government and the leadership of Palestine. In particular, I bring you greetings from the workers of Palestine. I address myself to you where the war of genocide has transformed part of my country into rubble. It has spread death and destruction. Their aeroplanes do not make the distinction between a woman, a child or an elderly person, a student or a physician. Everybody is a target of death. Ladies and gentlemen, the workers of Palestine look to the ILC to attain the objective of social justice. They look forward to receiving protection against death. They seek freedom, peace and security. They are looking for any form of livelihood, any food that would allow them to bear the pressures that have been put upon them. After 50 years of occupation, settlements, siege, blockades and destruction, the last episode of that is the war of genocide against the people in Gaza. Today in my country my people are standing fighting for the right to freedom and the independence of the State of Palestine with Eastern Jerusalem al-Quds ash-Sharqiya as its capital. We

are looking for just peace that would allow us to construct our economic and social development so that we could contribute with the whole world to the protection of peace and to face the great challenges and the problems of the environment as well as strengthening the world construct that would be beneficial to the whole world. Palestine has participated and contributed over history in this construction of civilization and human renaissance. We still have the ability. We still have the skills. And we still have the scientific knowledge that would enable us to participate with other peoples of the world in order to face the various challenges of the future. But our vocational and professional skills are persecuted by death with the policy of systematic destruction of our infrastructure and the deprivation of water and electricity and the prohibition of access to humanitarian assistance as well as medical supplies and with the continued killing of our skills and our capabilities. Ladies and gentlemen, no doubt you know and you follow what is happening in Palestine, a war that has left all the aftermath of destruction that has affected every aspect of life: economic, social and environmental. You have seen and the world at large has seen children being pulled out of the rubble and women that are having their babies on the curb sides, patients who are not getting medical treatment and workers who have no work or income. As a result of this continued occupation of our land, unemployment reached more than 50% over Palestine and 70% in the Gaza Strip. In particular after our workers have lost half a million jobs and the levels of poverty now are affecting more than half of our population. Thousands are threatened with famine. War has destroyed all installations in Gaza, in particular industrial parks, and many businesses have been closed in the West Bank. And decent work has regressed in the labour market, and this is threatening the economic viability of Palestine to collapse from 3% to a negative level of 30% after external support has receded and the occupation has confiscated the clearance revenue of our people, after it has stolen their revenue. The occupation forces have killed and arrested hundreds of our people, hundreds of our workers. Ladies and gentlemen here present, despite the economic situation in Palestine and that which the occupation is controlling to make it subservient to its own interests, we have worked as the parties to the production process and the social partners in Palestine. And over the years we have worked in order to enhance the economy and open the possibilities for development. We strengthened our interventions in the labour market, and along with the ILO we have strengthened laws of social security and labour and unionization. We have held a conference for social discussions during the COVID-19 vices, and we strengthened income. We held meetings, especially an international meeting in support of all of those efforts. But all of that has gone to utter waste after the war that has been launched against our people and which resulted in the destruction of our economy and all its production factors. And this is what is making us today, working according to an emergency response plan where our main priority is to continue ensuring income and job opportunities for thousands of workers. In particular those who have been expelled by Israel from the Israeli labour market and those who have lost their jobs in Gaza and the West Bank as a result of the destruction of their economic businesses and installations and enterprises. Ladies and gentlemen, we look to the ILO to stand side by side with the people and the workers of Palestine and to support the people of Palestine and the workers. We look to the free world and we commend those countries that have taken the initiative to recognize the State of Palestine. We underline that more recognition of the State of Palestine and the rights of our people is the shortest way to reach peace and security and sustainable development in our region. In conclusion, I wish the Conference success, and I hope that all the decisions and resolutions and recommendations will be taken to enable us to live decently and that would strengthen the workers in Palestine and that would also support the economic efforts. Once again, let us convert what we said yesterday in the

special sitting. Let us convert this in realities on the ground. Long may you live and long may Palestine live. Thank you.

Mr Hongren Zhu

Employer (China)

Mr President, first of all, on behalf of the China Enterprise Confederation, CEC, I congratulate you on your election as the President of the 112th ILC. The Director-General's reports 'Towards a renewed social contract', calls on the tripartite constituents to play a greater role in renewing the social contract. The ILO is also expected to play a more active role in this regard. We resonate with the report, especially on the importance on the renewal of the social contract, its challenges and our response strategies. We believe that is the only answer to the profound changes, unseen in a century, and to the quest for global social justice. All societies share our common foundation: a timeless and universal yearning for social justice, freedom, dignity, economic security and an equal opportunity. A renewed social contract is a critical means to all these ends amid changing demographics, technological transformation, climate change and geopolitical tensions. We see a wide gap in the achievement of the SDG agenda though we have passed the midway point towards 2030. We must redouble efforts to introduce inclusive and effective governance, revitalize policies and strategies for full and productive employment based on free choice, internalize the environmental dimension in just transition and fairly distribute the results of progress. The Chinese Government upholds our high-quality development philosophy that stresses innovation, coordination, green development, openness and shared benefits by putting development and people first. It highlights inclusiveness, innovation, harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, concrete actions and genuine multilateralism. This philosophy and its practice echo the SDGs for 2030. For more than a decade, the joint building of the Belt and Road Initiative has opened up a chapter of China's development and provided new opportunities for other countries around the world, benefiting BRI countries with win-win results and facilitating the common and sustainable development of the whole world. As the representative of employers and businesses in China, CEC has actively participated in a tripartite mechanism, comprehensively promoted harmonious labour relations and advocated the rights and interests of entrepreneurs. We have enhanced our research to inform law makers, regulators and policymakers so that the labour market becomes more fair and inclusive. We have promoted a collective consultation and a coordination mechanism, urged enterprises to engage in collective bargaining and led major platform operators to collective consultation and coordination with trade unions and workers' representatives. We advocate international labour standards through training, seminars, field research and other activities. Enterprises are guided to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work, actively fulfil their corporate social responsibility and follow a green and low-carbon path to sustainable development. We will actively participate in a discussion of the ILO's new social contract document, promote its practice at Chinese enterprises, advocate the belief in a community with a shared future for mankind on occasions such as National Entrepreneurs Day and the China Business Summit, lend wisdom to the Second World Summit for Social Development, seek balanced development with equal opportunities to ensure that development is for all and of all and contribute to social fairness and justice. Finally, I wish the 112th ILC a complete success. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Vénuste Muyabaga

Government (Burundi)

President of the Conference, Director-General of the ILO, tripartite constituents, august assembly. On behalf of the tripartite Burundian delegate, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Burundi whom I am representing at this august assembly of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, I now have the opportunity to firstly express our thanks for the warm welcome of the organizers of this assembly but also to speak with regard to the Report of the Director-General of the ILO while highlighting, above all, the achievements of our country with a view to securing social justice for all in our labour market on one hand and decent work for all on the other, all while capitalizing on the technical and financial support of the International Labour Office. President, august assembly, the Government of Burundi, through its tripartite constituents whom I represent here today as head of delegation, would like to use this opportunity to thank the ILO for its climate of cooperation with our country in areas such as employment, social protection, social dialogue and national and international labour standards. We would also like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to commend Mr Gilbert Hونغbo, Director-General of the ILO, in his noble mission that he is fulfilling with diligence and equity and the benefits of which are clear through initiatives underway in our country and which will undoubtedly contribute to implementing the great vision of Burundi as an emerging country by 2040 and a developed country by 2060 and a country that generates decent jobs and dignified social protection for all citizens of Burundi. President, distinguished guests, the Government of Burundi has taken note of the content of the Report of the Director-General to the extent that all major areas constituting social justice and decent work for all have undergone significant improvements during this past year in our country as a result of the good and honest cooperation between Burundi and the International Labour Office. Our country is among those countries deserving of particular attention at this 112th Session of the ILC following the periodic crises that it has undergone which have undermined certain principles of equity and social justice, thereby causing a large part of the population to fall into extreme poverty which therefore limits their access to a minimum income that would enable them to put their children through school and have health coverage. The tripartite constituents of Burundi have welcomed the establishment of a representative of the ILO national office in our country with its flagship programme to establish social protection floors for all and which is designed to develop a social protection scheme that meets the needs and priorities of workers in the informal economy. As with other countries across the world today, Burundi is threatened by the adverse effects of climate change which have caused terrible flooding in certain parts of our country, thereby destroying a lot of public and social infrastructure such as schools and health establishments on a large scale. Burundi was in the process of seeing how to establish a national occupational safety and health policy for our country, but we must note that it is more urgent than ever that this policy be established and that we develop strategies and mechanisms to deal with natural disasters and environmental disasters that are caused by climate change across the world. As our country has already requested the support of all its partners, our delegation would like to use this opportunity to inform different partners that are present here today that thousands of children in our country must return to school because the Government has taken the measure to move them out of dangerous areas that are threatened by floods in order to avoid the loss of human life as a result of the repeated flooding that our country has suffered. And to do so, the ILO could help us through its customary proven expertise in

strategies to respond to these different crises that have recently affected the world of work. And they could help us to develop adequate measures to assist Member States in setting up projects and programmes that both protect the environment but also generate green jobs in our respective countries. And this in turn could help us to ensure the systematic recovery and reintegration of our suffering population whose goods and properties have been swept away in their entirety by the floods. Promotion activities to ratify Conventions 155 and 187 on occupational safety and health are currently being organized across the country with the involvement of key stakeholders such as Members of Parliament and senators and other social partners and other stakeholders involved in prevention such as judges, the police and civil society. As we all know, children are the primary victims of natural disasters, and protection measures must be taken by governments to protect them. Our country is delighted that on the eve of the World Day Against Child Labour, which is celebrated on the 12th of June, the tripartite constituents of Burundi and other key stakeholders have just established a National Action Plan to combat child labour and its worst forms for the period 2024-2027 with specific action capable of keeping children in school and reintegrating child victims into socio-economic life. In order to ensure social justice for all, the Government of Burundi has ensured the continuity of beneficial measures of free schooling for all children in primary school up to the age of six, but also by ensuring free healthcare for all children under the age of five and all mothers giving birth. The Government of Burundi and its partners have just approved a national policy for social protection which highlights a coupling of health insurance and a unified economy which is an effective means of combatting poverty and consolidating social protection floors. Moreover, inclusive measures have been taken to enable older persons to access healthcare. In terms of training, and in order to ensure that all children have universal access to education and a balance between training and employment, the Government is in the process of reforming its education system so that, following basic training, young people can have access to technical and vocational training in order to easily find job openings on the labour market. In terms of youth employability, the Government has established a youth investment bank to support projects for young entrepreneurs as well as an incentive and guaranties fund and an investment bank and development bank for women, not to mention a pilot project initiated by the President of the Republic which is a project for economic empowerment and youth employability. All of these achievements in terms of youth employability and social protection have meant that our president of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Mr Ndayishimiye, has been awarded by the African Union the title of a president who is a champion for the peace and security agenda of the African Union in 2023. And this is why we call him in our country a friend to young people. Burundi is experiencing a more tranquil labour market thanks to the good collaboration of the tripartite constituents of Burundi who have together adopted a national charter for social dialogue and a joint national committee for social dialogue which is today led by the wise former President of the Republic, and he is part of the delegation present here today. Given the new priorities of the Government of Burundi, the Government, with the support of the ILO and its partners, will update its new national employment strategy. I could not conclude my statement without reiterating once again my thanks to the ILO and more particularly its Director-General for his achievements. Thank you.

Ms Natalia Efremova**Government (Bulgaria)**

Dear Mr President, Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates, it is an honour for me to take part in this session of the International Labour Conference. For more than a century governments, employers and workers have been joining efforts to overcome inequalities and ensure decent work driven by the understanding that lasting peace is unthinkable without social justice. I would like to emphasize the indispensable role of the international labour standards and tripartite dialogue in this regard. Bulgaria is among the countries that have ratified the most ILO Conventions. I am pleased to announce that this year Bulgaria has ratified another two ILO Conventions on occupational safety and health. Bulgaria also appreciates that there is a standard-setting item on the agenda of the current session of the Conference on the protection against biological hazards in the working environment. In the Report of the Director-General, it is correctly noted that the interrelated dimensions of social justice are linked to universal human rights and capabilities, equal access to opportunities, fair distribution and just transitions. Renewing the social contract is fundamentally about investing in people, in their rights and capabilities, in their opportunities to participate in employment and life in dignity, and their right to social protection. It is also about overcoming the challenges and seizing the opportunities arising from the changing world of work by using social dialogue as a powerful tool for fostering social cohesion. My country joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice, and we are impressed by the rising number of partners, including international organizations. I would like to express my strong belief that under the leadership of Director-General Hounbou the Global Coalition will make a great contribution to accelerating the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and advancing social justice on a global scale. Bulgaria has set employment policy priorities for 2024 which correspond to the priority areas of the Global Coalition. We aim at promoting employment and reducing the unemployment rate, including among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups on the labour market. An important emphasis is placed on increasing the quality of the workforce in the context of digitalization of the economy and just transition to climate neutrality. Also, significant financial resources have been provided for training and qualification of the population of Bulgaria. On a regional level, we join efforts for ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including through the recently adopted council conclusions on economic empowerment and financial independence of women. We implement a strategy for the development of corporate social responsibility. Bulgaria is fully committed to guaranteeing respect of workers' rights and ensuring a world of work that is just, fair and inclusive. We see an added value of the initiative promoted by several Latin American and European countries of moving towards a global charter of labour rights as in the ILO's contribution to the upcoming Social Summit in 2025. Allow me to conclude by quoting the slogan of the Global Coalition, that together we are building a future with social justice for all because decent work cannot be taken for granted but it requires the joint efforts of governments, social partners and the international community as a whole. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Jiadong Yu

Government (China)

The Chinese Government welcomes the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract', and we appreciate the ILO's commitment to integrating decent work and social justice with sustainable development, improving the policy framework for employment, establishing a universal social protection system, promoting equitable sharing of economic and social development results, and building a more inclusive and democratic international labour system. We look forward to the exploration of a renewed social contract through the Global Coalition for Social Justice and a bigger role played by the ILO in the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025. Adhering to a people-centred approach, the Chinese Government has been ensuring and enhancing people's well-being in the course of development to resolve the most practical problems that are of the greatest concern to the people. China has prioritised high-quality and full employment in our development, improving the quality and the quantity of jobs. In response to the new demographic trends, we have moved faster towards modernizing human resources. We have deepened the reform of the social security system, expanding coverage of social security and improving the quality of relevant services. Efforts have been made to improve labour laws and the regulations, strengthen the negotiation mechanism for labour relations and protect workers' rights. In recent years an average of 13 million new urban jobs were created annually, ensuring stable employment. China has established the world's largest social security system. The basic old-age insurance, unemployment insurance and worker injury insurance have covered 1.07 billion, 240 million and 290 million people. We have enhanced the skills of the workers, fostering a workforce of over 200 million skilled workers and over 60 million highly skilled workers. Labour relations in China remain harmonious and stable, and a sense of fulfilment, happiness and security among workers are enhanced. Distinguished delegates, changes unseen in a century are unfolding and the world is undergoing turbulence with increasing instabilities and uncertainties, multiple challenges standing in the way of promoting a renewed social contract, and cooperation of the tripartite constituents is imperative. I would like to make three proposals. First, we should adhere to a people-centred approach. We should give priority to people's [vgr INAUDIBLE 83:31] to the development, advancing full employment, strengthen social security system and improving the income level. We should implement the human-centred approach advocated in the ILO Centenary Declaration. Second, innovate labour administration models. We should seize the opportunities brought by the technological advancement and develop new quality productive forces, stimulate the growth of new business forms, explore the new occupations and a faster [vgr INAUDIBLE 84:00] for job creation. So we should step up efforts to better protect the rights and interests of our workers. Third, we should promote open and inclusive cooperation. It is essential to embrace a global [vgr INAUDIBLE 84:14] vision and practise true multilateralism and implement the global development initiative. We support the ILO in fulfilling its role to improve global labour governance, and constituents should be encouraged to explore labour administration approaches in line with their national conditions, thereby facilitating modernization of their own. Distinguished delegates, the Chinese Government stands ready to work together with the ILO's tripartite constituents to realize a vision of social justice and to create a better world of work that is fair, prosperous and progressive. Thank you.

Mr Arto Satonen

Government (Finland)

Director-General, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, the ILO was created 100 years ago to promote peace through social justice. This mandate is extremely relevant today. Social justice and decent work form the foundation for the legitimacy of democratic societies. International labour standards have affected our laws and labour market policy profoundly. Respecting and promoting international labour standards contributes to achieving our common goals for Agenda 2030. The theme 'Towards a renewed social contract' is topical. How do you tackle inequalities and insecurities which our societies are facing? The ILO's mandate to promote social justice and the Decent Work Agenda can be improved by policy coherence at all levels. We face challenges to achieve the SDGs. We share the view that we have now the opportunity to change our societies to become more sustainable and inclusive. Work is the best form of social security. Decent work opportunities and access to the labour market for all are the best ways to tackle poverty and non-discrimination and to ensure funding of social security schemes. Adequate and affordable social protection systems are crucial when promoting social justice. Governments are responsible to offer an enabling environment for companies and avoid unnecessary administrative burden. In order to achieve the vision of the Director-General we need to pay attention to equality. Globally, women are often discriminated at work and in unequal access to vocational training and work. Improving women's labour market and social situation, including equal pay, is the key for the development of societies. How care is provided is an even more pertinent question. Sustainable policy solutions for care work and economy need to be resolved, including the division of unpaid care work. Accessible childcare and possibilities to reconcile work and family life and development of equal parental leave policies promote women's participation in the labour market and work-life balance. When it comes to global supply chains, social clauses in trade agreements and corporate social responsibility are useful tools to promote global social governance and decent work. They help us prevent forced and child labour and those workers who do not have the right to organize or working in dangerous work conditions. Social dialogue is the tool to find common solutions. Turning to my home country, Finland. Finland, like many other countries, needs the international workforce to meet the need for skilled labour. The promotion of the workplace immigration requires that exploitation of foreign labour is effectively combatted. Our cross-government strategy and actions against the labour exploitation tackle labour exploitation in a holistic way. We increase cooperation and exchange of information between authorities. Cooperation, especially between the labour inspectors, the police and tax authorities will be enhanced to prevent and combat abuse in the labour market. We are committed to continue to develop close operation with the European Labour Authority and other EU Member States. Like in other parts of the world, the green transition is a very topical issue for us. We need to ensure the right skills for the green transition and to continue to educate more high-level experts who are able to steer us towards a more sustainable future. The green transition requires that also companies invest in development skills of their employees. On-the-job learning is crucial as well as promoting opportunities for continuous learning. We are significantly increasing research and development investment and assessing what kind of expertise is needed in the short and long-term. Esteemed colleagues, we also need innovations. In order to make all I mentioned a reality, we highlight the need for policy coherence within the United Nations and multilateral system and the need to work together globally, regionally and nationally. This way we can integrate employment

innovation and environmental policies and access to promote human and labour rights, sustainable growth and decent and productive employment for all. Policy coherence can be promoted effectively by cross-governmental strategies. Now it is time to adapt our social contract to the current context and challenges we are facing together. I wish all the success for your work during the ILC. Thank you, Mr President. Thank you, audience.

Mr Rajeev Dubey

Employer Vice-President (India)

Thank you very much, sir. With that, we have no more speakers. I apologize that, despite every effort diplomatically possible, we are finishing this session five minutes behind time. Please accept my humble and respectful apologies. With that, this session comes to an end.

► Monday, 10 June 2024

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Let us start. I hope that at least some of you managed to have some restful weekend. It is my great pleasure to declare open the 10th sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Our morning sitting will continue with the general discussion on the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. At the start of the afternoon, our plenary proceedings will begin with the presentation, discussion and noting of the Report of the Finance Committee as well as the adoption of the two resolutions stemming from the work of the committee. The report was published on the Conference website on Saturday as record of proceedings 4A. Before we begin, I would like to remind you that, according to arrangements approved at our opening sitting with regards to the modality of the special sitting on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories, the appendix of the Director-General's report on this topic was discussed at the special sitting on 6th of June. I therefore encourage you to please focus your interventions on reports I(A), I(B) and I(C). Thank you. Likewise, I would like to recall the principles governing this discussion which the Conference presidents refer to you in the afternoon. Firstly, on the use of the parliamentary language, I wish to call on all those who will speak in the plenary to do so with both the openness and the dignity that are appropriate at this highest international body in the realm of social and labour related matters. Freedom of expression is a vital feature of the International Labour Organization. To exercise this freedom in a spirit of mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates respect the accepted procedure, use parliamentary language, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising any questions foreign to these matters. The respect of this principle is necessary if we want our work to be effective and successful. I would also once again call on all delegates to please take their seats as we already began our sitting. Next, on the plenary starting time, there is a firm agreement on the part of the officers to begin our sittings strictly on time. Only in this manner will we manage to complete the debates within the time schedule. I am counting on you all to make this possible. Thirdly, I must refer to the length of the plenary speeches. As you may already know, the duration of speeches is limited by the standing orders of the Conference to five minutes only. The time limit will be strictly applied. It is therefore strongly recommended that delegates reduce courtesies to a minimum. Timekeeping is a collective responsibility. For the sake of transparency, a countdown will be on display on the screen for all interventions. Lastly, I would like to address the points of order and rights of reply. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order or to exercise the right to reply in the plenary do not need to interrupt the proceedings. Instead, they should simply raise their flag. A member of the staff will then approach them in the room and attend to their request. In the case of a right of reply, I ask that you clearly inform that member of the staff the intervention in respect to which the right of reply is sought. Please be reminded that a right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes and it should be delivered in respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice of our organization to allow a right to reply to a reply. All this being said, now we will begin with our speakers list. I just once again would ask all kind members present here to keep the noise to the minimum, show respect to all other speakers and take their seats. Please. Now the floor is being given to Mr Nujoma,

Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation of Namibia. Please take the floor.

Mr Utoni Nujoma

Government (Namibia)

Good morning, distinguished members of the presidium. Thank you, Mr President, for giving me the floor to speak on behalf of Namibia on the reports of the Director-General. I also thank the Director-General, Gilbert F. Hounbo, for his report on the social contract and how it can be renewed and adapted. The world today is in a deep state of crisis, confronted with violent conflicts, a cost-of-living crisis, economic insecurity, inequality and uncertainty, and a climate crisis while still grappling with the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Namibia is not spared. Two weeks ago, His Excellency Nangolo Mbumba, the President of the Republic of Namibia, declared a state of emergency on account of the national disaster of drought in all regions of our country. The renewal of the social contract requires that we consider what is expected of each of us. The three steps proposed by the DG to assist with the renewal of the social contract are welcome as well as the call for stakeholders to play their parts. For the renewal of the social contract to be effective, it must be tailored to specific national circumstances and priorities while at the same time fitting into a shared global framework and international agreed standards. Mr President, I am pleased to inform the Conference of some of the important actions being taken by the Namibian Government to renew its social contract. Namibia is about to introduce the national minimum wage. The Cabinet of the Republic of Namibia has endorsed the introduction of the national minimum wage, which will benefit the lower-paid workers of Namibia and begin to reduce the extreme income inequality that is a vestige of the pre-independence apartheid system. This is an important first step toward achieving Namibia's constitutional principle of ensuring a decent standard of living for all in Namibia. The national minimum wage rate of \$18 per hour was reached after reviewing the report of the tripartite Wages Commission and extensive consultations with social partners and other key stakeholders countrywide and with the tripartite Labour Advisory Council. Namibia is making great strides to expand universal access to social protection. As part of the Global Accelerator process, Namibia will finalize the two far-reaching initiatives to expand universal social protection, in line with the Namibian constitutional principles. One, the establishment of an all-inclusive national pension fund, and secondly, the introduction of the national unemployment fund. Also as part of the Global Accelerator process, Namibia will explore measures to ensure that maternity protection is available to all women. Furthermore, to strengthen Namibia's legal framework on social protection, the Social Security Act will be amended to ensure social security coverage of the informal economy and to enhance maternity benefits. Namibia thanks the ILO for the all-round support it has been rendering to our country, particularly as regards the minimum wage and the national pension fund. Mr President, while appreciating the DG's proposals on how to go about renewing the social contract, my delegation submits that for the renewal to be effective there is a need for our organization to provide leadership in condemning the use of economic sanctions, unilateral coercive measures by some Member States to inflict suffering on the population of targeted countries to achieve political objectives. Such measures are contrary to social justice. Mr President, the Government of Namibia commits itself to deepen social dialogue and to continue to provide the enabling environment for employers' and workers' organizations as well as the tripartite institutions to participate

effectively in shaping and renewing the social contract at the national level. Merci beaucoup.

Mr Dongmyeong Kim

Worker (Republic of Korea)

Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends, I am Kim Dongmyeong, Chairman of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions, the FKTU. First and foremost I extend a heartfelt message of solidarity to our comrades enduring the agony of war and poverty worldwide and to those tirelessly working to support them. The Philadelphia Declaration, which asserts that all human beings are entitled to pursue material well-being and spiritual development with equal opportunities in freedom, dignity and economic security regardless of race, creed or sex, remains a beacon of hope and justice. I wholeheartedly support the report of ILO Director-General Gilbert Hounbo, which underscores our collective social responsibility to uphold the Philadelphia Declaration. The importance of social dialogue, tripartism and the creation of a new social contract to address pressing challenges such as the climate crisis, inequality and the realities of labour and education cannot be overstated. For this new social contract to thrive, the foundation of democracy must be solidified. Democracy is built on respect for all members of society. Unfortunately, the current Yoon Suk Yeol administration in Korea has adopted a consistently pro-business and anti-labour stance. The violent oppression of protesting workers, enforced disclosure of union finances, reduction of union support, attempts to impose long working hours under the guise of flexibility, and the exclusion of major trade unions from government committees are glaring examples of this anti-labour agenda. Democracy is fundamentally about elections. 2024 will witness an unprecedented number of elections worldwide. In Korea the recent general election in April resulted in a historic defeat for the ruling party. This outcome reflects the public's rejection of the Government's destructive labour policies over the past two years. The Government and the ruling party must abandon their outdated view of labour issues as class conflicts. The Labour Standards Act, which protects the rights of economically and socially disadvantaged workers, must be extended to workplaces with fewer than five employees. Attempts to apply differential minimum wages by industry must cease immediately. We must expand the scope of industrial action to hold the real employers accountable and amend articles 2 and 3 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Adjustment Act to prevent their misuse in obstructing legitimate union activities and destroying unions through damage claims. The right of teachers and public servants to voice their political opinions and engage in political activities must be upheld. These amendments align with the spirit of ILO Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 111, which Korea has ratified. The FKTU's decision to rejoin the Economic Social and Labour Council table last November, after temporarily suspending social dialogue in response to the Government's anti-labour stance, was driven by our unwavering belief in the importance of tripartism, as emphasized by Director-General Hounbo. The FKTU remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining open channels for social dialogue under any circumstances. President Yoon Suk Yeol must abandon his biased attitude of disregarding labour's value behind slogans of labour reform and rule of law in labour relations. He must engage in genuine communication with the labour community, including FKTU, to achieve outcomes beneficial to both labour and management. 2024 will be a pivotal year for establishing the direction of a new social contract for workers in Korea and globally. As I conclude, I urge all of us to deeply internalize the powerful

proclamation of the 1944 Philadelphia Declaration: labour is not a commodity. Thank you.

Mr Bob Azam

Employer (Indonesia)

Honourable Mr President, ministers, Director-General, fellow delegates, good morning. On behalf of the Indonesian Employers' Association, APINDO, and Chamber of Commerce, KADIN, I would like to express the highest appreciation to the ILO for organizing the 112th International Labour Conference. We hope the results of this conference could transform the future of work challenge into opportunities to make a conducive working climate that supports the global economic growth. Currently, Indonesia is still in progress to recover from repercussions of the pandemic and the global crisis. Collaborating with the Government and workers, APINDO must systematically continue our knowledge, experience and network to foster a sustainable economic growth. In 2023, APINDO released the Economic Roadmap, a five-year proposal aimed to provide recommendations on national economic policy to the new government. The road map will help the Government to address current global and national economic issues through creation of healthy employment for upcoming labour force and existing workers in the labour market, especially to deal with the national demographic bonus predicted to happen in 2030. On this very honoured occasion, I would like to convey some of APINDO's views of the issues discussed in this year's ILC. Mr President, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, concerning general discussion on decent work and the care economy, APINDO believes that enabling access to decent work is essential, especially concerning the care workforce. This sector will increasingly support the inclusion of female workers if we do the business correctly by ensuring a rights-based approach, equal pay, equal benefit and freedom of association. Enhancing skills of the care workers is vital, including upskilling, reskilling and promoting lifelong learning among care workers. Mr President, on fundamental principles and rights at work, FPRW, APINDO strongly believes that FPRW plays a critical role in creating a fair and equitable society. APINDO also believes that the strong collaboration among the ILO office and constituent members is critical to advance the implementation of FPRW despite the challenges faced by all of us. The advancement of FPRW should be continued. However, APINDO also suggests that the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work also needs to consider the sustainability of the individual business, especially small/medium enterprises, to be able to continuously provide employment. Mr President, regarding protection against biological hazards, APINDO strongly agrees and supports the adoption of the standards concerning biological hazards in the working environment. Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic, tripartite should play a critical role in developing preventive and proactive measures that are their responsibility pursuant to the standards, including the preparation and arrangement for emergency response, identification of high risks sectors and occupations and categories of workers that requires protection. We must also emphasize the need of robust education to our employees to change their mindset from recovering to preventing. The ultimate objective is to protect workers while at the same time maintain business and employment sustainability. Mr President, in summary, our aim is to be partner to the Government to create healthy employment through improvement of the labour law and regulation. APINDO does believe that collaboration and effective social dialogue is the key to respond to uncertainty and ambiguity in the world of work and it must be supported by the strong labour administration. APINDO is committed to

continuing our participation, collaboration and proactive engagement with the social partners in crafting the best solutions for a better Indonesian economy and aligned with the global and Sustainable Development Goals. Thank you. Merci.

Ms Marta Elena Feitó Cabrera

Government (Cuba)

President, Director-General, representatives of workers and employers, honoured guests. At a time when the world economy is continually evolving and labour conditions are changing quickly, it is imperative that we renew the social contract. New technologies, globalization and demographic changes have radically transformed the world of work creating challenges that are unprecedented [vgr INAUDIBLE 23:35]. Artificial intelligence threatens to replace [vgr INAUDIBLE 23:42] while work is becoming more and more precarious and inequality affects millions of workers across the world. In its more than hundred years of existence, the ILO has addressed challenges such as slave labour, violence at work, child labour and violence against migrants, which affect millions of people still at a world level. In many areas, including in developed countries, freedom of association and collective bargaining are far from being a reality. More than half of the world's workforce works in countries that have still not ratified the fundamental Conventions that regulate and protect those rights. Injustice and inequality need to be addressed, while the Palestinian people are being barbarously attacked by Israel. Nothing can justify the deaths of more than 30,000 Palestinians and the forced displacement of more than 65% of the population. We have to promote social dialogue as a powerful tool to address the emergent challenges facing us and to find solutions together. Only in a situation of peace and protection for workers' and union rights will we be able to achieve fair and lasting development for all. We need to get rid of obstacles to fair access to labour and address the challenges in a world of work which is changing all the time. That is essential and we need to renew the social contract. Enterprises have to accept their social responsibilities and respect workers' rights. Entrepreneurs' businesses have to contribute to the good of society and contribute to the construction of just societies. Honoured delegates, despite the problems facing it because of the blockade and economic pressure from the United States, Cuba maintains its commitment to international standards and is continuing to perfect its development and social model to become a more just and sustainable society. We have been working on the amendment of the labour code and social security based on the needs of workers in accordance with the constitution of Cuba which is based on rights and principles, which address rights at work and social security. We also have a national plan for social and economic development up until 2030 addressing young people and adolescents, addressing the demographic change and the ageing population, promoting the rights of women and maternity rights of women and the needs of families. This reflects the commitment of the Cuban state to the rights and well-being of its workers. We emphasize once again our commitment to comply with international labour standards, in particular the 19 Conventions that Cuba has ratified. And we think that this is a good time to strengthen the annual [vgr INAUDIBLE 27:13] of the ILO on the fundamental principles and rights at work and to strengthen our work to move towards universal ratification of the fundamental Conventions which will strengthen the new social contract. Together we can create a fairer and more equitable social situation and work for a fairer world. Thank you.

Mr See Leng Tan

Government (Singapore)

ILO Director-General Gilbert Houngbo, Minister Alexei Buzu, President of the International Labour Conference, Excellencies, distinguished delegates. My team and I would like to congratulate the ILO for convening this year's International Labour Conference. The ILO and its constituents have showed great solidarity in overcoming COVID, which has had a massive impact on the world of work. We are now responding to the challenges of a post-pandemic world by reassessing how we can better ensure fair opportunities and protections for every worker and empower our workforces to benefit from technological change. We therefore welcome the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Singapore recently went through such a renewal. In 2022 we launched Forward Singapore, which is a nationwide effort to engage all Singaporeans on renewing our social compact. Singaporeans highlighted the continued need to reskill and upskill workers, make workplaces more progressive and uplift lower-wage workers. We have rolled out the first wave of programmes in response to this feedback, and I would like to share about some of them with all of you. Firstly, we need to create productive employment in the face of rapid technological disruptions to jobs and skills. To help our workers access good career opportunities, we have enhanced our Career Conversion Programmes by providing more salary support and a monthly training allowance. Secondly, we continue to shape norms towards fairer and more progressive workplaces. A level playing field is crucial for ensuring that every worker can achieve his or her fullest potential. We are working with our tripartite partners to develop workplace fairness legislation. We have also recently announced tripartite guidelines on flexible work arrangement requests to guide workers and employers towards win-win outcomes. Thirdly, the social contract must ensure that no one is left behind. We continue to uplift lower-wage workers through expanding our progressive wage model, and this benefits up to 9 in 10 lower-wage workers. Distinguished delegates, the platform economy has brought about more opportunities for workers. However, platform workers' protections require strengthening. We shall introduce legislation to require platform operators to provide financial support for platform workers injured at work. We will also improve their retirement adequacy and enable them to access the benefits of collective representation. We have also introduced an outpatient healthcare plan for migrant workers. Employers pay an annual fee for their workers who can then access a range of healthcare services. We are also continuing our partnership with the ILO. I am pleased to announce that Singapore has joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We look forward to contributing to its mission to build a sustainable, equitable and socially just future. I am also pleased to share that we will be extending the ILO-Singapore Partnership Agreement. Singapore will continue to organize joint technical activities to support governments, employers and workers in ASEAN. Our distinguished delegates, a truly successful society is one where everyone succeeds together. Renewing the social contract is an important step towards ensuring that no one is left behind. We will continue to work on this renewal together with tripartite partners and the wider ILO community. Thank you very much.

Mr Hassan Fakh

Worker (Lebanon)

Dear colleagues, fellow trade unionists, ladies and gentlemen, greetings. We welcome the Director-General's report on the occupied Arab territories and the detailed report on a new social contract which we believe is an exceptional road map for our efforts. With regard to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, we also need to mention Lebanon, and that gives you the full picture and we get an excellent analysis of the problems resulting from the violent occupation that continues there. The report on a renewed social contract was a theme wisely chosen because the world faces major challenges and major crises, putting a strain on human relations and labour markets. We also have artificial intelligence and a telecommunications revolution which are also posing threats to human rights, the rights of women, collective bargaining and the social contract which assures social stability. And so we believe that this report should be a guide for governments, employers, workers and liberal professions, and economic and social partners. We agree with all of the findings of the report and we thank the Director-General and his team for all of their research. We are meeting at a time when the Palestinian people is facing genocide in Gaza, in the West Bank, in Rafah and throughout the occupied territories. It is beyond belief to see what is happening, the number of casualties, the number of wounded, the number of people who have been taken prisoner and the destruction in Gaza. Gaza has been completely destroyed by Israel, and all of the Western countries supporting them are flouting human rights and are looking the other way as this continues to happen, this the largest massacre of our time. We thank the young students of universities in the United States and in other countries in the West who have said no to war and occupation. Bearing in mind moral and human principles, we need to condemn these massacres which continue to target the Palestinian people and we read about it in the Director-General's report. We demand an independent Palestinian State and an end to this destruction and to follow the example of Spain, Belgium, Ireland, South Africa and Slovenia in recognizing the Palestinian State. Lebanon has always shown solidarity with Palestinians, in spite of the Israeli aggressions that they have continued to suffer from. We have 13 refugee camps since 1948 in Lebanon, which are of course a burden for our society. And we continue to condemn Israeli occupation in Kafr Shuba Hills and the Shebaa Farms. This occupation has led to the burning of our farming land with phosphorous weapons, and that means that we can no longer use that land for many decades. The occupation has also led to the displacement of tens of thousands of people and destroyed factories. Israel also threatens to destroy Beirut and the whole of our country and send us back to the stone age. We wish to thank the Western countries who provided weapons in that respect. And as workers and farmers we continue to resist. Thanks to all of those free-thinking people who have shown their solidarity with us and defend the right of peoples to self-determination, to peace and security. And we demand that a recommendation is adopted to put an immediate end to this occupation in Gaza and in Lebanon according to the ICJ and the ICC decisions in this regard and the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine and the occupied Arab territories as well. And we demand that a programme is launched with producers in Lebanon in order to put an end to the damaging measures against Syria. We have now more than two million Syrian refugees, and this has a negative impact on our economy and on labour markets in our country and on labour relations. So, an end to the economic and military war against the Palestinian people, against the people of Syria,

Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, and we want to see peace, human rights, justice and the right to self-determination. Freedom for Palestine. Thank you.

Ms Margarida Adamugy Talapa

Government (Mozambique)

Your Excellency President of the session of this International Labour Conference, Director-General of the ILO, Your Excellencies, all protocol observed. It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, the Government along with me, and on my own behalf to express my great gratitude for the privilege that has been given to us to be allowed to address this august assembly. We would very much like to send warm greetings to Mr Gilbert Houngbo, the Director-General of the ILO, and his team who have been putting great effort into developing the work of this organization and guiding it. Director-General, we are very pleased to see the way that you address the subject chosen for your report entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract' which, as you explain, can be broken down into four dimensions: the universal importance of the social contract, social contracts under pressure, social contract adaptation or change, and renewing the social contract. We think that your approach is relevant and necessary because we are going through a period in which technological innovation, rather than being at the service of human beings in the world of work, tends to promote a situation in which working conditions become more precarious, which has a significant impact on workers' lives and the lives of their dependents. Apart from that, it is right to address the subject given. As we see things in the world of work, the social contract should be seen as focused on human beings. We also see the need to promote decent work and sustainable work because labour is not a merchandise, it is not a commodity. The worker is a human being with rights, needs and aspirations. It can only be possible to realize what is implied by that if in our countries we consolidate the mechanisms of social dialogue on a tripartite nature and go for the creation of specific conditions which will make sure that we have institutions created and consolidated which will protect workers from the risk to which they are exposed as a result of technological advance. The Government of Mozambique has been redoubling its efforts with a view to strengthening tripartite social dialogue. And one of the fruits of its work has been that in the month of February of this year a new labour code entered into force which was approved by consensus in the Assembly of the Republic after being subjected to intense discussions on the part of the social partners and other stakeholders from civil society. Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, Mozambique was elected an alternate member of the Governing Body of the ILO for the period 2024-2027. Given that, on behalf of the Government and people of Mozambique, we would like to express our gratitude for the trust placed in us, and we underline that we will spare no efforts to make a contribution as well as we can to realizing the objectives and goals of this organization. To wind up, we would like to recognize and express our thanks for the support and technical assistance that we have received from the ILO, particularly in the areas of promoting employment, working against child labour, the actuarial studies of compulsory social security and upskilling of our officials in various areas of the administration related to work and employment. Mozambique reiterates its commitment to continue working on the fight against child labour, implementing strategies which will promote decent labour and employment and consolidating tripartite social dialogue with all social partners. Thank you very much to everyone.

Ms K Thanaletchimi

Worker (Singapore)

Conference Chair, distinguished delegates, the Singapore National Trades Union Congress, SNTUC, commends the DG's comprehensive report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. It underscores the importance of advancing social justice, freedom, dignity, economic security, equal opportunity and provision of decent work globally. The SNTUC has been taking actions that are in line with the ILO's vision. We renewed our workers' compact through a massive engagement exercise in 2023. We are committed to reducing inequality through expanding our progressive wage model and lobbying for enhanced social protection for workers. Our initiatives aim to enhance wages, welfare and work prospects for workers, mirroring the DG's call for a renewed social contract that prioritizes equity and inclusiveness. SNTUC's emphasis on inclusive roles resonates with the ILO's focus on social dialogue. Our collaborative tripartite approach involving the Government, employers and unions has been instrumental in ensuring all stakeholders, including all workers, benefit from economic progress. In 2023 the SNTUC completed the 'Every Worker Matters Conversation' exercise which engaged 42,000 workers across all segments of our whole workforce. From the workers' feedback we formulated ten key policy recommendations, several of which have been adopted by the Singapore Government. This includes assuring mid-career workers of a just transition to more resilient career pathways, comprehensive support for the youth to discover and grow in their career journey, fair employment opportunities and training support for workers, support for caregivers through improved leave schemes and flexible work arrangements, ensuring retirement adequacy for workers, and enhancing respect and recognition for essential service workers. SNTUC has placed strong efforts in structured training and placement and enhancing social protection for informal workers. In 2023 SNTUC implemented a 'C U Back at Work' programme to provide flexible training and work arrangements such that informal workers, especially caregivers, can transit back into the workforce more smoothly. For platform workers, SNTUC secured the Government's commitment to implement workplace injury compensation and social security contributions for platform workers that are on par with employees. In addition, the Government agreed with our push for the legal right to form a collective representation body for platform workers' associations so that they will be able to officially negotiate for better outcomes, resolve disputes and sign binding agreements with the platform companies. SNTUC strongly prioritizes upskilling and reskilling initiatives as a key priority, aligning with the ILO's recommendation for future workforce resilience. Since 2019 SNTUC has initiated the forming of Company Training Committees between companies and unions to spur individual company's transformation and upskilling for their workers to benefit from better wages and work prospects. Since 2022 the Government has set aside S\$100 million for SNTUC to skill up the CTCs. To date we have formed more than 2,100 CTCs across different sectors of Singapore's economy and trained more than 200,000 workers through the CTCs. We intend to step up CTC efforts to do much more in the coming years because we have seen good outcomes. SNTUC is also dedicated to promoting gender equality and enhancing women's participation in the workforce. We support women in balancing work and family commitments, fostering a more inclusive and equitable labour market. Earlier this year, SNTUC was instrumental in the social dialogue process to establish the tripartite guidelines on flexible work arrangement requests. This ensures that our workers have a formal process to request flexible work arrangements and have them properly considered by employers. In conclusion, the SNTUC is committed to the ILO's vision. We are committed

to leave no one behind in our efforts to improve their wages, welfare and work prospects, because every worker matters. Thank you.

Mr Liwiusz Laska

Government (Poland)

Mr Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, more than a hundred years ago, tripartite representatives of eight countries, including Poland, drafted the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, the first global social contract to respond to the needs of workers after the First World War. Today climate change, digital revolution, including artificial intelligence, military conflicts, including the unprovoked aggression of Russia against Ukraine, globalization and demographic change have put our social contract under great strain. So much so that our citizens may lose confidence in it. As the Director-General very rightly notes in his report, rather than having a sense of not being left behind, many feel that the system is rigged against them. That needs to be addressed. Our conference, a tripartite body, is the obvious venue for the future of the social contract to be discussed and, if needed, reinvented. For us in the European Union, the quest to modernize our social contract has been going on since the turn of the 21st century. Today, as we are facing digital and green transitions, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the associated headline targets set the core of Social Europe. They represent a political commitment of all European Member States that those transitions must be fair and just. Poland is doing fairly well when it comes to the implementation of Social Europe's goals. Currently we are pursuing policies supporting parents in reconciling work with family life. We wish to go further in that direction, experimenting with the organization of working time throughout the week. Ladies and gentlemen, work, especially decent work, is a space for self-fulfilment and emancipation. It is the primary source of income for most workers. Therefore, we are constantly aiming to improve the quality of work, which is reflected in the introduction in the labour code of provisions of remote work and in the implementation into Polish legislation of the provisions of the directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union. In the face of technological and economic changes and labour market challenges, Poland's goal is to build competitiveness based on increasing productivity and innovation rather than on the factor of low labour costs. This is why Poland is gradually raising social standards to ensure decent wages and stable work. The instrument for realizing the right to fair remuneration includes the institution of minimum wage and minimum hourly rate for specific civil law contracts. The next step will be for Poland to implement the directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union. The second objective of the directive is to promote collective bargaining. We are working on changes to the law that will encourage the social partners to use the agreement method to determine working conditions and pay. In response to increasing digitalization of work and the growing impact of new technologies on the labour supply process, the Polish authorities have also undertaken preparatory work aimed at implementation into Polish law of the directive on the improvement of working conditions via online platforms. Next year's Conference will initiate work on the ILO standard on decent work in the platform economy. We are looking forward to this discussion, especially as Poland will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union and thus represent the European Union countries in this debate. Safe and healthy working conditions are integral to decent work. Poland has consistently supported all steps aimed at improving the safety and health of workers in the workplace, both at national and EU levels. We strive to ratify at least one of the

fundamental ILO Conventions on OSH as soon as possible. Mr Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, in today's world, the work and discussion on the social contract is not a task for one Conference and must be continued. One of the tools for this discussion is the Global Coalition for Social Justice. I congratulate the Director-General on this initiative which shows vision and bold thinking and which Poland intends to join. Thank you.

Ms Lesly Sarahí Cerna

Government (Honduras)

President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, and allow me to congratulate you upon your appointment, Chair. As the Director-General warned us at the beginning of this conference we are now at a critical juncture. The convergence of global challenges such as unemployment, inflation, war corruption and inequality have been accentuated by geopolitical tensions and violent conflict, exacerbating poverty, discrimination and forced displacement. Our generation is suffering from the devastating effects of climate change, and if we do not act now, perhaps the next generation will be the last to live in harmony with its environment. Global consensus reached in the past is no longer sufficient to deal with the challenges of today, so establishing a renewed social contract today must be our main task. And that means a commitment to dialogue and a broad global agreement in which all parties agree to ensure an equitable sharing of the benefits of progress. At the global level, the new social contract also means recognizing the shared responsibilities, solidarity, cooperation and a firm conviction that systemic changes require systemic responses to current challenges. We will not manage to improve the living conditions of some 700 million people who live in extreme poverty or guarantee a quality education to the 160 million boys and girls in child labour without dealing with the imbalances of international trade, if we continue to be in the stranglehold of foreign debt, if we continue to see wars, genocides, unilateral sanctions. And we will continue to see the alarming rise in unemployment, underemployment and forced migration. In Honduras, over the past few years we have seen an erosion of the legitimacy and collective trust in the state, and we have seen profit and self-interest taking precedence over the collective good. And these forces have taken advantage of the current crises to build agreements that damage the majority of the Honduran society. And under the cover of corruption and the takeover of the state apparatus this has led to increased poverty, inequality and insecurity with the resulting lack of opportunities. For the past 12 years we have been dreaming of the real building of a new social contract in Honduras in which we see real collective interest to guarantee social justice and to overcome these imbalances, repair the social tissue, increase the trust in the state and allow an improvement to living conditions for all workers, a growth in productivity and facilitation of investment in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Government, led by our president, Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, we call this contract the re-founding. No change in the history of humanity has been addressed without challenges. But moving forward together we have improved our institutions and set the basis for this deep re-founding of the state. On the labour front we continue to maintain tripartite dialogue. We agree on a minimum salary twice a year, and we are trying to overcome child labour and offer opportunities for safe, regular migration through our temporary work abroad programme. And we are trying to continue to work to strengthen the coverage and investment in our Honduran Social Security Institute. We have adopted new laws on labour reservations, on the ceilings for contributions and other contributions. The national institute for professional training continues to work to modernize the system

of apprenticeships and extend possibilities in strategic and cutting-edge areas. International solidarity and cooperation play a vital role in achieving these objectives. In March this year, together with the ILO we launched a new programme on decent work where we have an approach focusing on investment and sustainable development around the principles of human dignity and decent work. Employers and workers have come together in a common strategy with our government, and I would like to thank them for that. President, our government is determined to ensure a renewal of the social contract, more than 100 years since the creation of the ILO and on the 80th anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia. As an international community, we need to honour this historic debt to human development and overcome the inequality which is preventing us from taking a quantum leap forward, particularly in developing countries. Thank you very much indeed.

Mr Sameer Nass

Employer (Bahrain)

In the name of God, the Magnificent, the Merciful. Your Excellency Mr President, Your Excellencies ministers, Your Excellencies ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, dear congress participants. It is a pleasure for me to be involved in this important event, the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would very much like to thank and express my esteem for the Director-General of the ILO and all of the members of the Organization's Governing Body for their untiring work to protect and promote the rights of workers, apart from the positive part they have to play in facing up to current and future challenges. As Employer representative and President of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce, I look forward to seeing the fruits of our meeting reinforcing social justice and rights at work. This all the more because, given the changes happening at a world level and their impact on humans and resources, this has become all the more urgent. This conference is happening at a time when we are seeing a genocide happening in the view of the world and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are being ignored: the right to peace, freedom, construction and self-determination. There are huge challenges for the Palestinian working class. All of us, employers, workers, governments, the whole region, the whole of the world is called on to act. We have to follow the principles of the ILO. We need to install dialogue in international organizations which have been applying double standards and passing in silence over the violations of rights. That has nothing to do with justice. We have a legitimate right to call that into question. We have a great interest in cooperating with international organizations such as the ILO in the framework of our own approach to things. We aim to represent all economic sectors in the national Arab world and international world, across the world, and we have a unique approach to various political and economic questions. One of our priorities in the near future will be to support and protect the creation of enterprises and startups in accordance with the conclusions of the 33rd Arab Summit held recently in the Kingdom of Bahrain that very much paid attention to working conditions, economic diversification and productivity. Ladies and gentlemen, while we consider the development of the concept of decent work in a tripartite dialogue, I cannot pass over in silence the significant part played by the Kingdom of Bahrain in improving the working environment to be healthy and safe, in the creation of new enterprises that promote employment and health and safety at work, helping the fight against unemployment. The unemployment rate is under control. And all this is being done in accordance with the instructions of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, promoting fundamental principles and rights at work

and making it possible for social legislation to be in harmony with ILO standards that we have ratified. We firmly believe in the importance of renewing the social contract based on human rights, a culture of dialogue and cooperation, a culture of peace, of prosperity and equality of opportunities as we continue to construct a developing and developed country facing up to all of the challenges that arise, aiming for balance and justice and democracy in the world of work. Ladies and gentlemen, finally, we hope that the principles we have set out today will be pursued. We see this as a call for peace, for humanity and for promotion of human rights, of which the social rights of workers across the world are an important part. That is the ideal path to promote tripartite interests, those of the workers, the employers and of governments. Our ambition is to create new ways of working that will promote our objectives and reflect the aspirations of our society. We hope that our work in this conference will be blessed by the Almighty and that the work of this conference will be an additional contribution to the cause of workers and of work. Thank you.

Mr Bakhtiyor Makhmadaliev

Worker (Uzbekistan)

Thank you, President, and greetings of the federation of Uzbekistan workers. And we sincerely hope that all of the decisions taken at this conference will help to strengthen social peace and democracy in the field of labour. The Director-General's report on a renewed social contract shows very clearly that decent work and social justice must become the foundations of a new social contract. This renewed social contract must consider the following issues: a respect for human rights, in particular the fundamental principles and rights at work; an effective governance; full employment; productive and freely chosen employment and a fair transition towards a green economy; the equitable sharing of the benefits of progress; good social protection; democracy in the world of work labour; universal access to social welfare; and new strategies to deal with current challenges. The Government of Uzbekistan has carried out important reforms in this area which has strengthened the prosperity of our population, transformed economic sectors and led to the creation of a dynamic civil society. The reform of taxation and the liberalization of exchange markets and monetary policy have also led to progress in the economy. We have also seen the defence of private property and the free movement of labour and capital. The new constitution which dates back to 2023 establishes clearly the principle of a social welfare state. That is a constitutional principle which is enabling us to continue to strengthen human dignity, guaranteeing the prosperity of our people. Thanks to this successful transformation we have seen an extension in life expectancy and an improvement in the quality of life. The average life expectancy has moved to 74 years, and the share of people over the age of 60 has also increased. We have also made great efforts to pursue social justice, creating a single mechanism for registration for the poorest sectors of the population. We have now this single register for social protection. Major reforms have also been undertaken in the area of work more generally. Yes, we have had difficult relations in the past with the ILO, but thanks to the political determination of the current government and good efforts from the workers' movement, we have managed to implement recommendations. And I believe that Uzbekistan can now serve as an example, as a successful reform of labour and full respect for international labour standards. But there are still a number of challenges that we continue to face, and as Gilbert Hounbo the Director-General has said, currently we are not in a position to rise to all of the challenges we face, connected with the transformation from the informal to

the formal economy, for instance. And we do not have a one-size-fits-all solution for dealing with the issue of irregular employment and the self-employed. On labour protection and work-life balance, we still have a long way to go in the work that workers do, where some workers work more than 48 hours a week, which is a major concern for us. And universal access to social protection must also be the cornerstone of this new social contract. If we are to guarantee this contract, we suggest that under ACTRAV we should be organizing a regional workers' conference in Uzbekistan, and we propose to host that. Trade unions are engaged in many activities but their priority must be a fair wage for workers, and so I believe that workers should be fighting for the right to a fair wage as a fundamental right at work. Thank you for your attention.

Ms Betty Amongi Ongom

Government (Uganda and Non-Aligned Movement)

I deliver two statements. One on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and one on behalf of Uganda. Mr President, first I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The full text is posted online. NAM thanks the President and Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General for their respective reports and notes the crucial need to renew the social contract. As we mark the 80th anniversary of the Philadelphia Declaration, which reshaped global social justice, NAM remains committed to its principles. NAM members strongly condemn the illegal Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip, the indiscriminate attacks against Palestinian civilians, civilian objects, the forced displacement of the Palestinian population, and further calls for an immediate and durable humanitarian ceasefire. We look forward to the establishment of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, a timely initiative to enhance cooperation and solidarity in promoting decent work and social justice. This initiative can continue strengthening South-South, North-South and Triangular Cooperation and promoting, preserving and reforming multilateralism and to fully respect the principle of international law and internationally agreed principles with a view to enhancing cooperation in addressing threats and challenges facing developing countries in advancing economic development and social projects. We remain committed about the significant job challenges and the widespread lack of decent work which particularly affects women, children and the youth. In order to achieve social justice, it is necessary to continue calling for the complete, immediate and unconditional lifting of all unilateral coercive measures. Finally, NAM affirms its commitment to social justice and calls on ILO constituents to update social contracts with solidarity and inclusivity. I thank you on behalf of NAM. I now turn to the statement for Uganda. Mr President, Vice-Presidents, Director-General, distinguished delegates, Uganda aligns with the NAM statement. I congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of this session upon their election. I thank the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General for their reports to the Conference. This conference is being held against the backdrop of global political polarization, geopolitical instability and extreme environmental impacts, challenges that place the greatest burden and risks on women and workers. Uganda is committed in advancing the social contract because we believe that it is our duty and responsibility to ensure that our citizens access basic services, employment and social protection. To this end, my government has put in place socio-economic programmes to address these issues. Let me share some of the programmes. Number one, free universal primary and secondary education in all government schools. Wealth creation programmes aimed at providing affordable capital for businesses owned by women, youth and farmers, under which approximately

USD\$2 billion is allocated annually to support agricultural production services. For example, the Parish Development Model provides grants at household level for economic empowerment. Our programme called GROW supports women entrepreneurs with a grant of USD\$217 million targeting business development services and access to affordable capital at 10% interest rate per annum to expand their businesses. We have special grants of USD\$50 million annually established for persons with disabilities and older persons. The National Social Security Fund, which provides efficient social security coverage. A Social Assistance Grant for older persons of 80 years and above which provides monthly cash to them. We have invested in higher education scheme loans for students from poor backgrounds. Our technical skills development programmes are revitalizing structured apprenticeship programmes in which learners, primarily women and the youth, acquire technical skills and workplace experience and are provided with the tools and equipment to start their own businesses. In implementing these programmes, my government prioritizes partnership with our social partners, with our constitution protecting fundamental human rights including equal opportunities, economic and social rights and affirmative action for all vulnerable groups. This includes workers electing Members of Parliament to represent their interests as a special interest group in Parliament. It is essential that we enhance the North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation to support national endeavours aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger as well as fulfilling the pledges contained in the Philadelphia Declaration. Furthermore, there is a need for global solidarity and responsibility sharing with the developing countries being supported through fairer trade terms, a reformed financial architecture and investment that can accelerate the social and economic transformation of these countries. Finally, I reaffirm my government's commitment for a renewed social contract and reassure the Director-General of my government's cooperation and support. I thank you.

Mr Ali Bin Samikh Al Marri

Government (Qatar and Gulf Cooperation Council)

Mr Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, the Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, heads of the delegations, may God's greetings be upon all of you. I would like to speak to you on behalf of the GCC, and that GCC represents the UAE, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. Allow me to congratulate the President of the Conference and his vice-chairmen for having been elected to steer this 112th Session of the ILC, and we wish them all the best in their work. Ladies and gentlemen, we have taken note of the Report of the Director-General and we have felt that he is keen to talk about social justice for the second year. And this is an excellent idea. It is the idea that has been the cornerstone of the ILO. And this report has mentioned the importance of a renewed social contract and the reasons for such a renewed social contract. And the tripartite representation is going to underline social dialogue and would allow those countries or those three parties to fulfil their responsibilities. Social justice is very important and we believe that an unhealthy and unsafe working environment means that our social justice is not fully rendered or that it is absent. Ladies and gentlemen, this organization has been set up 100 years ago or more and we need to review the social justice on the ground to see how it was implemented in terms of legislative and standard-setting activities. We know that the ILO, with its tripartite representation, has made headway in this respect and that we have been able to convey various interests of the various parties in an excellent manner, these parties that represent the ILO and make the ILO different than other

organizations. In this report, we have seen that there is a clear explanation of the daunting challenges that we need to work on effectively and together, and we need to make joint efforts amongst all countries and international organizations in a more comprehensive manner in order to have an impact, in order for the change to become stronger and to be able to face up to reality and its complex activities. We know that climate change, technological advance, the informal sector as well as the debt crisis are only some of the problems that impede the renewal of our social contract. We in the GCC, we convert all our efforts in order to achieve a healthy environment for the workers on the basis of decent work and just transition. We have adopted the best programmes in order to ensure social protection. We would like to take note of the programme that we have adopted in the GCC for fair wages, and we work with you and with the ILO in order to improve the implementation of such a programme. Last week in Doha we had the first round of Doha Dialogue which is a regional dialogue between the GCC, Jordan, Lebanon and African countries that have a lot of migrant workers. And we set up a voluntary mechanism to deal with the status of such migrant workers in both receiving and sending countries. And we have set up a new dialogue mechanism that has been in implementation in the GCC since 2008 but we have adapted it at the regional level. We would like to thank the ILO for all their efforts in launching the social justice global alliance, and we think that this enables all tripartite parties to benefit from the experiences of each and every country. And we wish that the future would truly be a better future on the basis of our work and that this conference would achieve its objectives. Greetings be upon all of you.

Mr Masahisa Miyazaki

Government (Japan)

Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director-General and distinguished delegates. Thank you very much. I am Miyazaki Masahisa, State Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan. It is my great honour and privilege to deliver this statement today on behalf of the Government of Japan. First I would like to thank the Director-General for putting together a comprehensive and ambitious report. Japan has already announced its intention to participate in the Global Coalition for Social Justice, invited by the Director-General, and has the pleasure of taking a role in the coordinating group. To achieve significant results, Japan will continue to support the initiative. As noted in the report, the ILO has been working on protecting workers' rights for more than 100 years. Japan has been a Member State of the ILO since the Organization's establishment and has taken on a great responsibility for the administration of the ILO for a long time as a member of the Governing Body. We have also been proactively involved in ILO activities as the third largest financial contributor while we share the values with the ILO. The Asia Pacific region is a critical area that has the largest number of workers in the world, and I am honoured that Japan plays a significant part to making decent work a reality in the region. As stated in the report, different approaches need to be taken according to the changes in the times, such as technological advances and demographic shifts. Japan will continue to make its utmost efforts by closely working together with the ILO. As many of you are aware, Japan is facing a rapidly ageing population and a declining birth rate. About 30% of the population is 65 years old or older and our society is significantly influenced by the demographic shifts. In such a situation, the Government of Japan believes that it is important to make sure that people with different characteristics can contribute their share as members of the labour market according to their wishes and capabilities, regardless of gender, age and other factors. And to maintain an adequate

workforce as the country's population declines, our government is making various policy efforts. For instance, companies are required to ensure their employees employment opportunities until age 65. Also, businesses must make efforts to secure opportunities for their employees to work until they reach 70. These are provisions aimed to create and maintain an environment for older adults to be able to work regardless of their age. Furthermore, Japan is stepping up policies supporting children and child rearing to address the population decrease. In terms of labour and employment policies, the Government is promoting various initiatives so that both men and women can balance work and parenting. Such initiatives include reducing long hours, encouraging male workers to take childcare leave and promoting flexible work arrangements for workers with young children. Meanwhile, we are also implementing policies to boost the income of young people by strengthening support for workers participating in education and training programmes. Being able to work is a blessing. We are creating a society in which the older adults can have a job according to their hope, just like the younger generation. At the same time, the Government is implementing policies to deal with population decline in the labour and employment area. As one of the fastest ageing nations in the world, Japan is willing to continue to share its policy efforts with other members. I would like you to utilize Japan's experience of success and failures when making policies in your own countries. Within the country, the Japanese Government attaches importance to dialogues with workers, workers' organizations and employers' organizations. Outside the country we make every effort to deepen mutual understanding with each country by discussions and colloquies. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I commit that Japan will, with leadership, cope with any challenges in the world of work which the ILO has identified. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Dr Arshad Mahmood

Government (Pakistan)

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, assalamu alaikum and a very good morning. Allow me to extend warm greetings from the people of Pakistan. We deeply appreciate the insights presented by the Director-General of the ILO in his report at the Conference. These visionary insights resonate with Pakistan's socio-economic landscape, emphasizing the need for a revitalized social contract to combat contemporary challenges of inequality, insecurity and injustice. Pakistan stands at the forefront of a journey towards comprehensive socio-economic development. With a dedicated focus on inclusive growth and sustainability, we navigate the challenges of climate change, remain unwavering in our commitment to fortify social safety nets, protect vulnerable segments of society and strengthen economic resilience. Mr President, at the heart of our endeavours lies the expansion of social protection schemes, ensuring a robust social safety net for the most vulnerable among us. By prioritizing health, education and financial support, particularly for marginalized communities, we strive to mitigate the adverse impacts of crises and foster resilience. The largest national social safety net programme, Benazir Income Support Programme, has been evaluated as an effective and very successful model. Mr President, the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution and the Workers Welfare Fund support private sector workers' welfare. EOBI offers pensions and lump-sum grants funded by the employees' and the employers' contributions, while WWF provides housing, education, health facilities and supports building hospitals and schools through industrial establishment contributions. Both institutions ensure better social security and living conditions for the workers and their families. Our recent endeavours of consolidating

and simplifying labour laws, Mr President, enhancing their scope to cover excluded groups, has ensured coverage to domestic workers and others who until now have been denied of these fundamental rights. Mr President, investments in skill development programmes are pivotal, equipping our workforce with the requisite skills for international labour markets. Through collaborations with international organizations and host countries we ensure that our workers are well-prepared and supported, facilitating fair recruitment and safe migration. Through significant legislative and policy measures, we are aligning our national legislation with international labour standards, underscoring our commitment for upholding workers' rights and fostering harmonious industrial relations. Our recent convening of the Federal Tripartite Consultative Committee exemplifies our commitment for social dialogue. Endorsing six new ratifications for 2024-25, including crucial Conventions on forced labour and maritime labour, Pakistan reaffirms its dedication for ensuring workers' rights with international labour standards. Mr President, we intend to convene the National Tripartite Labour Conference very soon. With a focus on occupational safety and health, OSH, we envision meaningful stakeholder participation, culminating in actionable outcomes that ensure OSH conditions across various sectors. Pakistan's leadership has been well demonstrated through our active participation in the Global Coalition for Social Justice. As the first ILO Member State where all three constituents, government, employers and workers, joined the Global Coalition, we underscore our commitment for advancing social justice. The launch of a national coalition for social justice further solidifies our dedication, and we eagerly anticipate contributing to and benefiting from the Global Coalition's inaugural forum scheduled for June 13th. Mr President, Pakistan remains steadfast in its pursuit for just transitions, emphasizing job creation, social protection, human capital developments and the upholding of fundamental labour standards. Aligned in our objectives, we look forward to collective efforts with the Director-General of the ILO to further the goals of social justice for all. I thank you all.

Ms Elly Rosita Silaban

Worker (Indonesia)

Chair, I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Indonesian workers. I would like to start by warmly thanking the ILO Director-General on this report, so called 'Towards a renewed social contract'. It is time for a new social contract between workers, government and business, based on respect for human rights, including the fundamental principles and rights at work. We Indonesian workers fully support the Report of the Director-General. In the context of accelerating economic integration and reshaping the labour market, the formulation of labour policies becomes crucial, and participation of the social partners in the formulation is critically important. We need to reframe our social contract using social dialogue. I am in line with the report about the challenges we are facing in social dialogue, taking into account the declining trend of collective bargaining agreement coverage in many places. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of social dialogue depends on the existence of strong representative trade unions, thus the knowledge capacity to participate in social dialogue. One of the roots of this problem is the perception that still believes cheap labour policy and export-led growth will lead a country developed and sustainable (sic). Using precarious work as a comparative advantage in attracting foreign direct investments has proven to fail to prosper the people. The case on Indonesia's Omnibus Law, which Indonesia labour unions are currently complaining about in the ILO standards application committee, is one example of these circumstances. In developing the job creation law, the Government lacks to

have proper consultation with trade unions. To date, trade unions continue to voice their opposition against the job creation law. In its conclusion, the Committee requests the Government to avail itself without delay of ILO technical assistance with a particular focus on legislative labour law reform, including the job creation law, with the full involvement of social partners to ensure full compliance with its obligations under the Convention in law and practice. I thank the Director-General for his unwavering support to the tripartite constituents in Indonesia. I was honoured to officially meet the Director-General last Saturday in his office and convey the aspiration and expectation of Indonesian workers in relation to CAS conclusions in 2023. In this connection, I am also thankful to the International Trade Union Confederation, ITUC-Asia Pacific and ILO ACTRAV to make this possible. In addition to that, it is timely to re-visit the role of labour regulation today. The labour market situation has developed substantially in the last decades. However, the legislative frameworks failed to follow this development. For example, labour laws are not effective to protect the types of non-standard forms of employment. Therefore, adequate and sustainable social protection for workers in the gig and platform economy is essential. Chair, peace is the cornerstone of the realization of social justice. The Indonesian workers will continue to support the restoration of democracy in Myanmar. Indonesian workers stand firmly in solidarity with the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar, CTUM, Myanmar's workers and the people of Myanmar in their struggle to reclaim peace, justice, and democracy in their country. We express our strong support for efforts for peace, freedom and self-determination of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, we exhort trade union leaders around the world to stand in solidarity with Palestinian trade unions and workers in these difficult times. We urge the world leaders to stop this brutality and inhumane occupation. Finally, I would like to conclude my speech by pledging that we, the Indonesian trade unions, will continue to be actively involved in the activities of the ILO. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Mr Ahmed Ali Abdelrahman Mohamed Elnour

Government (Sudan)

Mr President of the Conference, Chair of the Governing Body, ladies and gentlemen, members of the delegations. Mr President, it is a pleasure and an honour to be involved in the work of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. And I am addressing you on behalf of the Government and would like to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the Conference and I wish you every success in your work. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr President, as this session is being held we can see a series of challenges and crises across the world. It is important that we face up to the new challenges. We are discussing technical issues in this session which is taking place more than a year after the revolt that affected my country, affecting the Government, workers and employers. Against that background, we welcome the report from the President of the Governing Body and would like to thank the Governing Body for the work that it has been doing and that it did between March 2023 and 2024. We would also like to express our thanks for the report from the Director-General, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. We also welcome the annex to the report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, and we also welcome the holding of a special session to discuss the situation of workers in Palestine and the aggression against Gaza which has had such negative effects on workers and their families. Respect for workers' rights is significant for the creation of social justice. A new social contract and standards at work will be important to establish peace at a regional, national and world level. We

have to have lasting peace. And that will only be possible if it based on social justice, so we need policies to reduce poverty within the framework of the ILO's strategy which is based on labour standards. Addressing employment and salaries, they have to be the basis. We quite agree about the significance of collective bargaining in accordance with Convention 87, which my country has ratified. The social contract requires good governance with the consent of all stakeholders. And in our view, it is important that we create jobs responding to new technology. In particular in my country which is being subjected to a rebellion and an aggression against our people, many of whom have been displaced, more than nine million of them, which is more than a third of the workers in the private sector. Small and medium enterprises are suffering from a lack of resources. It is important that they have the resources they need so that peace can be lasting and so that we can profit from digital technology and reduce the negative effect of the use of artificial intelligence. It is also important that we reduce the obstacles to the use of technology for workers, particularly in developing countries. Despite the progress that we have achieved since the Organization started addressing biological hazards, they continue to threaten the health of workers and remain a threat to investment and trade at a world level. An example of that was the COVID pandemic. In my country there are a number of biological hazards arising from the war which have caused epidemics. And we hope that at this conference we will recall the great significance of these biological hazards and risks and that we will be able to adopt a standard to address and reduce them. Mr President, the fundamental rights and principles at work are a significant issue. We need a robust plan to implement the decisions that are adopted, in particular faced with war, instability and climate change. We also must strengthen social dialogue to face up to the challenges of the digital economy, personal services and care, and to improve the working conditions. We hope that the Sudan will receive technical support from the Organization to address these various needs, particularly given that it is faced with a grave conflict. Finally, on behalf of the Government of Sudan, we thank the ILO for organizing this conference which is a great opportunity for us to enter into exchanges, and we hope that lasting peace will be installed in the world.

Ms Gerelmaa Davaasuren

Government (Mongolia)

Mr President, Mr Director-General, honourable delegates, ladies and gentlemen, at the outset, on behalf of the Government and representatives of Mongolia, I would like to extend my sincere greetings to you Mr President and Vice-President, with warmest congratulations on your election to steer the work of this very session. At the 112th Session of the ILC, we all gather to discuss a wide range of pertinent issues for the better of the world of work and a sustainable and inclusive economy. It is crucial to address the issue of transitioning to government, determine priorities and clarify the roles and participation of social partners. Mr President, in 2020, the Parliament of Mongolia adopted the Vision 2050 long-term development policy aimed at supporting employment, reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable social and economic growth with a favourable living environment. This policy document outlines goals for creating productive and decent jobs, encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering creativity to support employment. Our country's state policy on occupational safety and health is fundamentally aimed at protecting the life and health of working citizens and employees in all aspects. The National Occupational Safety and Health Programme has been implemented five times since 1997, with a significant update in 2008 to ensure safe working conditions and promote a healthy work environment. An independent law on

occupational safety and health was enacted in 2008 as well. Currently, a draft revision of this law is being developed, which includes regulations for improving the management system and creating a healthy and safe working environment. Although multi-faceted occupational safety and health prevention activities are organized for the mining, energy, road and construction sectors, which have high levels of workplace risk, the number of industrial accidents, acute poisoning cases and occupational diseases is not decreasing. In the mining sector those incidents account for 21.5%, in the construction sector 10%, in the road transport sector 10% of the total number of industrial accidents and acute poisoning cases. Mr President, as of today Mongolia has joined 21 ILO Conventions, including eight fundamental Conventions related to fundamental labour principles and rights. The standards, requirements and norms established by those Conventions have been successfully implemented within the framework of our national legislation. Furthermore, we are actively working with a view to joining the Labour Inspection Conventions 81 and 129 in the future. In recent years, the Government of Mongolia, in cooperation with social partners, drafted and had approved major labour and social protection laws such as the Labor Law and the Social Insurance Package Law by the parliament, thereby carrying out significant legal reforms. Additionally, to achieve these goals set forth by the laws, the Government, the employees and employer representative organizations signed the State Agreement for 2023-2025, which includes new content, responsibilities and relationships. It remains crucial to protect low-income citizens, enhance the value of work, increase the minimum wage and transition to a unified wage system based on work results and performance. I would like to express our gratitude for the continuous financial and technical assistance provided by the ILO at the policy level in all those activities. Mr President, in 2021 the Parliament of Mongolia approved the New Revival Policy, which the Government is committed to effectively implement over the next ten years. This policy aims to address six main areas: port, energy, industrialization, urban and rural revival, the revival of green development, and revival of state productivity. The topics and issues being discussed at this ILC session are fully aligned with this policy's theme. By implementing those reforms, we will accelerate post-pandemic economic growth and increase the number of decent jobs. I thank you, Mr President.

Mr Ishai Pollack

Employer (Israel)

Mr President, members of the Conference, unfortunately the organizers of this conference and many members of the ILO have forgotten that the strength and essence of this conference lie in the professional aspects concerning labour relations and not politics. We as employers found ourselves on October 7 deprived of life around the fabric of labour relationship, a large portion of the population lost its residence along the borders, and alongside this the entire economic system of workplaces, businesses and services was lost. Unlike the State of Israel as a nation and us as employers, many of the countries that have chosen to attack the State of Israel under the auspices of this conference do not respect human relations, human dignity, severely violating human rights regularly, including discriminating against women, exploiting women and children, allowing honour killing and more. The majority of these countries experience frequent coups characterized by significant loss of life among their own population. And instead of promoting their countries economically and socially, they sanctify dictatorship and destroy their democracy. One only needs to look at what happens around Israel in Libya, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, et cetera. A

comprehensive examination worldwide shows that we, the employers in Israel, have been paying and continue to pay workers much better than anywhere else in the world, with comprehensive defensive labour law and pension rights directly to the worker's account, just as is given to an Israeli worker, including issues of hazardous and rights to work under the work care economy, as the reports (sic). Much better. These actions of wide protective legislation and cooperation with banks in Ramallah were carried out to prevent Palestinian third-party intermediaries from collecting between 30-45% of the Palestinian workers' wages. We, the employers, have been involuntarily caught in an absurd situation where at an international labour conference, whose professional purpose is to ensure balanced employment including the rights of foreign workers, we as employers are falsely perceived as harming Palestinians workers. Meanwhile, these very Palestinian workers are the ones that were found amongst the murderers in the massacre on October 7, killing and kidnapping other foreign workers simply because they worked for us, Israeli employers. Side of high-tech we need low-tech expert (sic). Many countries are happy to send workers to Israel due to the superior and protected labour rights, and we will welcome them with love and respect, G2G or B2B. We will continue to protect all rights of all of the workers wherever they came from and continue to provide a safe and economic platform for their welfare, but we will do so with mutual willingness to work together. The ILO organization is crucial for maintaining a balance of tripartism among the Member States of the Organization, and I would expect a professional organization like the ILO to avoid entering into ridiculous political attacks and solely stick to the professional platform, allowing us all to do business. 48 hours ago we rescued four more of our hostages back to Israel, but there are yet 120 more to bring home. And as for our so-called Arab colleagues, even in many cases of terminating an employee's employment due to personal or professional unsuitability to the workplace, and certainly due to the employee's extreme breach of trust, I can say only this to you. [foreign 120:28] which means "Don't ever cry like a baby over actions you took as a man". Thank you.

Ms Teresa Rodrigues Dias

Government (Angola)

A very good morning. President of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, Chair of the Governing Body, distinguished ministers, ambassadors, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed. I am honoured to take the floor once again before this august assembly, and I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr Alexei Buzu, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, president of this session. And I wish to extend those congratulations to the three vice-presidents. On behalf of the Angolan Government, the delegation of Angola and in my own capacity, allow me to convey my warm greetings and my sincere hope that we are successful in our efforts at this conference. Mr President, the strategic objectives that inspired the creation of the ILO are vital, and they are focusing on the social justice that is achieved through dignified, decent work. And we are fully aware that the importance of social justice, designed to achieve peace and universal security for all, is why we have come and continue to show our commitment to the collaboration between our States and this UN specialized agency. Today's world faces great challenges for social justice, caused by a multiplicity of crises and wars and the acceleration of economic and structural transformations. An increase in the rates of extreme poverty, in the number of poor workers, poor children, youth unemployment and informal employment underscore the importance of fighting inequality and trying

to ensure decent work at the global level. In this respect, we welcome the inaugural forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice at this International Labour Conference, which is clearly an opportunity for the ILO to bring fresh momentum to our work and come up with new responses based on the principles of solidarity and economic democracy. Angola reiterates its international commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to the Decent Work Programme of the ILO and the 2063 African Union Agenda and our National Development Plan 2023-2027 which is designed to implement these commitments. And reforming our long-term national planning system, which is called Angola 2050, this sets out the guidelines for ensuring the sustainable development of our country focused on social justice, sustainable economic development and the promotion of peace and decent work. Mr President, with regard to compulsory social protection for employees, a number of legal instruments have been adopted and issued with a view to promoting the extension of compulsory social protection for employees and for low-income generating activities which have a lower rate of contribution because of the amounts being generated by these activities in sectors like agriculture, fishing, small-scale commercial activity and services. With regard to vocational training, we have built and equipped 162 centres of vocational training under the auspices of the national employment and training institute. And I would like to underscore that these vocational training centres number 1,474 at the national level, and in 2023, 808,000 young people and adults were trained, and over 30% of those were women. And we have new centres for supporting training and a new programme which is designed to modernize our public administration. And in the labour force 112,107 workers have been brought onto the market as a result of this training, and we are strengthening collaboration between companies and people and these job centres. There is no doubt that we will continue to do everything we can in terms of awareness-raising in companies and our training centres to try to ensure that all job offers and the provision of training use these government services so that we can have a system that is adapted to the needs of the market and we can focus on real training needs in relation to that market so we only need to train the people who can actually find jobs on the market. And this will help us to combat unemployment as well. Youth employment is one of our key focuses under the guidance of our president of the republic and we have this agenda and a national employment fund to try to ensure that we implement these policies effectively. On behalf of my delegation, and as Minister of Public Administration, Labour and Social Security, I would like to reiterate once again our firm commitment to pursue the objectives of this organization and which are reflected in our constitution and the legislation that we have in force in our country. Thank you.

Mr Akihiro Ichimura

Employer (Japan)

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak here as a representative of Japanese employers. The world is facing crises of unprecedented complexity. Urgent challenges include overcoming the problems of climate change, ecosystem collapse, expansion and entrenchment of inequalities and reproduction of disparities where the poverty of parents is passed on to their children. The crises we face are now further complicated by disruptive technological innovations such as generative AI and biogenomics. In this situation, Keidanren, Japan's leading business organization, has advocated the realization of a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution and proposed various policy measures. First, with regard to growth, solutions to social challenges must

be engines of growth. A prime example is the green transformation aimed at solving the problems of climate change. In addition, through public-private collaboration, we are working to generate innovation, increase productivity and strengthen industrial competitiveness with a focus on digital transformation and the promotion of start-ups. Distribution is as important as growth. Therefore, Keidanren has insisted that, in order to create an ample middle class, it is essential for the Japanese Government, labour and employer organizations to work together in an integrated and holistic manner in three policy areas: macroeconomic policy, social security and taxation, and labour policy. We have thus called on companies to respond with wage increases, emphasizing that this is a corporate social responsibility. In this context, it is particularly important to raise wages at small and medium-sized enterprises and to improve the environment in which they operate. To change negative attitudes towards price shifting and price increases in society, Keidanren is strongly encouraging companies to participate in the Government's Declaration of Partnership Building initiative which aims to achieve co-existence and co-prosperity throughout the supply chain. Keidanren also attaches great importance to promoting the goals of the Declaration as social norms. Keidanren's Chairman, Mr Tokura, has been emphasizing the concept of thinking and acting from the social point of view since taking up his post. This means bringing a social perspective to the market economy. It means that we, as companies, are public institutions of society and that we must contribute to society in addition to pursuing profit. We believe that this concept will lead to the realization of a social contract, as highlighted by Director-General Gilbert Houngbo in this year's DG report. There has never been a time when tripartite cooperation has been more necessary than now. Keidanren will continue to work for the realization of a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution through in-depth discussions and concerted efforts by governments, workers and employers. Thank you.

Mr Bassolma Bazie

Government (Burkina Faso)

President, distinguished guests, please receive the greetings of His Excellency Captain Ibrahim Traoré, President of Burkina Faso and Head of State. The preamble of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization of 1919 makes it clear that "lasting peace can only be established if it is based on social justice". This was recalled in the commemoration of the centenary of the ILO in 2019: "If you want peace, cultivate justice." And because it believed in these principles and the values of solidarity, social justice and peace, Burkina Faso adhered in a sovereign fashion to the ILO on the 21st of November 1960, and since that date it has ratified 44 Conventions. Since 2015 a predatory war, could be called terrorist, has been imposed in a cowardly fashion to better pillage its riches. Now having understood that survival, stability, social development and progress can only happen not on the basis of the weight of Conventions that have been ratified unless given artificial presence in a wide range of organizations, the Burkinabé people has decided that it is resolutely going to be involved in the study and consent to sacrifices at the level of the historic challenge that it is faced with to conquer its entire sovereignty. That is the only way that we will be able to live in freedom and dignity. I would like to thank the Director-General for his report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. It is not just calling on us to action but also confirms the analysis of things that we have in Burkina Faso. It is necessary that this be understood by many leaders, and in particular some of those in Africa, like us, because there are among us still some African leaders who have not understood the lessons of history, on the slave trade, colonization, neocolonialism, and continue to have the suicidal illusion

that they can depend on the good will of a master who will claim to free them. In fact, the shores of the oceans are covered with the bodies of our young people. In our countries medicines are diverted to kill people and not to kill germs. Tonnes of food are diverted to make people ill or infertile. Conventions are signed to alienate people. There is blackmail to impose [vgr INAUDIBLE 135:57] and leaders are recruited and maintain to become true [vgr INAUDIBLE 136:04]. This is happening at the same time as we have seen [vgr INAUDIBLE 136:07] representation of African people in international organizations, violating simple rules of decency. If the [vgr INAUDIBLE 136:13] wants to survive as an organization of [vgr INAUDIBLE 136:15] tripartite mandates have courageously to take on in the full sense the values that [vgr INAUDIBLE 136:22] humanity, in particular dignity, integrity and honour. While we are waiting for that, the Burkinabé people has devised its own priority social contract, implementing an action plan for stabilization, trying to make the whole of the international territory secure and responding urgently, effectively and efficiently to the humanitarian crisis, promoting good governance in the fight against corruption, engaging in political, administrative and institutional reforms with a view to reinforcing the culture of democracy and consolidating the state of law, working for international consolidation, social cohesion and providing for the organization of free, transparent and inclusive elections. So it is only in the sense of this [vgr INAUDIBLE 137:09] that we will be ratifying Conventions and implementing, not to please anyone else, whoever it may be. We would like to [vgr INAUDIBLE 137:19] the brother peoples of Mali and of Niger with whom we have formed an alliance of the States of the Sahel. And on the other hand, we are partners in the whole world who have understood us and share our fight for sovereignty. We would like to express our profound compassion, solidarity and sincere condolences to the people of Iran, Russia and Palestine for the painful moments that they are going through. Long live the Alliance of Sahel States. Long live people fighting for their sovereignty. Long live Burkina Faso. Long live the ILO. Our country or death. We will prevail. Thank you very much.

Ms Sandra Major

Worker (Bahamas)

Director-General, all presidents, vice-presidents and colleagues, I am from the Commonwealth of the Bahamas Trade Union Congress and representing the workers of the Bahamas. I want to congratulate the Director-General on a comprehensive, eye-opening and informative report. This report has caused reflection, empathy, appreciation and gratitude. Mr Director, in 2021 the Bahamas sign its second-generation Decent Work Country Programme, which speaks to our social contract between the Government, the workers and the employer. The Government of the Bahamas has increased the minimum wage and has expressed an interest in introducing a more sustainable liveable wage. This was welcome news to all workers, and it is our hope that the Bahamas Government continues to move the goal post toward a decent standard of living in the Bahamas. Social justice in education will be greatly enhanced with the National Apprenticeship Bill, which was passed in the House of Assembly, April 2024. The programme supports opportunities for people of all ages to continuously skill, reskill, upskill and focuses the workforce to respond to constantly evolving labour market needs as technology and AI have changed education forever. Thank you to the ILO for providing technical support to the Bahamas. In recent years we have seen an increase in the improvement of job security to benefit many workers with the signing of industrial agreements in the last two and half years of our government's

five-year term in office. To ensure that social justice is applied, government and the private employers must operate within the law, which are industrial agreements, all of which must be signed, contracts, and the Employment Act. Serious consideration must be given to Section 29 of the Employment Act. A fully operating labour inspectorate is priority as we are committed to improving our health and safety in the workplace. The Government of the Bahamas must address the issue with the industrial tribunal not having the capacity to enforce its own ruling. We await the necessary legislation and amendments to resolve these concerns so that the workers in the country will not be denied justice. I also note throughout the report the focus on climate change and its potential impact on countries. The Bahamas has recently been on the global stage during COP28 with our prime minister making the international community aware of our vulnerability and our need to be protected beyond our limited resources, taking into consideration the employment impact of the climate environment. The Bahamas has a vested interest in the sustainability of our country and the necessary mitigation against the impact of climate change. Director, we are grateful that the Bahamas is a country where the severity of these issues can be addressed by our government. We, the Workers' representative, remain committed to working with other social partners to ensure that every Bahamian lives in a society where social justice is not only the goal but the reality. March on Bahama land. Director-General, congratulations once again. Colleagues, good afternoon.

Mr Agni Deo Singh

Government (Fiji)

Mr President, Excellencies, bula vinaka and greetings. I am honoured to address this assembly today on the pivotal theme of a renewed social contract, a subject that resonates with the core of our shared aspirations for labour relations and social justice across the global workforce. We gather here cognizant of the indelible mark that equitable and just employment practices leave on individuals, societies and economies the world over. In an era marked by rapid technological innovation, economic shifts and evolving societal values, it is crucial that we adhere to the tenets of social justice and foster employment relations rooted in trust, respect and open dialogue among employers, workers and governments. The foundation of a reinvigorated social contract in our working world must be laid on the bedrock of fairness, equality and solidarity. It demands a concerted effort from all parties involved, governments, employers, workers, and civil society, to safeguard the inherent rights and dignity of every member of the workforce. Furthermore, this renewed contract must navigate the changing tides of work in the digital era. As we witness the transformative impact of technology on industries and job markets, our mission is to forge an inclusive and sustainable future of work that ensures that no one is left behind. This mission necessitates investments in skills development, lifelong learning and a robust social dialogue to empower workers and equip them for the digital economy's diverse challenges and opportunities. Mr President, the Fiji Coalition Government has taken a decisive step in revising its labour laws to align it with the International Labour Organization's requirements. This is a testament of our commitment to international labour standards and the pursuit of social justice and the safeguarding of workers' rights in our nation. I extend my gratitude to the ILO for assisting with the review of the labour laws, in harmony with the ILO committee's recommendations and the Joint tripartite agreement of Fiji from 2016. The decision to embark on this comprehensive review reflects the shared priority that unites us as members of this organization. By collaborating closely with the ILO, we are

fortifying our laws, ensuring adherence to international norms and championing the values of social justice at the workplace. The collaboration signifies a renewed commitment to equitable labour practices, the protection of workers' rights and the nurturing of harmonious industrial relations. The contributions of the consultants funded by the ILO will undoubtedly shape the refinement of Fiji's labour laws, ensuring it reflects the contemporary best practices and aligns with the requirements and recommendations of both the ILO committees and our joint tripartite agreement. Through this joint effort, we are establishing a foundation for a labour environment that is more inclusive, transparent and rights-oriented, benefiting all stakeholders. Mr President, the 29th of April 2024 marked a significant milestone in Fiji's history as we welcomed the return of the Direct Contacts Mission of the ILO after several years. The constructive dialogues with tripartite members and other key stakeholders underscore our resolve to nurture a harmonious workplace environment. By embracing the Direct Contacts Mission, we not only affirm our commitment to upholding international labour standards but also demonstrate our readiness to engage in meaningful dialogue with the concerned parties. The united endeavours of government, employers and workers set the stage for exchanges that promise to yield beneficial results for Fiji's workforce. In closing, I reaffirm Fiji's commitment to building on these efforts to make social justice the foundation of sustainable peace, shared prosperity and equality of opportunity to all. Vinaka vakalevu and thank you.

Mr Deogratius Bona Ndejmbi

Government (United Republic of Tanzania)

President, Vice-Presidents, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Honourable President of this conference, it is with great honour I take this momentous occasion to address this 112th Conference of the year 2024. On behalf of the United Republic of Tanzania, allow me to congratulate you Mr President and Vice-Presidents for the trust and honour placed in you to preside over and steer the work of this conference. Chairperson, let me also use this opportunity to convey warm and fraternal greetings from Her Excellency Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, whose leadership is leading towards rapid socio-economic transformation with achievements that benefit the whole country of Tanzania. My delegation commends the Director-General and the entire ILO secretariat for a sterling job. We also appreciate his in-depth report that calls us to renew social contracts by reaffirming the fundamental principles that labour is not a commodity and that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. As a country, we are therefore ready for taking decisive actions and identify countless opportunities in improving the quality of work in the world of work. The United Republic of Tanzania has taken measures to enhance administration of labour standards, including reviewing its labour laws and employment policies and strategies, increasing access to skills development for all, and including persons with disability, and strengthening the tripartism and social dialogue in various consultative forums and decision-making bodies. Chairperson, towards promoting a renewed social contract, Tanzania is on the verge of ratifying six ILO Conventions, which include C102, 121, 122, 189 and two fundamental Conventions on occupational safety and health, C155 and C187. Along with ratification of two OSH fundamental Conventions, Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar in 2023 has developed OSH regulations on occupational health, personal protective equipment at work, and occupational safety and health, working environment, that protect workers against occupational hazards, including biological hazards. Chairperson, in strengthening social

security for the private sector, Tanzania, through the National Social Security Fund and Zanzibar Social Security Fund will launch a revised National Informal Sector Scheme and Zanzibar Informal Sector Security Scheme respectively in 2024. These schemes are designed to extend social security coverage to the informal sector workers and the self-employed so as to promote a renewed social contract that enables them to participate and contribute to the fund through voluntary arrangements. Chairperson, making social contract a reality, Tanzania, through the Workers Compensation Fund and ZSSF through a special scheme known as ZSSF [vgr INAUDIBLE 152:19] Scheme provides adequate and equitable compensation to employees and dependents in instances of occupational accidents, diseases, including diseases resulting from biological hazards and deaths. The scheme pays compensation benefits at a replacement ratio of 70% above that of the ILO recommendation replacement ratio of 60%. Chairperson, to ensure the right of work, Tanzania has established and continues to strengthen the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration, CMA, for mainland Tanzania and the Disputes Handling Unit, DHU for Zanzibar, a specialized and independent institution with executive mandate to resolve labour disputes timely and fairly. I would like to express my gratitude to ILO Member States for the overwhelming support and votes that enabled Tanzania to be elected as deputy Governing Body member. In this, let me assure ILO Member States full cooperation and commitment in our tenure as deputy Governing Body members. In closing, Chairperson, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to continue working with the ILO in addressing decent work deficits in the country. We value the support provided by the ILO over the years and call upon your continued support in the efforts to provide a better standard of living and decent employment for our people. Thank you all for your kind attention. Asante sana.

Mr Akmadi Sarbassov

Government (Kazakhstan)

President, ladies and gentlemen, participants of the Conference, I would like to give you greetings from the Government of Kazakhstan and congratulate Madame Passchier as President of the Conference. Kazakhstan entirely supports the ILO's calls for concrete action to guarantee decent work and social peace and also its work against biological hazards. We welcome the report from the Director-General, Mr Hounghbo, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. This document particularly highlights the importance of social justice for sustainable development. Kazakhstan entirely supports the call for a renewed social contract. We are convinced that only shared efforts will be able to respond to the challenges of creating a more sustainable and inclusive future for everyone. We want to work along with the ILO and the community of employers and workers to achieve that. For Kazakhstan the question of occupational safety and health is a priority. We fulfil the standards of the 25 ILO standards that Kazakhstan has ratified. We welcome the opportunity to ratify other Conventions such as 176 involving mine safety. In 2023 we adopted a legislative text on social agreement which regulates industrial relations in our country. It is a very important document. It also covers social security, protection of the rights of workers and social services. This legislation guarantees the rights of the people of Kazakhstan. And at the moment Parliament is considering draft legislation to improve safety at work and the rights of workers. We are also involved in active efforts in labour inspection in line with Convention 80 on labour inspection and 29 on labour inspection in agriculture. We have adopted strategic documents to create safe and quality work with a strategy to develop the labour market in the next few years and a strategy of work without danger for a similar period. We have created an electronic tool making it

possible to look for a job or for employers to look for workers. A new general agreement was signed between the Government, workers and employers for 2024-2026, the main objective being to create favourable conditions for employment and work and to provide guarantees. With technical assistance from the ILO we have created a road map for support of decent work. In the framework of this road map we have carried out a cooperative analysis of the Kazak legislation on the respect for Convention 102 in particular. We think that stable and fair labour conditions are the basis for sustainable economic growth and for social prosperity, and that is why Kazakhstan has joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice with a view to establishing lasting peace in accordance with the fundamental values of this organization. It is these basic values of human dignity and equality and equality of opportunities for everyone. To wind up, I can assure you that the Government of Kazakhstan is working to improve labour and social policy, improving legislation, fairness and decent work in accordance with ILO standards.

Mr Wills Rangel

Worker (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Gilbert Hounbo, ILO Director-General, Mr Alexei Buzu, President of the 112th Session of the ILC, I congratulate you upon your election. Distinguished citizens of the world of the international working class, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela takes note of the content of the Director-General's report calling for a renewed social contract. Venezuelan workers have a programme to re-found our republic to establish a democratic, participatory, dynamic, multiethnic and pluricultural society with a state of federal and decentralized justice consolidating the values of freedom, independence, peace, solidarity and the public good, territorial integrity, coexistence and the rule of law for this and future generations, ensuring the right to life, labour, culture, education, social justice and equality without any form of discrimination or subordination, promoting the peaceful cooperation among nations and facilitating and consolidating Latin American integration according to the principle of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples. We agree with the Director-General's call for people's aspirations for a new era free of the exploitation of workers to see the day. And we need urgently to see a new global society with the respect for nations and their peoples, a fair distribution of wealth, environmental sustainability of production where we see a real effort to address climate change and consolidate a multipolar world with the development of different economic centres and different partnerships for the benefit of peoples. And Venezuela has been discussing seven transformations under the programme of our government 2025-2031 under the legacy of Commander Chávez. Our Bolivarian socialist nation has tried to take on as a priority the well-being of our people. Transnational companies and the visible faces of the governments of the US and the European Union have applied even more crude, unliteral coercive measures with more than 900 such measures, so-called sanctions, where the centres of power are trying to impose a model as an alternative to our economic and social model. And we are aware that the empires of the West will continue to impose these sanctions, and therefore the workers of the nation, and under the Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros, we know that we are the forefront of efforts to protect the well-being of our peoples. And we have productive councils of workers to try to do this, along with our trade unions. We have recovered the Indexed Comprehensive Income for workers and we are moving towards fully recovering our good wages. Alongside this, the Government has managed to control inflation to record levels over the past 20 years, and we are trying to ensure better protection of the living wage for our workers. We agree with the

Director-General on the importance of social dialogue. Venezuela has been an example of open dialogue with all social partners under the guidance of our leading partner, President Nicolás Maduro Moros. We urge the ILO to call for the withdrawal of all unilateral coercive measures against our nation. Our nation has been a model of democratic participation with 31 national elections over the past 25 years of our revolution. And we are shortly to have new elections on the 28th of July when once again millions of Venezuelans will vote to continue with our Bolivarian revolution. Transnational policies and forces are threatening to ignore our democratic process and spread media generated rumours of electoral fraud, and we urge people around the world to bear in mind this new threat to our nation. We also call for an immediate end to the genocide against the Palestinian people, renewing a social contract for the workers of occupied Arab territories. Our Bolivarian revolution is no enemy of the Jewish people, but we will always fight Nazi Zionism. We extend solidarity to people's all over the world and we renew our efforts to promote Latin American and the Caribbean integration as encouraged by the liberators of our continent and Commander Hugo Chávez. Thank you very much. Long live the nation.

Mr Ahmad Soueidan

Government (Lebanon)

Thank you, President, and allow us to reply to the statements of the representative of Employers of the Israeli occupation who I remind you is murdering children and spreading lies in order to try to divert attention from its crimes in Gaza. We need to see justice, and in the meantime we condemn these words that undermine the ILC because we have simply been highlighting the crimes against the Palestinians and against Lebanon. And this is terrible for the conscience of humanity. We are surprised to hear the representative of Israeli employers issuing these accusations and lies against us for as long as Israel continues to commit crimes against the Palestinian and Lebanese people. The meeting on Thursday that discussed Palestine was an opportunity for the whole world to learn about the atrocities being committed there, the massacres and the human rights abuses. And this simply proves that the employers of the occupying power are complicit with their political and military leadership in an attempt to crush the Palestinian people and deny their right to work, life and self-determination. Thank you.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Dear delegates, ladies and gentlemen, that brings us to the end of our speakers list for this morning's plenary. As I announced at the start of the sitting, our plenary will resume this afternoon at 2.30 sharp with the presentation, discussion and noting of the report of the Finance Committee as well as the adoption of the two resolutions stemming from the work of the committee. The report was published on the Conference website on Saturday as Record of Proceedings 4A. I thank you all for your contributions and for the fact that you abide by the rules of our plenary, and I will declare now the sitting closed. Thank you.

Mr July Moyo

Government Vice-President (Zimbabwe)

Please be reminded that a right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes. It should be delivered in respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice of our organization to allow a right to reply to a reply. I thank you very much. Without further ado, let us begin our list of speakers as displayed in the room and published in the daily programme. My first speaker this afternoon is Mr Ngouelondele, Minister in charge of Qualifying, Training and Employment of Congo. You have the floor.

Mr Hugues Ngouelondele

Government (Congo)

Mr President, Your Excellencies, ministers, distinguished delegates, I am honoured to take the floor at this 112th International Labour Conference organized under the leadership of Director-General Gilbert Houngbo. And I wish to convey to Mr Houngbo the congratulations and respect of our president of the Republic of Congo, His Excellency Denis Sassou Nguesso. My country welcomes this organization's efforts to continue to promote social justice and the rights of workers throughout the world with a view to rising to global challenges that have arisen from social inequalities. Mr President, this, the 112th Conference is taking place at a time of great challenges, including the post-pandemic recovery, the impact of geopolitical conflicts, a transition towards green economies and digital transformation. All of the Organizations' members need to provide a coordinated response to these challenges with a view to promoting decent work and social protection for all. The Republic of Congo, like many countries, is still recovering from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearly, supply and distribution chains have been severely disrupted and we have seen an increase in unemployment, particularly affecting the youth. Nevertheless, this situation has given us an opportunity to review our strategies and strengthen our commitment to improving working conditions and to promoting sustainable economic development. In that context, my country has declared the year 2024 a year for youth, and we have undertaken major reforms. For instance, we have conducted a study into the transition to active employment, and in that context we have taken a number of initiatives to improve the situation of our young people. And we hope to create about 60,000 jobs and draw up a national employment policy with the support of the ILO in this context. Thanks to cooperation with the ILO, Congo has adopted two key instruments to promote decent work: the programme for the promotion of decent work 2023-2026 and the Roadmap 2023-2025 with Congo joining Alliance 8.7. Implementing the universal social health insurance scheme has also made tremendous progress with the opening session of the Governing Body in 2024, May this year. Mr President, my country has just been elected as deputy member of the ILO Governing Body, and we have indicated our interest in joining the Global Coalition for Social Justice and we are expecting great things of the high-level forum on the 13th of June. That is why Congo remains committed to building a fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable future of work, continuing to engage with the ILO and the international community in order to try to improve conditions for all and promote fundamental rights at work. To conclude, my country believes very strongly that international cooperation is essential if we are to rise to the global challenges of the world of work. And in preparation for the global Social Summit

in 2025 Congo calls for greater solidarity among States in sharing good practices and providing support to the most vulnerable countries. Thank you for your kind attention.

Ms Aïssatou Abdoulaye Tondi

Government (Niger)

President, Director-General of the International Labour Office, ladies and gentlemen, ministers and heads of delegations, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour for me and a true pleasure to take the floor before this august annual labour conference. Allow me to give our president and other members of the bureau our congratulations on their election to their post in guiding our work at this 112th Session. We are sure that they will live up to their noble mission. I would like to thank Gilbert Hounbo, Director-General of the ILO, for his report. We would also like to thank all of his team at a central, regional and national level for the remarkable work that they have been doing to improve the world of work at world level. Mr President, my delegation notes in particular the significance indicated in the report of the need for a renewed social contract for more social justice, a key part of the Director-General's vision. We read with great interest about the developments in employment and improvements for the world of work involved after the official end of the pandemic. However, despite this positive tendency in unemployment, we can see that there are problems arising in the future and there is persistent inequality on the labour market, in particular in low-income countries such as ours. And that is a matter of major concern for us. We are seeing more and more young people leaving school and arriving on the labour market. This situation leads us to recognize and underline the relevance of the subject we are talking about and the questions set out on the agenda of this 112th session, protection of workers from the effects of climate change and biological hazards, and also the question of care workers and fundamental rights and principles at work. We are sure that the discussions on these issues will enable us to find the guidelines for inclusive and fair policies and the means to implement them that will make it possible for enterprises and the workers that they work to participate in a lasting and just relaunch. Niger is currently involved in a reform and transformation of its industrial fabric to revive production and has been addressing the needs of employment, in particular for young people and for women. The Government has put into place a resilience plan, adopted on the 1st of May, and in June of 2023 it installed a wide-ranging social protection programme aiming for employment for all and to fight against inequality in all its forms. This is the [vgr INAUDIBLE 10:41] programme and His Excellency Brigadier General Abdourahamane Tchiani, President of the State, is the chair of the committee responsible for this programme and is working tirelessly to recover the full sovereignty and independence of Niger and provide for profitable growth to the benefit of all Nigeriens. We are working actively along with all stakeholders at national level to have an in-depth understanding of the issues and to work towards the global summit for social justice with a view to implementing its objectives more efficiently. Given that, we are particularly attached to the importance of the strengthening of technical cooperation with the ILO and with other parties involved in this vision so that we do not leave anyone behind. Mr President, to conclude, we would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the election of Niger to the Governing Body of the ILO and we call on all of the tripartite constituents of the ILO to fully support the ideas of the Director-General contained in his report. Thank you.

Mr Jung Sik Lee

Government (Republic of Korea)

Honourable chair, honourable Director-General, distinguished delegates, greetings. As articulated in the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract', the existing social contracts that have supported individual well-being and realized co-prosperity and solidarity are currently under pressure. Amid the tumultuous waves of socio-economic changes, including global demographic shifts and technological advancements, there is a growing need to shield workers in vulnerable positions from unfairness and inequality. I strongly align with the vision of a renewed social contract where tripartite constituents engage in dialogue and solidarity to support workers in vulnerable positions and realize the value of co-prosperity. In response to these evolving socio-economic challenges, the Korean Government is striving to build a labour market grounded in mutual growth and co-prosperity, ensuring the well-being of all working individuals through comprehensive labour reforms aimed at transforming awareness practices and systems. First, the Government is advancing policies designed to guarantee universal human and labour rights. Korea has made significant progress in expanding labour rights, as evidenced by the ratification of fundamental ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98 in 2021. Yet, given the large number of non-unionized workers and diversification of employment types, there is a need for various institutional protections and supports that align with these realities. The Korean Government intends to identify policy agendas across multiple sectors to effectively address various challenges in the field, ensuring that workers in vulnerable positions experience tangible improvements while enhancing the Government's role in providing protection and support throughout the process. The Government also plans to establish an institutional basis to provide continuous and systematic support such as building a communication system to gather opinions from workers who have difficulty voicing their concerns collectively and expanding legal counselling and education services. Additionally, we are reinforcing labour inspections to eradicate illegal activities such as delayed wage payments which directly affect workers' livelihoods. We are also promoting discussions on establishing a labour court for a swifter and effective resolution of rights violations in addition to the Labour Relations Commission which serves as the existing labour dispute resolution system. Furthermore, to prioritize the protection of workers' rights and foster safe and healthy workplaces, we are providing support for the establishment of industry specific prevention systems, particularly for SMEs. Second, the Government is increasing investments in active labour market policies to ensure equal access to employment opportunities for all. As emphasized in the Director-General's report, the success of a renewed social contract hinges on its capacity to deliver social justice through decent work. For parents whose work life is challenged by child bearing and childcare responsibilities, decent work means having jobs that guarantee the choice of working hours and location. For the youth who have just entered the labour market, decent work means having jobs that offer opportunities for meaningful professional growth and experience. To expand work opportunities for parents, the Korean Government is working towards establishing a system that guarantees work-life balance through expanded paternity leave and a phased increase in parental leave benefits. To help more youth obtain better and more job opportunities, the Government is expanding training programmes in emerging industries and new technology sectors and strengthening tailored vocational training that can be immediately applied in the field. Third, the Government is continuously expanding social safety nets for workers in vulnerable positions to ensure fair distribution of the fruits of

progress. Since it took office, the current government has improved and tailored employment insurance and industrial accident insurance to better serve workers in new employment types such as dependent, self-employed and platform workers who often receive remuneration from multiple work places and change jobs frequently. In response to the diversification of employment types and occupations, the Government is committed to periodically assessing actual conditions and expanding the coverage of employment industrial accident insurance accordingly. Lastly, the Government is actively promoting social dialogue among tripartite constituents to improve awareness, practices and systems that support better work-life balance and establish a sustainable labour market capable of adapting to industry transitions and demographic changes. For instance, the tripartite constituents in Korea launched a special committee for sustainable jobs and future generations. As highlighted in the DG's report, tripartite-based social dialogue is essential for expanding decent work and addressing the dual structure of the labour market. Recognizing the critical importance of meaningful dialogue with workers and employers, the Korean Government aims to establish a sustainable labour market for future generations through active engagement and discussion. However, we firmly reject problem-solving methods that resort to illegal means such as logic of power, violence and threats instead of fostering dialogue and compromise. Such approaches are contrary to the values of solidarity and co-prosperity that the tripartite should uphold. The spirit of the ILO, as embodied in Convention Nos 87 and 98, upholds the principles of freedom of association and the respect for domestic laws of each country. So the tripartite should comply with domestic laws, denounce illegal acts and realize the principles of freedom of association through social dialogue. The direction of the Korean Government's labour reform is straightforward and clear. It aims to create workplaces for all where all working individuals are respected, healthy, receive fair compensation and where the values of co-prosperity and solidarity are protected. Now looking ahead, as a responsible member of the ILO the Korean Government will continue to be at the forefront of establishing a system that will create sustainable jobs for future generations and foster a society where the value of labour is respected properly. Thank you.

Mr Oudet Souvannavong

Employer (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

Distinguished members of the presidium, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour for me to address the 112th International Labour Conference. Allow me extend my congratulations to the work done by the International Labour Organization, and let me express my support for the Director-General's report with the theme 'Towards a renewed social contract'. It is indeed addressing the cause of our concern related to the growing inequality and growing labour market imbalance that impacts growth and social justice. It sets a new vision for advancing social justice through the promotion of decent work as a means to address the persistent injustice, inequalities and insecurity due to the rising inflation, increased cost of living following stagnant economic growth, climate change and increased geopolitical tension and armed conflict. The global challenges have profoundly impacted the economy and business landscape of our country, Lao PDR. Our [vgr INAUDIBLE 19:52] business sector, which experienced the harm of reduced operations during the COVID pandemic followed by the worldwide economic recession and encountering difficulties in their recovery due to the change in [vgr INAUDIBLE 20:06], low productivity, labour shortage, high inflation, significant devolution of the local

currency, elevated cost of living and the more attractive wage and benefit in other countries. In our region, illegal labour migration is increasing, exposing vulnerable individuals to injustice and insecurity. As the official employer organization and as an active member of the ASEAN Confederation of Employers, the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry has diligently worked towards the implementation of Lao National Labour and Social Development Plan 2025. This five-year plan encompassed the development of national [vgr INAUDIBLE 20:54] employment strategy, aimed at promotion of decent work and sustainable employment through the enactment of appropriate labour and social welfare legislation. The Lao National Chamber of Commerce is also providing recommendations and undertaking action to support the recovery of the industrial service sector by facilitating market supply chain and transportation and by enhancing production and services to steer the country out of the economic downturn. Consequently, issues relating to labour and employment have become our high priority. Furthermore, the Lao Chamber is instructed with the mandate of promoting micro and small-sized enterprises. With the support of the Government and development partners, the Chamber provides information and training to SME and MSMEs mostly operating in the non-formal area to ensure compliance with enterprise regulations and be able to run profitable businesses. First, promoting formal employment and social justice. The Lao Chamber actively engaged in social dialogue and activities with the tripartite constituents aimed at improving the livelihood of employers and workers. This involved addressing issues such as wages, social protection and welfare, skill development, job matching and workforce planning for industry needs, occupational safety and health, labour market needs and possible business practices. A Dual Cooperative Training, DCT, information and promotion centre has been established since 2020 to support vocational training in our country. To these constituent activities, Lao Chamber is collaborating with related government institutions involved in improving the livelihood of the employee with the focus on defining minimum wage, skill development, work matching and planning for various [vgr INAUDIBLE 22:56] industry needs. Finally, in our commitment to address growing injustice and work insecurity, I would like to reaffirm the commitment to combat human trafficking and modern slavery. To end my statement, I would like to reiterate our determination to support the demand for the further improvement of and development of a human-centred policy as outlined by the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work in response to the actual global challenge we are all facing. I also want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the ILO for its substantial and continuous support extended to our organization. Thank you very much.

Ms Rivka Werbner

Government (Israel)

Good afternoon to you all. Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates, I would like to start by thanking Mr Gilbert Hounbo, Director-General of the ILO and to you, Mr Chairman, for leading us in this conference. I wish you a great success. Mr Chairman, since the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas, major changes occurred in the labour market. The enormous scope of evacuation of communities away from their workplaces in the south and north of Israel created challenges characterizing IDP communities around the world. The suspension of the education system for long months had a grave impact on working parents. Also workers placed on unpaid leave are mainly ones with a low income. Mr Chairman, around 20% of the labour force has been absent in sectors such as construction, agriculture, tourism, which rely heavily on foreign labour. As a

result, the Government led adjustments in national insurance benefits in order to support vulnerable populations and those most effected by the tragic events. Due to the absence of employees and the extreme increase in expenses, the economy relies more and more on technological progress. We are aware of the need to protect the labour market from social injustice, especially due to layoff of unskilled workers. This is why we invest in computerized training with the aim of integrating specific communities such as Orthodox Jews and Arab women in the labour market. Also, in 2023 the Minister of Labour, Mr Ben-Tzur signed an extension order which stipulates a fundamental reform for social workers, including continued increase of wages up to 20% based on development of professional experience, training and management promotion. Despite the challenges, the labour market remains relatively strong. Unemployment rates have fluctuated but generally stayed low, reflecting the economy's resilience. Mr Chairman, we welcome the work of the Standard Setting Committee on Biological Hazards and we are looking forward to its conclusions. The Government of Israel has enacted laws and regulations in the field of dangerous and harmful substances at work, in addition to the operation of a registry of occupational diseases. In addition, a national database of employees' exposure to harmful factors contains all tests since 1960 and is updated on a daily basis. Mr Chairman, the economy is a bridge between people and countries. I am convinced that joint efforts can make us move forward when coping with global crises. Emphasizing decent work and maximizing the potential of all parties involved will lead us to a fair economy and a better society. We are looking forward to the return of all our hostages back home and to a peaceful day in our region. This will allow us to establish better economic and labour relations with our neighbours for the benefit of all of us. Thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you all. Toda. Shukran.

Ms Florence Bore

Government (Kenya)

Mr Alexei Buzu, the President of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, Honourable Moyo the Vice-President, Mr Gilbert Houngbo the Director-General of the ILO, colleague ministers, representatives of workers and employers, distinguished delegates. Kenya welcomes the Director-General's report titled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. This report highlights predominant pressures on the social contract and the emerging deficits in fulfilling societal and communal obligations to individuals and families. It questions our respective responsibilities and duties to each other, the understanding of our respective needs, access to services, opportunities and social protection. The report also interrogates our rules governing relations between ourselves and institutions of governance. Mr Vice-President, as part of the global economy, Kenya does not have any unique experience from what we have heard so far expressed from this podium, and we wish to state that our experience only differs in space and time but the trajectory remains the same. Climate change, technology, artificial intelligence and geopolitics of the times have had profound impact on the social contract, which has have left many vulnerable. This has raised mistrust of our governance institutions in the eyes of workers and employers and put to test the relevance of tripartism in governance. Mr Vice-President, during the recent floods, Kenya witnessed severe loss of life, human and livestock, and property, destruction of infrastructure and displacement of people. As at the end of May 2024 nearly half a million learners were unable to resume classes as they remained at home or in temporary shelters following heavy rains and flooding across the country. Joint assessment by the Government of Kenya and development partners, including UNICEF,

indicates that 3,781 classrooms are unsuitable for learners. 242 adults and 73 children are reported to have lost their lives as a result of the floods and landslides. Consequently, waterborne diseases and associated illness are on the rise. Mr Vice-President, these children and their families require equal protection of the law, and on this point I do agree that there is an urgent need for renewal of the social contract. Mr Vice-President, digitalization is one of the key drivers of change of the world of work. The adoption of digital technology in Kenya has heralded the access to education, healthcare, banking, commerce and many more services, all of which are helping our people improve their lives and their livelihoods. The poor rural population, the elderly persons, however, remain disadvantaged due to limited access to digital platforms. Mr Vice-President, further, despite growth in the labour pool with an increase in skills demand at entry level and task-based work to specialized work, there is a need to devise new strategies in governance and policy framework to ensure fair distribution of the gains and opportunities of the digital transformation. Workers in the digital economy have no job security. They also have limited access to social protection and career progression and lack benefits and rights to organize collectively. Clearly, Mr Vice-President, we need a new social contract to ensure protection of workers in this sector. Mr Vice-President, unemployment of the youth in Kenya remains very high due to mismatch in skills and labour market demands, growing population, an education system which does not emphasize technical skills or job creation, poverty levels, among others. This has given rise to pressure between the young and the old generations and an increase of mental illness among the youth and a feeling of lack of social inclusion. To revise the existing policies and put in place new strategies to promote employment of the youth, we require to renew the social contract. Mr Vice-President, geo-global conflicts in parts of the world such as the ones between Ukraine and Russia, Israel and the Gaza Strip, instability within East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region have impacted negatively on many economies across the world, and Kenya is no exception. There is a rise in emigrant community in Kenya and also movement of persons within the Member States which have both gains and challenges and require address. Clearly again there is a need to revisit the social contract to balance the national and foreign interests to work. Mr Vice-President, without belabouring the decent work deficits, I wish to state that as a global community we have all made great strides since the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944 and there are documented milestones to this effect. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement to close the income disparities, inequalities within our populations and reduce social exclusion, which all threaten our societal fabric and stability. The existing policies and institutions are ill-prepared to respond appropriately to the transformations in the world of work. As a community of nations, the ILO must be intentional in our collective action and must build bridges for cohesive, peaceful and sustainable communities. Mr Vice-President, as I conclude, let me concur that we cannot continue to talk about decent work and social justice without renewing the social contract. We must assess our collective responsibility as constituent parties. We must revitalize and reconfigure existing labour and employment policies and programmes for just transition and sustainable development. To this end, I call upon the office of the ILO Director-General to help the Member States and the coalition of the willing to renew the social contract and to go beyond ratification of international labour standards. I thank you for your attention. Merci beaucoup.

Mr Donat Bagula Mugangu

Government (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

President of the Conference, Vice-Presidents, Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour for me to transmit to you the voice of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which, through its president, President of the Republic His Excellency Mr Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, and the people of Congo in general, send their very warm greetings to all delegates here present. Mr President, it is also an opportunity for me to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election. My delegation is pleased to thank the President of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO for their reports on which our hopes of moving towards a renewed social contract are based. Through these reports and their annexes we see how the impact of war on the labour market and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation is clearly underlined. It is important to point out that, apart from what is happening in Palestine or in Ukraine, the worst hidden events are currently happening in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the dignity of more than 20 million people is being trampled upon. Fundamental rights at work are being divested of any significance and all efforts towards social dialogue are being annihilated by the enemies of peace, and there I would mention in particular Rwanda and its allies, in a shameless enterprise to pillage the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, my country, today has the world record of around seven million displaced people within it, thanks to this war of aggression, and more than five million displaced people are living in host families and displaced people's camps. The occupied areas are characterized by significant decent work deficits where these workers do not have any access to their rights at work nor to social protection and even less access to a right to or services of care for themselves or their families. Despite that very difficult situation in the occupied regions, many efforts have nonetheless borne fruit in the world of work as a result of the efforts of my government to better comply with the social contract. There we are talking about the implementation of to facilitate universal health coverage; the reform of social security, including in the public sector; the strengthening of social dialogue through the organization of union elections in all enterprises of whatever kind; the current reform which is underway in public employment systems and in vocational training to guarantee the employability of young people; and a boost for the labour inspectorate through the recruitment of more than 2,000 young inspectors; and finally, the updating of the road map that we have as one of the pioneer countries in Alliance 8.7. Mr President, I cannot finish speaking without sending out an urgent appeal to all of you individually and collectively to work together with the Democratic Republic of the Congo for peace. This is an essential factor for a fair transition in a world of work in continuous change. Thank you for your kind attention.

Mr Mody Guiro

Worker (Senegal)

Mr President, Director-General, distinguished delegates, I am delighted to address you at this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference to bring you the contribution of Senegalese workers to the discussions of the important agenda items at this conference. At the outset, allow me to convey our congratulations to the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference and to the ILO Director-General for his frank diagnosis of the global situation. But also thank you for the very comprehensive reports

and important documents that have been submitted for our consideration. Mr President, we have read with great interest the Director-General's report on a renewed social contract, and we share his vision and proposals for a fairer and more just world. Globalization has not fulfilled its promise of economic prosperity and social justice for the vast majority of workers and people around the world. In fact, it has led to historic levels of inequality. Together with digitization and climate change, it is throwing up fresh problems for all of us. We are seeing the weakening of labour laws and fundamental labour rights, unfair trade practices and the unbridled financialization of the economy, and blind trust in technology to resolve problems relating to social organization and ethical values that underscore our societies. The arrival of automation, artificial intelligence, greater fragmentation of society, inequality, precarious labour, mass unemployment, poverty and phenomena such as exclusion and rejection of people, they threaten our life together and coexistence and throw up challenges for all institutional social partners, particularly in the world of work. You are right to remember that the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 in Copenhagen set us on a path to try to find inclusive social contracts to promote real social justice for peace in a sustainable way. Other summits have taken place in 2000 with the Millennium Development Goals 2015, with the 2030 Agenda and the 17 goals which are very important for trying to improve living conditions around the world. But just a few years now separate us from 2030, and we must recognize that the commitments have not been met, and many of these goals will not be reached unless we accelerate progress. The Director-General's report clearly describes the situation for people in developing countries, in particular in Africa and Asia who are most affected by unemployment, poverty, inequality, the lack of social protection, insecurity, famine, the violation of human and trade union rights and instability. In spite of all of the sacrifices made by African populations for many years, the continent's progress has been held back by debt and debt servicing which has become an impossible burden, and the poor distribution of the benefits drawn from natural resources which are exploited by multinationals and only leave the crumbs to the people in the local communities. It is quite clear that we cannot stop regular emigration of young Africans without a better distribution of the wealth that is drawn from natural resources in Africa and withdrawing the burden of public debt. Other issues are on the agenda at this conference, including protection from biological hazards, fundamental principles and rights at work, and the care economy and decent work. The COVID-19 pandemic shook a world which was ill-prepared to deal with it, and we need to draw the lessons from this crisis and prepare for the future with more affordable and accessible health services for all. The extension and consolidation of social protection systems and the adoption of decent work public policies by governments in developing countries remains the best strategy to address inequality and poverty, which are the scourge of our societies. We need more investment in social services. That is why we need to see the establishment of a global fund for social protection and its financing, and we need to give an important place in that discussion to workers in the informal economy which tend to be excluded from formal social protection systems. President, Director-General, distinguished delegates, it is possible to build a better world of peace and social justice, but to do so we will need to pool our efforts and work together towards the same goals. Thank you for your kind attention.

Ms Patricia Francourt**Government (Seychelles)**

Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to be part of the discussions of the 112th Session of the ILO Conference which is further advancing the importance of social justice and the promotion of decent work. I commend the ILO Director-General, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for his leadership in carrying forward the well-deserved discussions from last year's Conference in his new report entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Seychelles embraces this concept which safeguards fundamental human rights at work and advocates for individual and collective responsibilities in order to bring positive changes amidst our evolving context and challenges. It aligns with the Government's strategy of placing human development at the centre of public policy, and it reiterates that a country's prosperity largely depends on the quality and the life of its people. A renewed social contract reminds us of the rights and obligations of employers and workers and it is the basis of the employment relationship in the world of work. Indeed, achieving such a model takes time and perseverance, but the conversation has started and even certain actions are being implemented. We need to continue in this direction and keep sensitizing and educating our labour force, as communicating the right information always becomes crucial whenever we are addressing employment challenges. In this respect, I thank the ILO for the continued support extended to the Government of Seychelles in different areas of cooperation that are assisting the country to promote social justice. Namely, completion of a study on informal employment, drafting of an action plan on skills mobility framework, development of a proposal to extend pension contribution to migrant workers, a skills assessment in the circular economy, implementation of a labour market information system, amongst others. I am pleased to share some recent milestones made by Seychelles which are contributing towards this vision. In October last year the Government signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2024-2028. Through national consultative sessions and use of empirical data, the framework identified economic prosperity, social inclusion, people development and environment conservation as priorities to achieve economic and social development. Furthermore, in May 2024 Seychelles organized its first World Social Work Day Symposium as the Government recognized the need to bring greater value and support to social workers as their role is becoming increasingly important to improve the well-being of people and communities. I was therefore delighted to note that the Conference agenda is also holding an opportune discussion on decent work and the care economy. Enhancing awareness and recognition on the role of social work, aligning working conditions with current challenges and training were amongst the main recommendations of the symposium to create effective economic and health outcomes. It is my hope that other Member States will join this effort in preparation for the World Social Development summit in 2025. I am also proud to announce that in January this year Seychelles ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention as we acknowledge that all workers should enjoy equal rights and social protection, no matter their place of work. Last but not least, Seychelles is undertaking final consultations for the review of the Employment Act 1995, and several recommendations stem from the ILO's technical assistance. The review process has been extensive, but in the spirit of social dialogue, we believe it is important to consult and listen to the needs of all parties. In conclusion, I take this opportunity to reaffirm Seychelles' commitment to the shared vision of the ILO of social justice and renewing a social contract that reflects the challenges and opportunities of our time, whilst ensuring prosperity to all. I thank you.

Mr Daniel Funes De Rioja

Employer (Argentina)

As an Employers delegate from my country and as President of the Argentine Industrial Union, I would like to greet the President of the Conference, Alexei Buzu, and the Director-General, Gilbert Hounbo. I would like to express our commitment to advancing in a social dialogue which is effective in searching consensus which can then be reflected in our individual countries, reconciling the universality of the ILO with the individuality of every country and every region. We are faced with a challenging global context which affects business work as well, both in investment, incorporating technology, employment and employability, productivity and competitiveness, and international trade. In Argentina, apart from that situation, there is a clear and urgent need to stabilize the economy, which has to take into account the sustainability of enterprises so that employment can be provided. In particular, small and medium-sized enterprises, they need a balanced macroeconomic framework which will promote investment and generation of quality employment. I am talking about that kind of employment. In the Director-General's report there is reference made to the need for a periodic updating of the social contract to respond to the way that circumstances change, both at political and institutional levels as also at an economic and social level. As a current example, we can see what is happening in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the incorporation of Industry 4.0, digitalization, artificial intelligence and innovation, among others, and also the new realities of the world of work to adapt to the development of new tools and occupations which require, along with an updating of the regulations, a modernization of labour relationships. And these changes need to help to promote more and better high-quality and formal employment. AIU has presented a white paper addressing these issues to provide responses to the challenges of a new labour ecosystem and to formalize people who are not yet in formal employment. And faced with this double challenge, we need to make advances in issues that Argentina has not yet resolved: high levels of labour fines, court cases and non-payroll labour costs which affect productivity and competitiveness. And as a background to that panorama, our country does not just have a high level of labour informality but also a high level of tax informality: more than 35% after a long period of stagnation in our economy and in employment in our country. In parallel, while we are addressing all of these issues, we also have to work for the future. Education and vocational training, as we have already said, are absolutely fundamental given the significance of the new technologies. Workers, employers and governments have to work together to make the change which will highlight the value of employability. As the Director-General, Gilbert Hounbo, recently said in his appeal to give priority to social justice, this requires a modern and realist vision. As he said, we need to strengthen the institutions and organizations of work so social dialogue will be effective. And we have to revise legislation and standards which affect the labour market so that they are relevant and are up to date with a view to protecting workers and to promoting sustainable enterprises. And that is what the Director-General said, and I say that too. Another issue which is up for discussion at the moment is the limits to the right to strike, which quite clearly have to take into account the concept of harassment and violence in Convention 190, which Argentina has ratified, which works in two directions. Because blockades of workplaces or making it impossible for people to get into or get out of somewhere violate constitutional rights such as those of property and of exercising legal activity, freedom of transit and of work. As far as the Government is concerned, it is important that we have a tripartite commitment because

respect for standards is an absolutely indispensable precondition for social dialogue being effective and actually leading anywhere. Thank you.

Mr Louai Almonajed

Government (Syrian Arab Republic)

Mr President, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I bid you good afternoon, and please allow me at the outset to express my gratitude for this conference, wishing it all the success. We are honoured to participate with the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic, alongside representatives of workers and employers, at this important international gathering, ladies and gentlemen, despite the following effects that we are witnessing in our country. First the impact of the war of aggression and the armed terrorist acts which started in 2011 and led to vast devastation of our infrastructure and impacted the industrial relations and conditions due to the death of many workers and the sidelining of many enterprises as well as the labour migration of skilled labour migration. And the spread of child labour and the increasing numbers of the vulnerable, and coupled with the repeated aggression by the Israeli occupation against the Syrian territory and their discriminate practices against the Syrian citizens in the occupied Arab Golan. Third, the unilateral coercive measures imposed on us by the West and which go against international agreements and conventions and deprive citizens from their right to life and decent work and which hampered efforts to improve the socio-economic situation with regard to providing raw material, the means of production and the modern production techniques. And this is all in front of the world's silence and with the absence of any serious measures to hold such unjust measures. From this lectern I would like to call upon the international community to exert every pressure to lift these unjust measures which are hampering development. And here I would like to remind that a dear part of my country, which is the Syrian Arab Golan, is still under the Israeli occupation which is perpetrating many criminal practices against Syrian citizens and discriminating against them, hampering them from establishing productive enterprises on their lands as well as expropriating territories and denying Syrians access to their lands, to their water resources and choking their possibilities to market their produce and products. We would like to thank the ILO for listing this item as one of the main items this year, and we look forward to having it as a recurring item with regard to the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We also would like to reaffirm our keenness for the implementation of all international labour standards in order to achieve a decent work environment where all the appropriate conditions are available to workers, employers and their families to have a decent living and would like to reaffirm the role of the ILO as international sponsor of providing the necessary conducive labour environment in our country, Syria, and our cooperation with it in the many fields and activities that the Syrian Government is implementing, especially with regard to the rights of workers in the occupied Golan. I am honoured to overview a number of priorities upon which we have worked in coordination with the representatives of workers and employers in our country, which are the following. Modernizing the legislation that regulates the operation of our ministry to keep up with the developments around the world, and this was done alongside the ILO team. Also, enshrining the principle of decentralization and issuing the necessary labour guidelines. And we have also launched a platform for the labour market in cooperation with the United Nations delegation. And also we fostered the support for migrant families and the IDPs through the financing of MSMEs and simplifying all the measures. In the field of social protection we have undertaken the following. We have undertaken the labour

inspection, whether the industrial or agricultural sites, and we adopted transparency in maintaining these visits through the involvement of representatives of workers and employers to guarantee the rights of all tripartite representatives. And we have also enshrined the principles of cooperation and coordination with the workers' and the employer organizations in cooperation with all the tripartite constituents. We also raised awareness among workers and employers through dialogue sessions with workers' and employers' organizations and civil society organizations. We also promoted labour training at the workplace. In the field of social protection, following the war we started an actuarial study with regard to the role of the social protection institution in coordination with the ILO in order to look at the financial position of the institution and its ability to provide all the necessary contributions to its beneficiaries on time. And we simplified the many measures and launched a number of electronic services to limit the costs. We developed databases in order to achieve the best investment in putting and drawing policies and strategies. We activated the role of the national committee for occupational safety and health and adopted a national strategy in this regard in cooperation with the tripartite constituents. Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, we renew our wishes for the best results of this conference and we would like to thank the President of the Conference as well as the ILO's management and all those who contributed to this success. Thank you.

Ms Jacqueline Mugo

Employer (Kenya)

The President and Vice-Presidents of the International Labour Conference, the Director-General, employers welcome the Director-General's report to this conference. The Director-General's report observes in the preface that trust in national and international governance is waning. This occurs when the governance priorities are out of sync with the people's priorities. For example, in Africa the people's priority is wealth creation and job creation. The people yearn for decent jobs to help them put food on the table, send their children to school and meet other basic needs. The report rightly observes that many nations and people feel that the system is rigged against them. It calls upon us to ensure that the priority of the ILO remains aligned with the people and their specific circumstances. Mr Vice-President, let me highlight a few points from the Director-General's report. One, the new social contract. The call for a new social contract is in our view impractical without addressing effective labour market governance, trust in government or focusing on implementation and measurable impacts. Also, introducing a new standard is not the solution to promoting social justice, addressing inequalities and fostering sustainable development. The limited application of already ratified standards demonstrates the challenges of the normative approach. We need practical solutions and implementation strategies. Employers call for a constructive and forward-looking approach addressing needed social and macroeconomic policies that would benefit the whole society rather than consuming resources on deep theoretical reflections on a new social contract. This is a concept with various definitions and is not applicable globally given the various levels of development and diverse cultural, social and economic realities. Mr Vice-President, creating a conducive environment for sustainable enterprises should be a priority for the ILO and for all of us. Enterprises are the backbone of any economy. Without sustainable enterprises, there can be no decent jobs. The report calls for a new economic framework but does not adequately emphasize the need for a business-friendly environment. Policies that support entrepreneurship, reduce excessive bureaucratic hurdles and encourage investment are essential for

sustainable economic growth. A conducive environment for businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, will lead to job creation, innovation and economic resilience. The DG's report refers to a conducive environment for business but does not elaborate on it as it should have done. On productivity, the Employers' group has for a long time called on the ILO to recognize that productivity improvement is crucial to the realization of the aspirations in the DG's report. For example, we cannot talk about the implementation of living wages without first looking at productivity. Increasing productivity should be our collective concern. The report falls short in proposing concrete measures and policy reforms to enhance productivity across sectors. A well-articulated productivity agenda will not only boost economic growth but also create decent jobs and improve living standards for all. The report states that "we must reach an agreement that protects employment quality and seeks to improve the balance between productivity gains and leisure". A strong productivity agenda goes beyond sharing productivity gains. It is about reskilling, investing, improving regulations, reducing informality and strengthening institutions, among other measures. Mr Vice-President, the transition from informal to formal economies remains a significant challenge, particularly in developing economies. The report underscores this issue but lacks detailed strategies to address it effectively. Simplifying regulatory frameworks, ensuring financial inclusion and providing incentives for formalization are critical steps that need to be prioritized. These measures, in line with Recommendation 204 of the ILO, will help integrate informal workers into the formal economy, offering them greater security and access to social benefits. Reducing informality must be a priority to create productive employment and decent work in developing economies, which is the most effective path to reducing poverty and creating job opportunities. It is also essential to improve conditions for companies to drive economic growth and employment creation in the formal sector. Lastly, Vice-President, the Director-General called us to consider two questions: how we should go about renewing the social contract and how we can amplify the voices of the real economy. In my view, the answer to these two questions is the same: invest in strengthening membership-based organizations of employers and workers, and strengthen institutions and platforms of social dialogue at all levels. It is my hope that the Office will ringfence resources for revitalizing tripartism and the employers' and workers' organizations that underpin it, as envisioned in the Director-General's report. I thank you.

Mr Woldeyesus Elisa Gulay

Government (Eritrea)

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to express my gratitude to deliver a speech on behalf of my government in this august conference. And I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank and appreciate the reports presented by the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General's second report which focuses on the social contract upon which we are striving to build decent work for all. As the Director-General has rightly written out in the report, since 1919 the ILO tripartite organs were founded to advance social justice, and our tripartite social dialogue enabled us to build commitments to promote decent work. However, the existing geopolitical instabilities, coupled with wars, climate change, technological advancement and demographic change have not allowed social justice to advance to the heights we all expect. Rather, it has put the world of work to badly face injustice, inequalities and insecurities. This situation, we believe, compelled the Director-General to develop this report and enquire the following two questions. How do we tackle the

injustices, inequalities and insecurities facing us today? How do we renew that social contract today and deliver social justice as the basis for lasting peace? Appreciative for raising these two questions as to renew and advance social justice through social dialogue, my delegation kindly encourages the Director-General to take into account how this body can contribute to restoring peace and stability worldwide. Mr President, Eritrea, based on its self-reliance and the steadfastness of its people, has persisted numerous complications, devastation and provoking wars, and celebrated its 33rd independence anniversary under the theme Peace Anchored on Resilience on 24th May 2024. Currently, Eritrea is heavily engaged in nation building and the development of its economy by revisiting its policies and development programmes, improving implementation plans, mobilizing the necessary resources, making essential adjustments and concessions and reinforcing institutional capabilities, with its main objective being to formulate and implement inclusive development policies. This is Eritrea's strategy towards renewing its social contracts and eventually delivering social justice through its agenda for decent work. Ladies and gentlemen, realizing that it is not easy to carry out the indicated nation building and development plans and deliver social justice in these fluid global and regional developments and trends, Honourable President Isaias Afwerki said, "Beyond safeguarding our independence and sovereignty, we will continue to work hard, without complacency, to consolidate the tie of friendship, cooperation and complementarity with our close neighbours and wider region as well as with like-minded and free people of the world." In this context, Mr President, Eritrea welcomes the building of ILO's partnership as it enhances its human and institutional capacity to promote and protect the employment promotion programmes. We profoundly share the idea of renewing the social contract and delivering social justice as a basis for lasting peace and request the ILO's contribution in tackling the national and global labour challenges. I thank you all.

Mr Noor Kutub Alam Mannan

Worker (Bangladesh)

Honourable Chair, good afternoon. On behalf of Bangladesh, I would like to extend my best wishes to the governments, employers' and workers' representatives, including the guests and media personnel from different countries participating in this conference. We are looking unitedly to secure food security for the working peoples of [vgr INAUDIBLE 80:13], ensure decent work, occupational safety and health, ensure children's education, end violence and harassment against the men and women, create smooth industrial relations and ensure socio-economic and cultural development. We want to [vgr INAUDIBLE 80:44] peaceful world and guarantee of global justice and sustainable, friendly relations. Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the daughter of the Father of the Nation, consistently raised [vgr INAUDIBLE 81:11] by forming [vgr INAUDIBLE 81:17] 40 industrial sectors and 42 to the tripartite committee. Four sectors have been declared as new industrial sectors. [vgr INAUDIBLE 81:33] for agriculture sector and domestic workers are under process. Honourable State Minister and Employment Minister, [vgr INAUDIBLE 81:51], Mr Nazrul Islam Chowdhury MP is labour-friendly and honest. He has already started working on the Bangladesh labour information management system under the Minister of Labour and Employment through which the online database of the workers is being created. As a result, we will be able to solve any problems of the workers and take quick measures for their welfare. According to the labour force survey in 2024, total labour force is 73.75 million, male 48.45 million and female 25.30 million. Unemployment population total 2.59 million,

male 1.75 million and female 0.85 million. Informal labour forces employment total 84.9%. [vgr INAUDIBLE 83:20] employment population by sector: agriculture 33.83 million, industry 12.75 million and services sector 26.358 million. Honourable chair, an improvement [vgr INAUDIBLE 83:48] in biological health, exposure of biohazard [vgr INAUDIBLE 83:54] in variety of settings such as workplace, hospitals, lavatories, agriculture and food processing plants, biohazard including pathogenic tonics, allergenic biological [vgr INAUDIBLE 84:13] for food industries, waste management, et cetera, and dying from the various diseases, including HIV, Hepatitis B and C, [vgr INAUDIBLE 84:28] or E. coli. In the same cases, biohazards causes epidemic. Neither the owner nor the buy or the brands bears any responsibility. In this regard, we should take urgent action [vgr INAUDIBLE 84:46]. In the past three conferences, I reported on progress in improving the living standard, social and legal protections and benefits of the workers in Bangladesh. At the same time I call to end the trend of the third-party contractual of [vgr INAUDIBLE 85:13] in this name of global outsourcing, including Bangladesh and certain creation of a permanent disaster prevention fund of workers under the auspices of the ILO. Any progress in that regard would benefit my country. Thank you. Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu, Joy.

Ms Toni Moore M.P.

Worker (Barbados)

Mr President, Vice-Presidents, distinguished delegates, underpinning the Report of the Director-General is the recognition that worldwide the trust gap between states and their citizens and between employers and workers is widening. The experience of COVID-19 exposed further social and economic inequalities within and between countries. When taken alongside the disruptive impacts of climate, demography and technology, the need for course correction is certain, to control the power imbalances and divergent interests that continue to promote an agenda for the few and not for the many. The need for a renewed social contract is therefore incontestable, but are we truly ready to move past this being merely a philosophical concept? Is there within and among ILO Member States the political will to undertake the drastic transformation required in our labour markets, tax systems, social security systems, but more so in our mindsets, to take advantage of what a new social contract can deliver on? But why these questions you may ask? For starters, we should not have to wait for an outcome from an international court to determine that, whether implicit or explicit, the right to strike has been a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy. To deny this would be to backwardly disregard the achievements of labour to our social and economic development. It would be to deny that the mere threat of strike in countries like mine has led to major economic reforms such as unemployment insurance, pensions, minimum wages, hours of work and overall employment policy. It would be to ignore that without the right to strike, or even the threat of strike, social development in many countries would not have taken place were it left solely to the captains of industry who resisted what is required to achieve the social and economic developments that we now take for granted. We must not fool ourselves that a social contract will be achieved where the right to strike is surrendered. As philosopher Isaiah Berlin puts it, "Freedom for wolves often means death to the sheep." Mr President, I do not intend to pre-empt the reports from those who have been leading the discussion in the Standard-Setting Committee on Biological Hazards. But as I witnessed the deliberate attempts to block consensus on language that could deliver far better protection to impacted workers, I could not help but think that this is exactly why workers are tired. This is exactly what

compromises the delivery of the social contract. Workers are wearied by employers who for the first two years of COVID were saying, “We are in this together. We need to build back stronger.” Today these very employers have seemingly thrown that expression of solidarity into the distant past, perhaps until, God forbid, another crisis comes. Workers on the frontline of COVID are feeling more isolated, forgotten and undervalued. In my country, we had to dust off the 1949 Labour Clauses Convention and Recommendation that were ratified for over 70 years. This was because workers who gave up their rights to severance payments during the pandemic to shield hotel establishments and the national insurance fund from astronomical decline, were put on the frontline of attack from employers who, as soon as tourism started to grow again, were pulling back on terms and conditions that had been established for 60 years of collective agreement. My union successfully lobbied and won a campaign to secure into law provisions to ensure that where private employers undermine labour clauses, they would not be granted subsidies or concessions. Under a renewed social contract we should not have to resort to legislation, because it requires that all actors hear each other, see each other and feel each other. This is not often the case. But the ILO can help in this regard. Through its unique structure and role, there is the opportunity for the ILO to engage constituents through Decent Work Country Programmes and to strengthen its voice in the multilateral system to assist constituents in setting priorities to tackle the multifaceted challenges. Among other things, the ILO must emphasize that establishing a renewed and modernized social contract will not be possible without a universal labour guarantee aimed at guaranteeing fundamental workers’ rights, living wages, limits on hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces. In his famous mountaintop speech, Martin Luther King observed that “the world is all messed up”, “confusion all around”, but “only when it is dark enough can you see the stars”. Distinguished delegates, I should not need to convince us that it is already dark enough. If we do not move past words to doing better, we are going to witness a lot more uprisings, many of which will not align to achieving democracy and meaningful progress. It is time for change. Let us stop moving simply towards a new social contract. It is time for us to deliver it. I thank you.

Mr James Hoth Mai

Government (South Sudan)

Mr President, Vice-President, honourable ministers, the Director-General of the ILO, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. First and foremost, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of South Sudan and on my own behalf, let me seize this opportunity to congratulate you and your colleagues for being elected as the President and Vice-Presidents respectively for the current 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the theme of the Director-General’s reports ‘Towards a renewed social contract’, in the report, the Director-General posed two fundamental questions. One, how should we go about renewing the social contract? And two, how can we amplify the voices of the real economy? A social contract is the relationship between citizens and their governments in a collective manner where citizens expect their needs to be met in terms of access to basic services, to decent work, employment opportunities, social protection, and safety and health at workplaces. The social contract is a glue that glues people together and defines entities’ responsibilities toward achieving human development. This entails that decent work and social justice are fundamental prerequisites of the social contract. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as explicitly stated in the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944, “All human

beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity.” Child labour, forced labour, human trafficking, violence and harassment against women, migrant workers, refugees, religious and minorities continue to dominate and threaten the existence of the human being. Therefore it poses a great challenge to the very principles for which the ILO was founded to fight. For us as a member of the ILO, we have to adopt and implement the Report of the Director-General that calls for a social contract to be the basis for decent work and social justice. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Republic of South Sudan became an independent country on July 9th, 2011. After independence, the country embarked on establishing international and regional frameworks that protect the citizens and adopted the following: the 1951 Refugees Convention, African Union migration policy, the Kampala Convention, the IGAD Nairobi Declaration on migration policies, IGAD Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance Protocols, seven ratified ILO fundamental Conventions. Nationally we have the interim constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, Labour Act 2017, the Refugees Act 2012 which outlines the country’s duties and responsibilities, Child Act 2008 which protects the children, the penal code of 2008. We developed the occupational safety and health policy at workplaces 2021, developed vocational training policies 2021, developed the Decent Work Country Programme, developed the Social Insurance Fund Act 2023, initiated the process of ratification of Conventions 97, 143, 144, 181, 189 and Convention 190. Developing minimum wage policy, developing the South Sudan employment policy, developing ethical recruitment policy and guidelines, those are part of the answers to the questions posed by the Director-General. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as I conclude, let me reiterate the commitment of the Republic of South Sudan to work closely with the Director-General to realize the road map that can shape the way we behave and act, through a social contract as a means to achieve decent work and social justice. We will work hand in hand with the ILO and IOM and other development partners to make sure that the social contract is renewed. Again, congratulations to you and your colleagues for being elected as President of the 112th Session and Deputy Presidents respectively. God bless you. I thank you all for listening.

Mr Bekhzod Musaev

Government (Uzbekistan)

Mr President, dear heads of delegation, dear participants, I am delighted to speak to you today at this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I am honoured to take part in the discussion of the Director-General’s report, Director-General of the ILO Mr Hounbo, on the issue of ‘Towards a renewed social contract’. Ladies and gentlemen, everybody’s life is a constant development and evolution, and someone’s self-fulfilment is the most important contribution to society and a state that anybody can make. At this time of globalization, we see emerging trends in the labour markets and new emerging challenges, and therefore social justice should be at the very forefront of all public policies. In that context, the universal importance of the social contract takes on new importance, in particular to ensure the sustainability of living conditions, guaranteed employment and income, overcoming gender inequality and promoting equal opportunities for all. So do we not need to rethink the social contract in the view of modern realities? Absolutely. And Uzbekistan welcomes the Director-General’s initiative designed to renew and update the social contract, covering a whole series of external and internal relationships

at the very heart of which you find the individual, his or her interests and views. Dear colleagues, in the Director-General's report we read that a good indicator of the effectiveness of a social contract is its capacity to ensure social justice through decent work. The ILO plays a key role in promoting coherent and global responses in the development of public policies designed to guarantee employment and protect labour law. Uzbekistan reaffirms its commitment to implementing the fundamental principles and strategies of the ILO, focusing on prevention of forced labour, prevention of discrimination, tripartism and collective bargaining. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank all countries who have supported the election of Uzbekistan to the Governing Body at the ILO. Ladies and gentlemen, responsibility, honesty, conscience and a determination to act for the good of society as a whole should be at the heart of our efforts. Should we not all be aware of our role in contributing to social justice? If so, I think we will be in a position to build a society in which we all play a dignified and useful role in contributing towards the collective good. Thank you.

Mr Kyungshik Sohn

Employer (Republic of Korea)

Honourable President and distinguished delegates, it is my great pleasure to speak at the International Labour Conference today representing Korean employers and business. Although the global economy and the labour market have recovered from the pandemic and returned to growth, geopolitical tensions, climate change and inflation are still presenting serious challenges to us. In that sense, I believe it is meaningful and timely to have a discussion about this year's DOING's report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Technology development and industrial restructuring are diversifying the way we work. Furthermore, a number of jobs are being created in the new industries. Indeed, the global labour market is at a critical juncture of transformation. However, outdated institutions and regulations, which were made in the industrialization era decades ago, are now holding back growth potential and job creation. Confrontational and militant industrial relations also discourage us to effectively respond to the changes in the world of work. Distinguished delegates, enterprises are key actors of creating jobs, which are the foundation of economic stability and social cohesion. In order to enhance economic and business vitality, which can lead to job creation, it is essential to establish a more flexible labour market and more cooperative labour-management relations. For this, the Korean Government is now pursuing policies in labour-management relations and improved labour laws and regulations. In order to successfully respond to transformations in the world of work, workers and employers need to be allowed to manage working hours more flexibly and a performance-based wage system should be established. For more balanced labour-management relations in Korea, regulations need to be improved, such as prohibiting unions' illegal workplace occupation and allowing substitute workers during strikes. The Korea Enterprises Federation, as a responsible social partner, stays committed to engage in social dialogue to discuss labour reforms. It is my sincere hope that the social partners join efforts to improve the current outdated and rigid labour laws and regulations for the sake of future generations. I also want to take this opportunity to ask the ILO to take into consideration Member States' national circumstances and the diverse position of all stakeholders in a balanced manner, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Honourable President and distinguished delegates, I hope that this year's ILC will provide us a constructive and valuable opportunity to share our experience and wisdom. Thank you.

Ms Barbara Owsiak

Employer (Poland)

Honourable President of the Conference, distinguished delegates, advisors and observers, as a representative of the Polish delegation of the employers' organizations, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to speak before such a distinguished assembly. The changes occurring in the modern world are more dynamic than ever in history. One of the most pressing issues in developed countries is demography. Currently, no EU country has a fertility rate that ensures generational replacement. This rate stood at 1.46 births per woman in the EU, and in countries such as Poland it was below 1.3. As Europe's population declines, employers face serious problems with employee availability, which in turn affects the competitiveness of our economy. Demography is just one of the many challenges we face. Climate change and the energy crisis, as well as the necessity to transition toward a more environmentally friendly economy, require enormous financial investments and numerous sacrifices are needed to achieve sustainable development. Modern technologies increase economic productivity but simultaneously force unprecedented flexibility upon employees, requiring them to continuously develop their skills and often change professions. Some studies indicate that most of our children will work in professions that do not exist today. We have to address all these challenges in an environment of instability and, from a Polish and European perspective, also a regular war in Ukraine. These are just a few of the challenges we must confront. However, one question always arises in such discussions: how do we meet these challenges? Is there a universal mechanism that allows for achieving social justice or sustainable development? If I were to name one such mechanism, it would undoubtedly be social dialogue. Through it, not only is societal control over legal, economic and social solutions possible but also the exchange of thoughts and ideas, sharing of concepts and solutions that will help face the challenges of the modern world. We must, however, bear in mind that social dialogue can only develop under certain conditions. It can only exist in countries with a democratic system where human rights and freedoms, including the right to association, are respected. Additionally, there must be a free market system. Only then can social partners representing both employers and employees operate. Thus, it is essential for a country to comply with the obligations arising from article 2 of ILO Convention No. 87. For social organizations to have a sufficiently strong voice that will be heard by state authorities, they need to be autonomous and independent. According to article 3 of ILO Convention 87, employers' organizations and trade unions have the right to draw up their statutes and internal regulations. Paragraph 2, in turn, states that public authorities should refrain from any intervention that would restrict the right to self-organization. These are basic standards that the ILO international community developed 76 years ago, which are still not always and everywhere respected. We should strive to ensure universal adherence to existing obligations and equalize standards so that social dialogue can function without hindrance in every ILO member country. It is also crucial to ensure a balance of power among the parties involved in social dialogue. While solutions concerning appropriate working conditions and employee remuneration have been, are and will continue to be the focus of the international community, in many developed countries we are increasingly encountering the problem of overregulation. Numerous obligations imposed on entrepreneurs result in more and more time and resources being consumed by bureaucracy, making it increasingly difficult to focus on running and developing the business, especially for the smallest entities. By promoting dialogue on wage and working conditions standards, we must

reduce the bureaucracy and over-regulations that hinder the development of the economy and companies. Therefore, we should strive to ensure that all labour law solutions are adequate to achieve the goals and are carried out at the lowest possible cost to the other party. Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your time.

Mr Luis Alberto Villanueva Carbajal

Worker (Peru)

Mr President, distinguished participants at this Conference, greetings on behalf of the workers of Peru. I wish to refer to the ILO Director-General's report, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. In fact, this is a vital issue, social justice, the key role of social contracts in striking a balance between individual and collective responsibilities. The report points out that power imbalances and divergent interests can complicate efforts to strike a balance between the different elements that make up the social contract. And this gives specific importance to the notion enshrined in the Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944 that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. And we agree that we need to renew the social contract to reflect an understanding of how our needs will be met over the course of our lifetimes, from access to basic services to employment opportunities and social protection. The report indicates that in 2023 approximately 700 million people around the world were subsisting below the international extreme poverty line, while almost 7% of the world's workers lived in extreme poverty. In my country, Peru, poverty affects 9,780,000 people. That is 29% of the population. Whereas extreme poverty affects 5.7% of the population, or 1.922 million people. Access to the comprehensive package of basic services, including water, sanitation, electricity is impossible for 83.5% of the population of the departments of Puno, Ucayali, Loreto and Huancavelica. And that is a result of a neoliberal economic policy applied by a government without social support and that has seen the death of about 70 Peruvians. And this government does not allow for social dialogue among the social partners. Now turning to social contracts under pressure, we agree that when an economy fails to protect rights or simply fails to provide the prospect of a better life, it erodes confidence in civic engagement, instils apathy towards institutions and undermines trust that justice will be delivered. And in the worst cases, it provokes social instability and unravels into violent conflict, and that is what is happening with attacks on workers and on the population in general who live in poverty. They have been denied an increase in the minimum salary to a living wage, and indeed pensions, and we have seen a violation of trade union rights and collective bargaining. The report also points out that the renewal could be undertaken in three steps. First, an examination of the rigour with which we are discharging our respective responsibilities under the current social contract. Second, the identification of the unaddressed challenges and unmet expectations in the current social contract. And lastly, the expansion of the social contract to address technological, climate related and demographic transformations. First of all, it is vital to review compliance with ILO standards and on that basis seek the renewal of the social contract, because ILO standards constitute the framework of social justice. We need to revitalize tripartism and social dialogue based on the freedom of association and trade union rights, generating confidence as a key element to advance together as workers, employers and governments. We are aware that the ILO plays a vital role in the formulation and renewal of the social contract, and therefore we need to strengthen the supervisory mechanisms and technical assistance. Mr President, participants, Peruvian workers want to see constructive dialogue, and that is demonstrated in the bipartite negotiation that we have seen in the construction industry

in Peru. We reiterate our willingness to participate actively in the renewal of the social contract. We seek social justice in our country under the principles and objectives of the ILO with democratic values that underlie them. Thank you, Mr President.

Mr Jacobo Ramos Crispin

Worker (Dominican Republic)

Delegates at this 112th Conference of the ILO, I greet you from this world podium which calls us together every year to get to know about the reality of labour in our countries and make proposals that make it possible to improve the material conditions and living conditions of workers. From the union movement, we have to promote a new economic model which will be based on a new social contract which will lead us towards the creation of employment, which will contribute to reducing levels of pollution and guarantee health and continuous education for workers faced with the unstoppable advances of technology which threaten to do away with jobs. We need to insist on equality and inclusion. We need to join forces to be more and more decisive in our combat against discrimination, whether it is by race or gender, so that well-being is not just for a minority which appropriates the riches that are produced by the majority by their work. In this situation of social dialogue we are pleased that in this 112th Conference we are getting into discussions about biological hazards in the workplace, and we hope that its conclusions will serve as a support for the strengthening and establishment of public policies in the Member States. And we are also pleased to see that the care economy is being discussed. I think, without fear of being mistaken, that the greatest demonstration of the relevance of dialogue and the new social dialogue achieved by the Dominican union movement in its whole history happened last May, the 1st of May, International Labour Day, when there was a pact signed between the Government and the workers. The Government, represented by the President, Luis Abinader, has been very close to the workers and listened to them. And in that pact we achieved a situation in which the Government has committed to indexing salaries on a periodic basis and exempting from taxes the first 50,000 pesos and paying a proportional amount to people who earn less than that. There will be legislation produced in the Congress to reform social security and strengthen the achievements we have had so far. There will also be a new labour code to extend our achievements of the past and comply with international labour standards. This demonstrates that we should continue promoting social dialogue as a policy of the union movement, which will lead us to establish a new social contract, to establish an economic model which is fair and inclusive, to dismantle the economic and social structures that have kept us in poverty and held us back.

Ms Rina Yessenia Lozano Gallegos

Government (El Salvador)

Distinguished delegations, like the priorities of this Conference, my government wishes to underscore that promoting genuine social justice is the very basis for public policies adopted by El Salvador since 2019. For many decades our country was affected by the scourge of crime and gang-related crime. Successive generations suffered or fled from this situation and from the lack of opportunities. According to official figures, in 2015 the rate of homicide was 106 for every 100,000 inhabitants, and unfortunately we were the most violent country in the world according to that ranking. And that had a

damaging effect on our social fabric. Families broke up. It led to migration. It exacerbated poverty and informal employment. And it also had an impact on our culture and on education. Thousands of young people could not continue with their studies because of the insecurity or were recruited by these terrorist groups. So it was a very damaging situation for decent work. In fact we were so struck by that that violence became the norm and we had a permanent fear of being killed or losing a family member or suffering from extortion. In fact, in the collective imagination we all wondered how many more generations would have to go through this problem before we resolved the issue. So it was a terrible situation. But thanks to the vision and determination of our President, Nayib Bukele, El Salvador has managed to enact an unprecedented transformation, implementing a successful security plan which has enabled us to cut crime and reduce the murder rate to historically low levels. And today I am proud to say that we are the safest country in the western hemisphere. Today our population has a free country and aspires to prosperity. And we have a good environment for trade unions and freedom of association, and indeed investment, having social and legal certainty, promoting tourism and investment and reducing security expenditure on the part of companies. The population of our country has given unprecedented support for our government to continue to lead this transformation, and it is doing the same with the economy. This effort has required the involvement of all stakeholders and sectors, employers, workers, civil society organizations, and of course the population as a whole. We have very much welcomed the support of trade unions and employer organizations who have publicly announced that they are fully ready to continue to build a better country together. And I am delighted to underscore the following programmes that El Salvador has adopted in the labour context: 'My First Job' opportunities, single mothers, labour rehabilitation for persons with disabilities, a permanent employment service. All of these programmes designed to encourage an environment conducive to decent work and to support workers, and of course employers as well. Furthermore, we have adopted special programmes for labour inspection so that we can check the working conditions in the construction sector, and these have seen a 100% rate of fulfilment of the standards. Also we have been checking on delivery platforms, ensuring that there is labour security for workers in that sector. We have guaranteed good conditions for professional footballers and for municipal workers. And at the same time we have created the SOS workers platform so that they can submit complaints about harassment in the workplace and we can have a specialized inspection team to follow up such complaints as well as general inspectorate services if there are complaints from any source. So none of this would have been possible without good tripartite cooperation and pooling the efforts of workers', employers' and government sectors. Ladies and gentlemen, El Salvador is advancing towards a more prosperous future, and in that process tripartite social dialogue has played a key role, and we count on the ILO's continued support to promote social justice and decent work. We are delighted to announce our joining the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Thank you, President.

Mr Alok Bansidhar Shriram

Employer (India)

Mr President, Vice-Presidents, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, greetings from India. Namaste. It is indeed an honour to represent the Employers' group from India and address the distinguished assembly. I extend my gratitude to the Director-General of the ILO for setting the stage for this conference by highlighting the subject of

'Towards a renewed social contract'. The report sheds light on the current state of global inequality, which has been intensified by the COVID pandemic and rapid technological advancements, and calls for a new social contract. Employers globally acknowledge the significance of technological developments, innovation and focus on skill enhancement and productivity. I would like to provide an Indian perspective on this subject. This tripartite format of dialogue is a cornerstone of our vibrant democracy. India, with its vast diverse workforce, has made significant strides in economic growth over the past years. However, the journey towards inclusive growth remains incomplete without addressing the challenges faced by the labour force. Recognising this, the government of India's initiatives to consolidate and reform labour laws through the introduction of four new labour codes mark a significant milestone in the country's landscape. These labour codes aim to simplify and rationalize existing labour codes, providing greater flexibility to employers, enhance transparency and protection of the rights of the workers. The beauty is that they have come about after years of tripartite discussions between all of us who are affected. We already have an estimated eight million workers in the gig and platform economy, which is expected to go up to about 24 million in the next five or six years. In recognition of this, the Social Security Code 2020 also extends the coverage to a wider segment of the workforce, including these gig and platform workers, thereby addressing the growing precarity of employment in the modern economy. Additionally, it aims to streamline the administration of social security schemes and ensure the portability of benefits for workers moving across different jobs and different locations. The code includes provision for the recognition of workers, establishment of welfare funds and the provision of social security benefits such as health insurance, maternity benefit and old-age pension. The aim is to formalize gig workers, enhancing job security and promoting social protection. India has also launched the eShram portal which represents a significant step towards addressing the issues faced by informal workers in the country. Informal workers, who often lack formal employment contracts and social security coverage, constitute a significant portion of India's workforce. This portal aims to provide these workers with formal recognition, social security benefits and access to welfare schemes, thereby enhancing their economic and social well-being. Currently 300 million informal workers have registered themselves under this portal. By leveraging technology and the digital platforms, the portal seeks to bridge the gap between informal workers and government welfare schemes, ensuring inclusive development and social justice for all segments of society. The Government also started an employment portal called the National Career Service Portal which provides a nationwide data bank for jobs and skills. The portal is a one-stop-shop for career related services including counselling, job fairs, skill and training programmes, et cetera, all free of cost. India's renewed social contract encompasses a holistic approach to address the evolving needs and aspirations of its diverse and young population. Economic inclusivity, social protection, empowerment and inclusion, education and skill development, health and well-being, economic and environmental sustainability of enterprises, and democratic governance and rule of law are the foundations on which this is being built. We anticipate that there will be hurdles in this project, but the project is a work in progress and will keep improving as we go along. One area of major concern to us is the vulnerability of our MSMEs in this new environment. In this new digitally driven world of work there is a huge compression of time between cause and effect. It is therefore all the more important to continue this tripartite dialogue in a rational and flexible manner to create win-win solutions rather than any win-lose solution. In India all of us, the employers, the workers and the Government, are fully committed to working together to create sustainable and equitable development opportunities for all and at the same time ensure sustainable

enterprises. With these words, I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity to address this gathering. Thank you and Jai Hind.

Mr Mahad Baawain

Government (Oman)

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished participants, at the outset I wish to congratulate the members for electing Oman as a titular member in the Governing Body of the ILO for the period 2024-2027. We assure you that Oman stands willing and ready to cooperate in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and achieve a fair and equitable working environment. We also wish to congratulate all the countries that were elected as members of the Governing Body and wish them all the best in their responsibilities. Ladies and gentlemen, we have reviewed with a great deal of interest the Report of the Director-General entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract' that sheds light on the issue of social justice and its importance in society, especially societies based on social contracts, decent work and efficient institutions. We are faced with a number of amazing developments in some fields but we are also facing challenges in other fields, such as climate change, technologies, artificial intelligence, financial and health crises that have led to the vulnerability of the most vulnerable categories of our society. We in Oman are committed to decent work in all sectors without exception. We are trying to improve skills to meet the requirements of new forms of work through a number of programmes and initiatives, especially in vocational and technical training and lifelong learning, taking into account the important role of the social partners in developing decisions and plans, because just decisions are rooted in a just society. Oman has tried to create a safe working environment. And in this regard, we took a number of initiatives, such as adopting a new labour law and a new social protection law in collaboration with the tripartite constituents. We have tried to take into account the rights of employers and workers by adopting legislation that achieves balance in the labour market and constitutes a strong foundation for the labour market. We have also taken a number of preventive measures to improve the working environment, such as a wage protection programme and reinstating the social dialogue committee. Oman, in its attempt to provide support to workers, employers and society as a whole, has started at the beginning of this year to put in place a comprehensive social protection system that provides benefits to all categories of society, including the elderly and children, in addition to benefits and entitlements to disabled individuals and to households. We have also put in place social protection programmes against a series of hazards. We are trying to have a unique experience with the support of a number of partners and stakeholders such as the ILO and other partners. And I would like to seize this opportunity to thank our partners for their support and their willingness to help us in coming up with a new social protection system. Mr President, the ILO plays a central role in the world of work, and we strongly believe in the need to strengthen this role in a framework of partnership and cooperation. In conclusion, Mr President, we would like to reiterate our thanks to the Director-General for his report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories and call on the Organization to help alleviate the suffering of workers in the occupied territories and implement resolutions that would put an end to the occupation. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Getahun Hussien Shekur

Employer (Ethiopia)

Mr President, Director-General of the ILO, honourable ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr President and your vice-chair, on your election to preside over the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. I am confident that your able and wise leadership will meet our expectations for the outcome of this important event. Mr President, allow me to seize this opportunity to commend the Director-General for his succinct report entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract' that outlines various issues, particularly underlining our collective responsibility towards each other that finds its expression in the norms, collective institutions and policies towards fulfilling the promise of the Declaration of Philadelphia that all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material wellbeing and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity to advance social justice. We fully agree with the DG's view that economic and productivity growth, business dynamism, investment in technology and innovation and competitiveness of companies can all deliver on the social objective of employment policy when supplemented by social dialogue and policies that ensure decent work and a just transition. In this regard, we associate with the International Organisation of Employers, IOE, policy priorities set out for a just transition. Mr President, as I indicated in my statement during the 111th Session of the ILC, multifaceted and profound reforms are going on in our country to advance social justice and decent work. However, as employers' organization, although we are exerting all our possible efforts to support business, our technical and institutional capacity is limited to fully engage in inclusive and effective social dialogue and collective bargaining towards promoting decent work and social justice. That said, we request the ILO Director-General to visit Africa, clearly observe the multifaceted problems that we as employers are facing, caused by climate change, migration, skill gaps, job loss due to the impact of COVID-19, and war and conflicts and the like, for the ILO's necessary intervention and supports in this regard. Mr President, let me also take this opportunity to affirm our full support of the technical items placed on the agenda of the Conference by the Governing Body for discussions which, in our view, are topical and relevant to address social justice and decent work. Mr President, I cannot end my statement without congratulating the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO for his detail report for the period 2022-2023 that, in our view, fully captured matters arising out of the 111th Session of the ILC and other pertinent issues incorporated in different sections. Mr President, with these few words, let me conclude my statement by affirming the commitment of the Confederation of Ethiopian Employers' Federation in our endeavours to advance social justice and promote decent work for all in Ethiopia in light of the DG's report and the IOE's Policy Priorities for a Just Transition, and we look forward for the ILO's technical support in this regard. Thank you, Mr President. Thank you all.

Ms Laura Peña Izquierdo

Employer (Dominican Republic)

Ladies and gentlemen, the Employers' delegation of the Dominican Republic greets the representatives present at this International Labour Conference. We looked at the reports from the Director-General and we emphasize the value of social dialogue which

governs the ILO along with contributions to fairness, inclusion and promotion of decent work. We think that the contributions made by the International Organisation of Employers are opportune and appropriate in referring to sustainable enterprises and to a favourable environment so that these can contribute to the generation of value in society in accordance with their role and their commitments. We express our support for the Global Coalition for Social Justice promoted by the ILO with a view to improve our approach to breaches of social justice and make progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through knowledge sharing, the promotion of international labour standards and social dialogue. From the private sector employers, every day we are working to create more inclusion and more prosperity through the promotion of decent work. At the same time, we hope that the conclusions of this meeting will be balanced, will strengthen tripartite representativeness and respect free enterprise and the free market. As constituents of this house, let us protect the fundamental principles and rights at work. In accordance with that, we reiterate our total conviction that fundamental rights at work are for everyone. They should be applied in a balanced and equal way to workers and to employers. Let us promote and contribute to the compliance with the goals set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly Sustainable Development Goal, 1 end of poverty; number 3, health and well-being; 5, equality of gender; 8, decent work and economic growth; and 17, alliances to achieve the objectives joining forces for sustainability and for work based on compliance with international standards. As far as the latter are concerned, we identify them as part of the rules governing what we do and as conditions that are appropriate to comply with them and to create appropriate ambits for investment and economic growth. We can see tendencies at a macropolitical level and their impact on the world of work. We hope that the international organization will be agile in its work and will carry out effective and opportune work in what it is doing and what it is suggesting. In other words, as we overcome the state of exception that COVID-19 put us in, we think that it is opportune to centre the aspirations of the ILO in making more flexible the standards which will promote more and better jobs and that should be a balance as far as the sustainability of companies and the conversion of informal activities. We reiterate our commitment to promoting agreements through dialogue, as consolidated by tripartite relationships, by complying with public policy and strengthening institutions, transparency in the creation of decent jobs in sustainable enterprises which will have a positive impact socially, economically and environmentally. Setting out our vision of what the ILO can do, we would like to pick out two proposals which, as we see things, demonstrate a trend in the Dominican Republic. For many years our country has enjoyed harmonious and flexible relationships between employers, workers and the government, and we are confident that this strength will make it possible in the next few weeks to construct, for the second time, an agreed labour code negotiated in a tripartite way which will make it possible for the country to have appropriate standards adjusted to reality, creating conditions to face up to present and future challenges. Finally, along with the ILO we think that it is a good idea to reach an agreement on employment and productivity where we will create more and better sustainable enterprises, more decent work, the universalization of social protection and levels of competitiveness which will promote investment and equality of opportunity for all. We reiterate our commitment to reaching these agreements through dialogue with a view to achieving objectives that everyone wants. Thank you.

Mr Blake Mulala

Worker (Zambia)

Chairperson of the International Labour Conference and all distinguished delegates, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General and his team for the success of this conference. May I also thank the outgoing Chairperson of the Governing Body for their tremendous work to set the agenda for this year's Conference. As regards the Director-General's report, we are glad it brings renewed hope. It brings a new impetus to renew the social contract by emphasizing the centrality of social dialogue in bringing lasting peace and shared prosperity. The Director-General paints a gloomy picture of the world engrossed in civil strife and geopolitical wars. The wars affecting territories like Ukraine, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan, regardless of the cause, have taken away many lives and displaced populations. This has only perpetuated the poverty, inequality and suffering. The geopolitical conflicts are affecting progress made in achieving global social justice. As the Director-General correctly puts it, the broader effect of such geopolitical instability, coupled with increased public debt, has seen rising inflation, especially for essential commodities. Poor and developing countries have suffered the most. There is a need to bring the inflation pressure under control to protect workers' livelihoods. Despite having the non-discriminatory Convention and Recommendation in place, the global job gap index and the wage gap between men and women still exposes structural challenges and it continues to perpetuate the inequality. We call for a comprehensive change in the dynamics that cause gender-specific constraints and structural obstacles. This will call for wider implementation of Conventions 111, 156 and 183 to promote a transformative agenda for gender equality at work. We also support the cause to reform the governance system of the ILO, both at local and global level. We cannot continue with the same governance system that perpetuates exclusion, and thereby perpetuating inequality and helplessness, while expecting to attain social justice. As such, we support the call for ratification of the Instrument of Amendment to the ILO constitution, 1986, to enable us to move forward with democratizing the governance structure of the ILO. It is sad that two-thirds of ILO Member States have ratified the amendment and yet its implementation remains elusive and blocked by eight of the ten Member States of chief industrial importance. This situation is at odds with our values of democracy and social justice. Therefore, we call on countries that have not ratified to do so now for the good of all ILO Member States. To attain global peace and social justice, we continue to reflect on the ILO's founding principles: universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. The global challenges we face today, in our view, cannot be addressed through military confrontations but through amicable social dialogue mechanisms. As such, the ILO has to reclaim its status as a leading institution promoting global lasting peace and prosperity. The ILO, as the last defender and hope for lasting peace in a world that is drowning in conflicts, must advance social dialogue as most desirable in the peace process. Please let us drop the weapons and give social dialogue a chance. As we revive our aspirations to renew the social contract, we reaffirm the Declaration of Philadelphia: "All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity." Indeed, social justice remains an imperative and essential condition for universal and lasting peace. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Elias Shikongo

Employer (Namibia)

Mr President, esteemed excellencies, colleagues and representatives of both employers and employees, government representatives as well as distinguished guests, it is a great honour to stand before you at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference as a representative of the Namibia employers' organization, which is the oldest representative voice of Namibian employers and hence mandated to advocate the interest of all employers. Viewed from a global perspective, our nation is indeed a small jurisdiction but faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from economic, social, environmental, that are not only unique to our country but also resonate with our regional and global counterparts. For instance, and to put matters into perspective, our nation is currently grappling, as was alluded to by my minister, with a devastating drought which is also being experienced elsewhere in the region. This drought has had an adverse impact on our agricultural industry as well as local food production. Namibia is at the same time also on the cusp of entering the global oil and gas sector following recent discoveries of substantive oil and gas reserves which, as in the case of other countries who have had similar discoveries, promised not only major developments for our country but exposure and closer proximity and involvement in international energy forums. These developments, Mr President, taking into account also the recent implementation of what is referred to as a hydrogen-driven energy project, highlights the importance of Namibia's engagement with organizations such as the ILO as we navigate the complexities of our changing landscape. In today's complex and increasingly interconnected world, organizations such as ours, working towards a common goal, often face similar challenges. These range from advocating for environmental conservation, social justice, economic development. And thus the power of collective action cannot be overstated. Recognizing this, the NEF, which I represent, has embarked on various initiatives and is committed to fostering collaborations with like-minded organizations such as the International Organisation of Employers. It is in light of the above that the NEF, in line with its objectives as well as those of the Director-General as well as its workplan towards Vision 2030, has as an organization committed and set about several objectives towards an effective and efficient social dialogue and tripartite mechanism towards contribution to socio-economic developments of our social partners in labour and employment. In addition, and recognizing that social dialogue and the practice of tripartism between governments and representative organizations of workers as well as employers within and across borders is now more relevant towards achieving solutions and to building up social cohesion and the rule of law, the NEF identified several primary objectives which will include and will result in, amongst others, policy impact, enhanced collaboration as well as empowered organizations. In conclusion, Mr President, the NEF believes that by unifying our efforts as organizations we can amplify our impact and create a more favourable policy environment for our shared mission. The plea is, accordingly, for employers' organizations to come together, learn from each other, and advocate for positive change in our respective constituencies. I thank you, Mr President.

Mr Ravindra Dinkarlal Himte

Worker (India)

Respected Chair, distinguished participants, please accept warm greetings from Bharat, India. I, on behalf of my organization, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, and other friends from the trade union movement of India extend hearty greetings to the Director-General of the ILO for presenting his excellent report. The report speaks about the role of the ILO in economic and social dimensions across the globe in detail. It has offered guidance on how to make decent work a global goal and has rightly recognized the concerns of workers. Today, the needs of the masses are eclipsed by the greed of others. There is a close interrelationship between economic and social elements, and therefore a broad multidisciplinary, multidimensional perspective is essential for monitoring development. They respond adequately to the problems of the modern world, and multilateral fora bring together all stakeholders. Last year India hosted successful G20 and L20 meetings attended by 60 international delegates from 29 countries. The two major points that emerged with full consensus during the proceedings were the universalization of social security, and women and the future of work. And we are glad that the incumbent Brazilian presidency is carrying the issues forward. The Government of India has collected data of informal workers through the eShram portal. To date 296.2 million informal workers are registered on the eShram portal. The eShram portal is aimed at building a comprehensive national database of unorganized workers in the country and to boost the last-mile delivery of welfare schemes. Encouraging organic farming in the agriculture sector is a valuable step towards reducing biological hazards and promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. Bharat has the largest informal sector in the world with 93% of its working population. Hence any attempt to improve the informal sector in countries including India would mean transforming the whole national society. There is a gross mismatch between wages and share of profits. Multinational corporations are operating without respect for labour standards in various countries. The right to a living wage has to be recognized as a human right, as according to ILO guidelines. In the changing global economic and industrial scenario, protecting workers' rights and privileges has become a major challenge. So, we appeal to all governments and also employers' organizations to implement freedom of association in both public and private sectors to protect the workers' interests. This time mobilization of resources with regard to further assisting Member States in their efforts to promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work through universal ratification and those efforts must be increased. Today there is an urgent need to work in three dimensions, economic, social and environmental, for sustainable development to be evident in the form of sustainable enterprises, universal social protection, skill development, health and indeed strong social institutions. A large number of countries, including India, are making their best attempts to integrate SDGs into their national policies. It is high time for all trade unions to identify, plan and implement their roles under each SDG. And with these observations in my speech, with optimism of the peaceful growth, employment generation so we can make our world happier, more peaceful and more prosperous with the motto of 'One earth, one family, one future'. Let us be reasonable in conveying thanks to the continuous efforts of the tripartite functions of the ILO. I am sure that we will definitely explore more effective developmental pathways for the world of work in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Let us pool our collective efforts towards those objectives. Thank you all. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Aymar Kissengori Adzougui

Worker (Gabon)

President of the Conference, DG of the ILO, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I first of all would like to congratulate you, Mr President, for your brilliant election to chair our work. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the bureau. On behalf of the workers of Gabon, we would like to convey our greetings to the ILC and its participants. This conference is taking place at a time when Gabon, our country, is living in the hope of a new era where the rights of each citizen are respected and governance is just and fair. This era is stimulated by the new authorities that have issued from the liberation coup of the 30th of August 2023. DG, as representative of the workers of Gabon, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the very far-sighted and stimulating report that you have presented at this ILC, which is entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Your detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities does accord particularly with the realities that we are living in in Gabon and other countries. For over six decades the ILO is collaborating with the Government of Gabon, the organizations of both employers and workers as well as other stakeholders in order to promote decent work and social justice. Gabon has also benefited from various support from the ILO, capacity-building, advice and in the development of sectoral policies in order to promote the creation of employment, social protection and social dialogue. We have seen some intense activity this year with the ILO. In fact, in May 2024 the signing of the Decent Work Country Programme for 2024-2027 represents an important stage in our joint work. It takes into account the economy, the green economy, the access to quality social service, tripartite mandates in order to ensure social dialogue and the application of international standards without which the world of work would be without effect. This takes into account the permanent respect of the commitments that the tripartite stakeholders are taking part during the sessions (sic), and this in particular in a light of worldwide transformations. In Gabon, we recognize that climate change and the technical development represent major challenges for the labour market. DG, in the light of permanent insecurity, it forces us to act with more determination. On behalf of the workers of Gabon, I would encourage you to continue your efforts in order to set up a global framework which will meet these challenges. Your leadership is crucial in order to ensure that decent work and social justice remain at the heart of our global priorities. These priorities are in coherence with the national objectives as identified in the development of the transition, the National Plan 2023-25 as well as for the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. We are committed to continue close collaboration with the ILO to transform these challenges into opportunities and to ensure that we have a fairer and more sustainable future before us. I wish every success for the work of this session and thank you for your very kind attention.

Ms Fanny Sequeira Mata

Worker (Costa Rica)

Chair, ladies and gentlemen, we are grateful for this important and very brave report from the Director-General. It makes us realize that everything that is in that report points towards the renewal of the social contract. Indeed, it is a political and sociopolitical contract which has to become a constitutional framework, and its ideals are being destroyed by the problems that are in the world. There are many

contradictions in the model of development that the state has implemented in terms of human development and the welfare state. It is only possible to renew a social contract if, as a society, we can undergo a profound development model change. This means that the gaps and deficiencies of rights, inequalities, economic precarity and justice and social inclusion must be dealt with. The social contract is being destroyed in Costa Rica. It is revealing structural weaknesses of our democracies which are continually the object of fights for political power. Indeed, it is getting much worse. We need real political goodwill, and that has to be connected to the political responsibility of the entire society. But there is an emphasis on the main role of the governments as the administrators of the social contract. In Costa Rica there is a move towards autocracy and it is undermining the possibilities of social dialogue and tripartism. These are causing obstacles that are the result of the lack of political good will. The problems in terms of social and labour justice on all levels that Costa Rica is suffering from, as well as many other countries, is the fruit of the deterioration of a framework of rights and one of the main obstacles for the adoption of a new social contract to strengthen democracy. In 1998 the Declaration of the ILO stated that the annual review of the Declaration should be performed. This was once again repeated in 2022 for the universal ratification of fundamental Conventions which would contribute to consolidating the new social contract. In Costa Rica there are attacks against freedom of association, including collective bargaining and the right to strike. And without those rights there is no sustainable social contract that is possible. The latest governments in Costa Rica have not paid attention to the reiterated observations concerning the violations of Conventions 87, 98 and 135. It is practically impossible to be in a trade union in the private sector. Indeed, wages have been frozen for five years now and problems in terms of collective bargaining and the right strike remain. This is a true trend backwards in terms of democracy and standards in the country. Indeed, Costa Rica this year was once again on the list of 40 countries for CAS to analyse the problems in terms of trade unionism in the American continent. And in the American continent it was on the list of 24 countries. According to the prestigious report of the State of the Nation from 2022 and 2023, politics have normalized problems in terms of human development and the country has undergone huge problems and gone backwards in terms of its historical achievements for sustainable human development. This is proof that its democracy cannot promote it. It is a progressive abandonment of the Costa Rican social contract. Finally, we would like to repeat the need to count on a strengthened ILO with more commitments in order to revitalize tripartism and the international labour standards thanks to a social contract. This means that the Global Coalition for Social Justice is one of our aims, and that will allow the renewal and reinvention of social contracts across the globe. Thank you.

Mr Albert Emilio Yuson

Building and Wood Worker's International

It is an honour and pleasure to speak in this house: the house of labour. This is the house where the voiceless can speak and the unprotected workers can seek justice. The ILO is tripartite but it is not neutral. It is a bastion of workers' rights. My focus today will be on two countries: Saudi Arabia and Myanmar. One is rich and powerful. The other is poor but has powerful protectors. Neither protects fundamental human rights. Myanmar, on February 1, 2021, the military staged a coup. Trade union leaders were imprisoned and tortured, demonstrators were slaughtered and massive strikes were repressed. Many thousands of young people are conscripted into the military to fight

their own people and their own family. The military had seized power but could not capture legitimacy. The National Unity Government was formed by legitimately elected leaders and ethnic groups with trade union support. The NUG is the legitimate government of Myanmar people. Two ILO Commissions of Inquiry, two military junta. Never again. It is time to protect the Myanmar workers and the Myanmar people. BWI is joining the appeal to the 112th International Labour Conference to invoke article 33, implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and impose further sanctions to the military junta. There is no place for the Myanmar military junta in the house of labour. In Saudi Arabia there are no free trade unions. Labour reforms may have been adopted but little has changed. Working conditions are worst for migrant workers. 21,000 migrant construction workers are owed wages, waiting for justice for nearly a decade. The family of a deceased construction worker reported that, due to termination of food provision by the company, the withholding of his passport, he and his co-workers were forced to subsist on discarded food waste. Suffering from severe health problems, he eventually returned home in a coffin. Two migrant domestic workers from Kenya reported sexual violence. One was the victim of multiple rapes. Both returned to Kenya. They hope someday to be able to put their lives back together. BWI has filed article 24 to the ILO on representation against Saudi Arabia's violation of the Forced Labour Convention and the freedom of association. We urge the ILO Governing Body to urgently act on that submission and intervene to give justice to these migrant workers. FIFA will be considering a bid by Saudi Arabia to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup. There is a danger that they will accept the unacceptable. The ILO has drawn its power and credibility by fuelling the hope for justice and dignity through workers' rights. The world has found no better way to peacefully resolve conflict than freedom of association and collective bargaining. The rights are too often not protected and respected. However, they must remain our goal and aspiration. Thank you very much.

Ms Esther Lynch

European Trade Union Confederation

President, distinguished delegates, the ETUC is proud to have joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We are committed to play our part to renew the social contract because we can only build a just world together. The Declaration of Philadelphia states that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. And the Director-General in his report, 'Towards a renewed social contract', notes that the social contract is fraying. In Europe we are experiencing a social justice emergency. Even the fundamentals of a social contract are now put in question. Ideas of solidarity, the principle of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, of taxation of the wealthiest, of non-discrimination or protection of the most vulnerable, the right to asylum, even the right to unionize, these are all put into question. Workers are faced with increased job insecurity combined with a cost-of-living crisis that has lowered quality of life and has made the basics such as a home and food unaffordable for many. This contrasts sharply with the privileged few who have outsized power and influence, who refuse to pay their fair share of the taxes. And exploitation is all too present. The recent ILO report laid bare the scandal of obscene profits from forced labour in Europe that amount to more than €84 billion annually. And far-right forces are once again gaining ground. The European Parliament will now comprise a concerning minority who have a political project that is fully hostile to the social contract. These far-right forces exploit Europe's social justice emergency but offer no solutions for working people. And solutions are needed. There can be no doubt, no complacency. We need a renewed social contract to build hope and

cultivate justice everywhere, including in Europe. The ETUC vision for a renewed social contract is one that protects and promotes the inherent dignity of every worker, respect for the worker, respect for the work that they do, no matter what their job, no matter who they are, where they are from or who they love, a social contract that delivers a fair share of the profits to all those who contribute to its creation. It is a project of hope built on genuine social dialogue that recognizes the value of trade unions. Because let us be very clear, a renewed social contract cannot be built on union busting or attempts to criminalize trade unionism. The ITUC in their global report identified the deteriorating situation of trade union rights in Europe. The worst is Belarus where trade union leaders are in prison for many years in inhumane conditions. We call for their release, the dropping of all charges and full implementation of the Conference resolution on Belarus under article 33 of the Constitution. Because for the social contract to be stitched back together, we must stand together to ensure that the fundamental rights to freedom of association, the right to organize, collective bargaining, the right to strike established by the ILO are always respected, protected and promoted. This is the path to defending and reinforcing democracy in Europe and the world. President, the Director-General's report on the occupied Arab territories highlights the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. The ETUC restates our call to the EU to use all tools at their disposal to secure an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, adherence to the international courts' rulings, an increase in aid to UNRWA and for that aid to be delivered safely and urgently. The ongoing developments for the recognition of Palestine highlight a new momentum for the two-state solution and peace and security for Israel and Palestine. We condemn the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine that continues to cause loss of life, incomes, employment and livelihoods. For over two years trade unions in Ukraine have shown their resilience, relevance and bravery in representing working people in Ukraine. President, distinguished delegates, social partners, brothers and sisters, the ETUC stands ready to work in a tripartite manner to believe in peace, to foster peace, to build social justice and to work together for a renewed social contract.

Ms Haldis Holst

Education International

Chair, distinguished delegates. My name is Haldis Holst, Deputy General Secretary of Education International, the global union federation of more than 32 million teachers, academics and education support personnel. The ILO Conference this year takes place in the context of multiple wars, widespread human rights violations and a worsening climate crisis. Education is a key tool to promote peace, equality, prosperity and sustainability. Education transforms lives. But without teachers, education cannot live up to its promise. The Director-General highlights in his report the importance of inclusive, equitable and quality education and the need for strategic investments in the sector, including in teachers. It states that priority must be given to ensuring that all teachers possess the minimum qualifications required for their profession and that they benefit from decent working conditions. Qualified teachers are central to ensuring quality education, yet we are faced with a global teacher shortage. The world needs 44 million more teachers in primary and secondary education, and more still at other levels. Overworked and underpaid teachers are leaving the profession in droves, and young people are attracted to other professions with better salaries and working conditions. In 2023 the United Nations Secretary-General rang the bell and convened a high-level panel to provide policy recommendations for countries to transform the profession. EI

applauds the ILO for its commitment and hard work leading the secretariat that supported the panel. The panel adopted 59 recommendations to attract and retain teachers, recognizing that the shortages are “exacerbated by the continued attrition of teachers, the use of contract and unqualified personnel to fill teacher gaps, the lack of professional development and support, inadequate working conditions and salaries, and the enormous hardships faced by teachers working in crisis contexts”. The panel calls on governments to invest in the profession. It stresses the need to invest in competitive salaries, secure employment, decent working conditions, inclusive and safe working environments, quality professional development opportunities and teacher support. Importantly, the panel also insists that governments engage in social and policy dialogue with education unions, including through collective bargaining. It highlights the necessity of coordinated and institutionalized social dialogue and stresses the need to respect existing international standards. The ILO Convention on the right to organize and bargain collectively celebrates its 75 years, but unfortunately it is still far from globally respected. Many teacher unions are under attack and many government teachers do not enjoy the right to form a union or to bargain. Furthermore, the panel invites governments to establish national commissions, including teacher organizations, to tackle the teacher shortage through policy dialogue. The ILO now has a responsibility to ensure that the high-level panel’s recommendations are implemented globally. This means, first, raising awareness of the recommendations, ensuring that every government knows about them and understands the recommendations. Second, advocating for adherence to the recommendations and supporting governments with technical guidance to take concrete action. And third, holding governments to account to implement the full set of recommendations. Accountability is key. We call on the ILO to play a role in developing a new, up-to-date international instrument to monitor and push for implementation. EI believes that an international Convention would be most effective to uphold the status of the profession as it is a legally binding mechanism. The high-level panel’s recommendations provide an important road map to tackle the persistent and increasing teacher shortages around the world. We urge the ILO to hold countries to account to implement them. It is the only way to uphold a student’s right to a qualified teacher.

Ms Margarita Usova

General Confederation of Trade Unions

Distinguished President, distinguished participants at the ILC, I am speaking on behalf of the General Confederation of Trade Unions. Our organization brings together eight States of the Eurasian region and 22 international sector trade union associations. This represents about 30 million workers. The confederation was established in order to consolidate the actions of affiliated organizations to protect social, labour, professional, economic and other legitimate rights and interests of workers, the rights and guarantees of trade unions to help strengthen international trade union solidarity. The General Confederation of Trade Unions welcomes the initiative of the Director-General of the ILO, Gilbert Houngbo, to create a Global Coalition for Social Justice. We recognize the need for collective efforts to speed up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Decent Work Agenda. The confederation considers very important the proposal made by the Director-General in his report ‘Towards a renewed social contract’. In our view, decent work and social justice are inalienable elements of sustainable development. Social justice remains an imperative and necessary condition for the establishment of a universal lasting peace. During the 112th

ILC, we attended the Committee on the Application of Standards which examined the cases in our region and throughout the world. Of particular importance to us was the special meeting of the standards committee on Belarus because the federation of unions of Belarus is part and parcel of our trade union. As a result of the review, we would like to note the following. The ILC was created to harmonize social and labour relations throughout the world. In our view, it is still very relevant to pursue this target. We feel that the examination of any issue, together with the conventions of prevailing and various countries, the most important thing is to set up a good political and social dialogue. Given the political relations between countries, they change all the time, and it is particularly important that these changes do not become a reason to stop the dialogue on social and labour issues. It is important to continue them both within the State and at the international level. We believe that only mutual respect, the aspiration to listen to other parties of the tripartite dialogue and a movement towards each other will lead us to the renewal of social justice and ensure decent work. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Andres Blas Roman

Organization of Mutual Entities of the Americas

Delegates from the governments, employers and workers, as the President of ODEMA I am grateful for having the opportunity to address once again this honourable ILC as a representative of American mutualism. This means that we are confirming our adhesion to the objectives of this organization. We would like to express our support for the Director-General's initiative to include international organizations such as ODEMA in the Global Coalition for Social Justice. This means that joining our strengths will reduce inequalities in the world of work and promote global social justice. In line with the report, we believe in social justice and we are fully convinced that the mutual system will achieve this. It will be effective. The innumerable and wide-ranging services from which families benefit are a transcendental factor to reach a life in conditions of freedom, dignity and equal opportunities. These services cover basic needs, but even more than that they also promote well-being and the well-being of our communities, allowing all individuals to enjoy full development. Mutualism is a pillar of the solidarity economy. It is one of the ways that can lead to associations that allow us to seek fairer conditions of life for all. The mutual system does not only represent an alternative economic model. It is also a philosophy that promotes cooperation, solidarity and equity. The world is increasingly interconnected and it is essential that these values be reflected in our policies and labour practices. From its very birth our organization has shared the idea that actions must be directed towards the rules of an international framework of integration with great focus on strengthening social justice thanks to public and private policies which allow access to essential services for all. Particular attention must be paid to vulnerable groups, protecting and empowering these people throughout their lives. Our organization also fully agrees with what the Director-General has stated concerning the renewed social contract by means of an in-depth and efficient social dialogue. This idea is the very foundation of a human-centred system, and it responds to the changes in the world of work that are caused by technological innovations, demographic changes and climate change. This viewpoint integrates literally at the philosophy and the practices of mutualism. It points to the fact that there is no situation that affects the human being that mutualism does not pay attention to. This is something which is also an inspiration for the ILO. It is fundamental to recognize that social justice is not an abstract concept. It is a tangible reality that must be constructed on a daily basis by

means of our actions and decisions. By belonging to the Global Coalition, ODEMA will have the opportunity to collaborate on actions and initiatives that aim to efficiently promote social justice, joining hands with others in order to achieve the objectives of this conference, such as the care economy and the fundamental principles and rights at work. The active participation of ODEMA in this coalition will take place in this 112th ILC, but it will also strengthen us in our commitments and it will increase our impact in order to fight against the lack of opportunities and generate more inclusion and more equity. To conclude, I would like, on behalf of American mutualism, to express our commitment to continue integrating and following the objectives of the ILO, and we call the world to action and solidarity for a human-centred development. Thank you.

Mr Matías Cremonte

Asociación Latinoamericana de Abogados Laboralistas

On behalf of the Latin American association of lawyers, I would like to welcome the Director-General's report. We share the hope for a return to a social contract that is based on a society with full employment and decent wages with social rights and freedom of association. Since 80 years we have been following the Declaration of Philadelphia's objectives, but now we are seeing many attacks against these philosophies in Latin America. The region has the most inequalities in the world, with extreme wealth living side by side with extreme poverty. It is not the consequence of a natural disaster. It is the neoliberal policies that have caused this. Regressive reforms are constant. Once implemented, it is difficult to turn back, such as has been seen in Colombia, Chile and Brazil. Governments and companies are justifying them. They present them as the only way to create formal work. But it is not true. It is a huge failure. At the ILO in 2015 there was a study that was launched to analyse the social impact of the crisis of 2008. 63 countries were analysed, and in no cases was a regressive labour reform successful in terms of employment or social or economic progress. Indeed, every time the situation became worse. And now these labour reforms are not creating employment and they are not formalizing the economy and they are not increasing wages. It is the exact opposite. The aim should be to create jobs and improve protection, not weaken it. Argentina at the moment is considered a laboratory in liberalism in terms of a self-regulated market. At the moment at the National Congress a new labour reform is being discussed to modernize legislation, but in truth it is a return to the 19th century. How can you explain that the elimination of sanctions for companies who do not formalize labour relations is not a failure? There is great informality now in Chile. In Chile it is now 50%, in Paraguay over 60% and in Peru 70%. The Ministry of Labour has lost power and it is now a simple secretariat that benefits companies. At the moment we are seeing great changes in the workforce, more precarity, and the social contract is now simply becoming a labour contract that is not respected. If employers fire workers on the basis of ethnic groups, race, religion and so on, this only means that they have to pay a minimal amount. This is a serious problem. Today nobody can return to their job after this. The employer is not being made accountable and it is generating greater precarity. Moreover, the possibility of justified sacking of workers for participating in strikes is a true violation of Convention 87 on the freedom of association. Collective bargaining is being weakened when it is most needed. There is very high inflation, and the state is guaranteeing that companies are gaining ground at the expense of real salaries. The labour movements in Argentina are not only simply watching what is happening. The trade unions are calling for general strikes, for massive mobilizations to express social discontent. This week there will be another one so that the draft law is

not approved and to demonstrate that the working classes can face neoliberalism and neofascism. The Argentinian labour reform goes against the international labour law, and that is why we are denouncing it here, and we call on the ILO to take this into account. Thank you.

Mr Julio Durval Fuentes

Confederation of Latin American and Caribbean Public Workers

I am honoured to be able to address you as the President of CLATE today. I welcome the Report of the Director-General to renew to the social contract. It is a great challenge, taking into consideration that there is a daily increase in poverty and there are huge problems in terms of inequalities. The wealth of five people on the planet has doubled while over 500 million people have become poorer. Extreme wealth is directly correlated with extreme poverty. Now if we focus on social dialogue as a tool and as a practice to renew the social contract, then we must identify the concrete obstacles that we are facing, whether they be in the public sector or not. We also welcome the decision of the President of Colombia to push forward a labour reform that is a positive move. Also, all the Conventions that have been agreed upon are fundamental. In Guatemala, for example, the Government is persecuting trade union leaders and trade unions. In Uruguay, on the other hand, reforms have been undertaken and they are not moving forward in order to improve labour protection in cases of illness. Indeed, instead of this, people have their wages removed from them for the days that they have not worked. This is an antidemocratic movement, and this has taken place in Ecuador as well. What is happening in Argentina is worthy also of mention because the collective agreements are not being respected and the Government is moving towards a regression in terms of labour rights, which also forces women to work until ten days before they give birth. It is also trying to eliminate all progress made in terms of equality, in terms of gender, and it is extending the probation periods for work. It is not allowing its workers to participate in trade union work, and even worse, it is moving back towards the 19th century in which it is creating labour legislation that will force people to be independent. We firmly believe that there will not be any possibility for a social contract that is not based on social rights. There will not be a social contract without a state that is based on solidarity, that is democratic, that focuses on participation and that focuses also on sharing and distributing wealth. That is why it is fundamental that we focus on public debt and eliminate austerity programmes. Programmes such as artificial intelligence and technology must focus on improving society. For decades now Cuba and Venezuela and Nicaragua have suffered from sanctions and from blockades, and there are also problems in terms of wars and genocides, such as the one from which the people in Palestine are suffering. We want a planet that can be good for future generations. This is not a utopia. It is an urgent call for action to move forward and give an opportunity for this future. There cannot be a social contract that does not guarantee social peace, and we will remain witnesses to the failure of governments against our rights. Thank you.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Thank you. That brings us to the end of our list of speakers for this plenary sitting. Before closing this meeting, I want to inform you that the results of the votes for the

election of the Governing Body for the period of 2024-2027 have now been published on the Conference website and the ILO events app. My sincere congratulations to this new Governing Body. I thank you all for your contributions and your patience and your solidarity. Our plenary sitting now is declared to be closed. Thank you once again. Get some well-deserved rest.

► Tuesday, 11 June 2024

Mr Boris Zürcher

Government (Switzerland)

Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Switzerland welcomes the Report of the Director-General in this economic and social environment that is constantly changing, because all players are affected. Both nationally and internationally, these players must adapt to new priorities and focus on social dialogue in order to be able to collaborate on the choice of social and economic policies that are consistent. Switzerland is committed to supporting a strong and credible ILO which is respected for its expertise in terms of social justice. The implementation of fundamental rights contributes to the creation of decent work and to the promotion of sustainable companies. The fundamental values of the ILO's mandate must never be neglected and are more important than ever. These values act as the guiding light for the ILO's action, even when the economies in our societies are in profound movements of change and the world of work is impacted. However, without renewed political goodwill to collaborate and reach these goals, without renewed trust in tripartism, it will not be possible to attain the objectives of the Declarations of the ILO of 2008 and 2019. Now we need a renewed pact with the social partners and with society in general, and this is even more important than a simple renewed social contract in the strictest sense of the term. We need better social cohesion. Technological progress, an economy which creates decent and sustainable employment, demographic evolution, the fight against poverty and inequalities, the convergence of policies and so on, all pose challenges which require our common efforts and joint efforts in order to attain social justice. This means that collaboration between the ministries of labour, the economy and finance must be strengthened. This is something which must be reflected in the various international institutions. Here the ILO can play a crucial role as a driving force. Switzerland believes that the promotion and the strengthening of the fundamental principles and rights at work are a priority. This is also discussed at this conference. The renewal of the social contract must also contain governance standards. The two most important Conventions in this respect are Conventions No. 122, unemployment policy, which is now 60 years old, and Convention 144 on tripartism. Switzerland also believes that actions must be undertaken to create sustainable companies that create decent jobs. Counselling and guidance must be given in order to create active policies on the labour market and on the training market so that the young can get work. Both nationally and internationally these will only be implemented and possible if we intensively practise social dialogue. And this is why we must think about how we can strengthen social dialogue so that this may be universally recognized as the most efficient way to establish rules and policies that are consensual. Social justice, tripartism are all fundamental for governance in order to promote social justice. Switzerland believes that the labour market must respect economic, ecological and social aspects. If this is not done, it will lead to problems. The idea of a new standard mentioned in the Report of the Director-General must be thought through. It must not be established only by the ILO alone. It must be established in association with other international organizations who have an economic, social or environmental mandate. Switzerland also advocates for the consistency and coherence of policies within the ILO and multilateral institutions, and we need a social pact that focuses on all this. Thank you very much.

Mr Samir Majoul

Employer (Tunisia)

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to be here today, and I congratulate all the members for their new positions and their successful elections. I would also like to thank the Director-General for the report for a renewed social contract. This is fundamental nowadays. Moreover, the establishment of a system that is focused on accountability is necessary. It must not be a system in which it is all about power relations. So the renewed social contract is crucial because we are witnessing ethical problems nowadays in society. This occurred during the pandemic, but there is also the issue of digital technologies, climate change and AI. We believe that the global renewed social contract must be based on shared values. Social pacts must be constructed in line with production and work ethics that respond to vital needs for employers and workers. They must be able to enjoy a decent position in society. Moreover, the self-employed must be integrated into the formal economy because this will have a positive impact on the economy and on revenue. A social pact is indeed a crossroads between various stakeholders. As a result, we must be aware of the role played by the private sector in terms of added value, in terms of services, employment and so on. It plays a role in terms of social protection. The private sector's role is not always recognized, and we need to recognize the private sector's role because it creates wealth and ensures productive and sustainable and decent work. We believe that progress will be based on a favourable environment to investment. There must not be barriers to projects. Funding must be available in order to allow the institutions to do their work. The lack of social justice creates chaos, on the state levels too. This can be seen in the movement of illegal migration in the Mediterranean, for example. It has indeed become a terrible problem. Every day there are victims of illegal migration, and if international relations were more balanced, then this could be avoided. There should be more justice in terms of international cooperation and organization. The problem at the moment is that we can see that illegal migration in African countries towards the north of the Mediterranean is a problem. Ladies and gentlemen, every single session at this conference deals with the situation of the occupied Arab territories. The international community must focus on stopping the occupation because such an occupation will not allow decent work, peace or social justice. Today, we are witnessing a collective war that is affecting our brothers in Palestine. It is also causing an exodus. Traditions and international humanitarian law are being violated. Women and children are being affected, places are being bombed where the population is taking refuge, and humanitarian aid cannot reach the people, and now it is fundamental that the State of Palestine be recognized.

Mr Michail Shmakov

Worker (Russian Federation)

Distinguished President, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia fully shares the key message of the conference documents that the emphasis on equitable multilateralism as the basis of sustainable development opens up perspectives for the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work as the driving force behind all social and economic progress. The new multi-polar world with its various centres in all regions is taking on an ever clearer shape. At the same time, the progress of globalization in its old, outdated forms is coming to

its logical conclusion. In fact, we are talking about the gradual collapse of the entire global paradigm. The main challenge today, therefore, is to align the work of the ILO in the emerging multi-polar world in such a way that the ILO values are shared and supported in each of the newly emerging centres. This is not just another challenge for the ILO itself. It is a question of its further development and relevance. Indeed, we are talking about the prospects for the very existence of the ILO. As it was correctly said by Mr Gilbert Houngbo, the Director-General of the ILO, the global integration of human rights and international labour standards is particularly important. This is the basis for reducing inequality and creating conditions for economic growth. We fully support the report's call for integration. In order to ensure this approach, we have categorically to exclude any politicization of the ILO's work or its fragmentation for the benefit of certain economic blocs. Moreover, the UN in its present form could cease to exist altogether, as it happened in the case of the League of Nations. The ILO is much older than the UN. It survived the League of Nations which ceased to exist with the outbreak of the Second World War. The ILO has weathered all the storms of history because of the imperatives of labour peace in any corner of the world, however significant they may appear to be. The ILO should be depoliticized in terms of raising its immediate bloc interests. Our organization is called to work on any of the poles of the new multilateral system. Then its work experience and capabilities will be in demand everywhere, as they are in demand in my country. Recently, at the initiative of trade unions, the principle of social partnership was introduced in Article 75 of the Russian Constitution. This includes political, economic and social solidarity. We see Russia as a social state whose policy is aimed at providing everyone with a decent way of life regardless of gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs. The Programme for a Fair Economy is adopted at the congress this year. This includes a form of fair economy for all workers. Workers should not be impoverished. Our programme is aimed at the basis of protection of workers and it is very important and part and parcel of a fair economy. The protection of the life and health of workers is an integral part of a fair economy and it represents an inalterable role in raising the wages. Strong trade unions, responsible employers, a government that respects social work and sovereign interaction are the guarantee of decent labour. We have to ensure that we have only responsible employers. Strengthening the international solidarity among workers remains an essential tool in its struggle for justice, and this in the face of a new multilateral world. We are ready to make a worthy contribution to this fight. Thank you very much.

Ms Nkeiruka Onyejeocha

Government (Nigeria)

Good morning, everybody. Mr President, I bring you warm greetings from the good people of Nigeria and congratulate you on the occasion of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Director-General, I also would like to appreciate you. I applaud the Office for the excellent work and choice of the theme of the 112th Session of the report. The theme emphasizes the interdependence between individuals and societies of our respective responsibilities for social cohesion, economic resilience and political stability. This theme is in tandem with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's led administration which is a transformative policy thrust aimed at repositioning Nigeria as a prime global investment destination. The agenda is hinged on the core pillars 4-D Diplomacy Strategy centred on promoting democracy, driving economic development, harnessing Nigeria's demographic potential and engaging with the diaspora community. The eight priority areas of the agenda aim to pursue economic

prosperity for the country through food security, poverty eradication, economic growth, job creation, access to capital, inclusiveness, improving the security of life and property, rule of law and the fight against corruption, which will help build a more just and equitable society reminding both Nigerians and the global community that Nigeria stands ready to embrace the future and conduct business in line with international best practice. Distinguished delegates, the Nigerian Government has provided an enabling environment for social dialogue with the tripartite constituents to advance social justice and has solicited tripartite-plus cooperation to align with the Government's agenda in the labour sector to promote workers' welfare and boost national productivity. The Federal Government has made giant strides in the following areas: implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme III; ratification of the ten ILO fundamental Conventions, and most recently ratified four additional Conventions, including Convention 190 on violence and harassment; revival of the National Labour Advisory Council, Nigeria's highest tripartite consultative structure; tremendous progress in the review of our labour laws; establishment of job centres across the country; upgrading skill acquisition centres across the six geopolitical zones of our country; establishment of migration resource centres as part of the Government's commitment to providing good governance for labour migration; reducing child labour to the barest minimum by promoting universal basic education and encouraging school enrolment of minors, especially for the girl child; granting direct loans to farmers in the agricultural sector geared towards food security; and provision of portable water, energy and massive road infrastructure, just to mention but a few. Furthermore, the Federal Government is currently negotiating, through its tripartite committee, to review the national minimum wage as part of its efforts to promote decent work for workers in both the public and private sectors. The Government also recognizes skill acquisition as a viable strategy for youth empowerment and job creation and has identified the informal sector as the driving force of economic growth in most developing countries of the world. As an intentional strategy towards achieving the goals of the Renewed Hope Agenda, the Federal Government launched the Labour Employment and Empowerment Programme, LEEP, on Thursday, 25th April 2024, with the fundamental vision to create jobs by training and equipping 2.5 million persons every year within the next four years with requisite entrepreneurship skills. The efforts of government towards promoting entrepreneurship will revamp Nigeria's economy and reposition it on the path of steady growth, enhance job creation and reduce unemployment and insecurity. Finally, Mr President, Director-General and distinguished delegates, we must continue to work together to mitigate the challenges of technology and its related threat to the world of work, while charting a more productive, resilient, equitable and more inclusive society for future generations. Thank you, and God bless you.

Mr Dato Awang Haji Ahmaddin Haji Abd Rahman

Government (Brunei Darussalam)

Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and good morning. My sincere congratulations to Mr Alexei Buzu, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, for being elected as the President of the 112th Session of the ILC. Our appreciation and gratitude also go to His Excellency Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, for his comprehensive report concerning the social contract and for organizing this year's inaugural forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. It is indeed important to renew the social contract in the world of work, aligning with the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work.

This renewal underscores the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers, highlighting the need to adapt to a dynamic economic and sociopolitical environment. A new social contract is crucial for fostering social progress and must be anchored in promoting decent work, social protection and equal opportunities. Brunei Darussalam remains dedicated to safeguarding workers' rights and well-being while fostering a resilient and adaptable workforce. To date, Brunei Darussalam has ratified three fundamental Conventions. Today, we are pleased to announce the ratification of ILO Convention No. 187. This ratification reflects our determination to create safe and healthy working environments, therefore fostering the well-being and productivity of our workforce. It underscores our dedication to promoting decent work, ensuring fair labour practices and safeguarding the rights of workers in our nation. Our Employment Order 2009 exemplifies our commitment to the principles of decent work, social justice and economic progress, reflecting the balanced approach promoted by the ILO. The Employment Order mandates a written employment contract, fostering clarity and mutual understanding between both workers and employers. Our phased implementation of the minimum wage since July 2023 ensures a smooth transition and adaptability for businesses and workers alike, guaranteeing fair compensation for all workers. The Employment Order also regulates working hours, ensuring fair and balanced working conditions for all. We also provide comprehensive maternity leave benefits, granting working mothers up to 15 weeks of leave, equivalent to 105 days, underscoring our dedication to supporting family welfare and gender equality in the workplace. Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Brunei Darussalam has consistently prioritized ensuring justice and fairness for all workers in addressing workplace disputes. We provide a structured approach to handle grievances, ensuring that workers have a voice and achieving equitable resolution between workers and employers, in accordance with the ILO's emphasis on social dialogue and justice. This underscores our dedication to respecting and protecting the rights and interests of all stakeholders at all times. Before I conclude, I would like to extend our gratitude to all for electing Brunei Darussalam as a titular member of the Governing Body from 2024 to 2027 representing ASEAN under the Asia Pacific group. This marks another milestone since we joined the ILO in January 2007. We look forward to engaging in and fostering strong partnerships to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. In conclusion, we recognize that the social contract is an ongoing commitment that necessitates continual nurturing and strengthening. It requires a holistic governmental approach, and Brunei Darussalam is committed to furthering our efforts in shaping an inclusive and enduring social contract. By fostering collaboration across sectors, we aim to cultivate an environment conducive to equity and prosperity for all members of society. Thank you.

Mr Alexander Shokhin

Employer (Russian Federation)

Distinguished President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Russian employers I greet all the participants at this 112th Session of the ILC. The topic covered in the report of the DG of the ILO, Mr Gilbert Hounbo, on 'Towards a renewed social contract' is particularly relevant. This report builds on the ILO's platform to build on the approaches proposed in 2021 by António Guterres in his report 'Our Common Agenda'. We fully agree with the ILO DG that social partnership is the main manifestation of the social contract at work. This is true for both its global and national levels. The main mechanism for the implementation of this approach is the system of agreements to regulate social and labour relations as well as the international and

country labour standards developed in this spirit of tripartism. More than 30 years ago the social partners in the Russian Federation first developed and concluded a general agreement between the representatives of workers, employers and the Government. In April of this year the procedure for signing the next, already the 16th, general agreement was finalized. This document was created taking into account the specificities of the current socio-economic development of the country. First of all, there is a shortage of staff due to various reasons, new technological challenges including digitalization, robotization, which requires an increase in labour productivity and for new requirements for professions and qualifications. In order to address the whole range of tasks in the labour sphere in our country, the Government, with the participation of social partners, is developing the national project 'Personnel'. It is aimed at solving several mutually linked tasks such as the continuing training of workers, cutting back on labour costs, the widespread introduction of the principles of a lean workforce, the utilization of labour reserves, including the removal of legal restrictions on employment of certain categories of the population, and effective regulation of migration. Social partnership, which incidentally became a constitutional norm in our country since 2020, has been noted with satisfaction. We note that this idea is echoed in the ILO DG's report which notes that strong employers' and workers' organizations are the foundation of democratic decision-making. The effectiveness and legitimacy of social dialogue depends on whose voices and interests are reflected at the negotiation table. To address this issue, we have developed proposals to strengthen the system of employers' associations in Russia, encouraging socially and economically significant organizations to join these associations. This, we believe, will enhance the contribution of business to social and economic development. The activities of companies are recognized and supported at the state level. The National Responsible Business Leaders award was set up by large Russian companies that comply with the principles of responsible business and comprehensively disclose information. In April of this year the first award ceremony was held. We suggest that the DG considers the possibility of recommending to the ILO member countries to organize similar events based on the principles of ESG and sustainable development principles. We are ready to share this method of work. On behalf of Russian employers, I would like to wish all participants at the 112th Session of the ILC very fruitful work and success in their individual countries. Thank you.

Mr Henrik Munthe

Employer (Norway)

President, Excellencies, dear friends and colleagues, I would like to thank the Director-General for his report. It is a truly comprehensive report, covering a wide area of topics. Many of the analyses presented in the report are of high quality but, seen from an employer's perspective, one could have wished that the essential role of the private sector had been highlighted to a larger extent. Not only the workers but also the companies faced tough times during the pandemic. The efforts from the companies' side deserve to be recognized. To improve the situation in the labour market, it is necessary to create a conducive environment for sustainable enterprises. A diversity of thriving companies is important for a fruitful climate with mutual trust. In this respect, social dialogue, both bipartite and tripartite, is of utmost importance. Social dialogue comes in many forms, based on different political, historic and economic circumstances. Coming from Norway, my background is from a country where we have had intensive social dialogue between strong social partners for more than 100 years. Collective bargaining and collective agreements on all levels are widespread. But this cannot be

taken for granted. “How can we keep our system also for the future?” is of great concern for everyone involved in social dialogue. For sure there are dilemmas facing us. How should we tackle them to advance? The employers in Norway strongly hold the view that the agreements must contribute to creating stability and secure the competitiveness of the private sector. The model we often refer to as the pacesetting model, i.e. that the sector most exposed to foreign competition negotiates first and sets the level for the rest of the agreement, is a cornerstone in our system and should remain so. Furthermore, the system should be flexible in the way that it takes into account the situation for the single company, not only for the sector level. We are in favour of a model that combines bargaining at sector and local level. Collective agreements must be balanced and not be of benefit only for the workers and their unions. In our system, like other countries, we have a peace obligation, meaning that as long as there is a collective agreement in force there can be no strike or other forms of industrial action. This is, of course, an incentive for the companies to enter into negotiations and agreements. Often, collective agreements are conservative and static. It has proven very difficult to delete provisions that have become part of the agreement. The result is that parts of several agreements are outdated. It is not an easy task to convince companies to sign on to an agreement they think belongs entirely to the past. We have a challenge in modernizing the agreements in cooperation with the trade unions. The companies’ need for employees with new skills makes it paramount to find new ways of drafting collective agreements. We cannot simply copy what has been common in the past. New sectors and new skill requirements must result in new and more modern agreements. We need a system that secures an acceptable distribution of the income among the employees, that honours also skills not only age and seniority. As you will have understood, we have challenges keeping our system alive and kicking in Norway, even if we have had widespread and trust-based social dialogue since the late 1800s. However, if all three parties (the workers, the employers and the government) can adjust to new needs, I think the social partners will be in a good position to tackle the difficulties that will hit us in the future. By doing so we can contribute to renewing the social contract as described in the report from the Director-General. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Pearnel Charles Jr.

Government (Jamaica)

President of the Conference, Director-General, members of the ILO Governing Body, ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, a pleasant good morning and greetings to you from the Government and people of Jamaica. Nearly fifty years ago Jamaica’s musical legend Bob Marley immortalized in song the words of the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I who declared in his speech to the United Nations in 1963 that “until the philosophy that holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, everywhere is war. And until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race, there is a war.” In this powerful statement, they warned the world and urged us to take action then, as our Director-General is urging us to take collective action now, to create societies where people are treated fairly and have equal opportunities to shared prosperity, free from discrimination. Jamaica, in our unwavering commitment to these fundamental principles, continues to champion a people-centred approach to implementing the renewed social contract through regional cooperation with CARICOM and international collaboration with the ILO and other partners. Like other developing countries, Jamaica

needs support to truly achieve sustainable development. As we strive to achieve our goals, we have prioritized our people and taken action to protect the most vulnerable among them. We have increased the national minimum wage twice since 2023 by an amount of 66.7%. We have recorded our lowest unemployment rate of 4.2%, lower than the 5% global average in 2023. We have ramped up skills training and removed all tuition fees in our national training agency, increased pension support up to 76% and instituted a new social pension programme for elderly persons not receiving any government benefit as well as recording one of the highest post-pandemic labour participation rates of 62.6% in the year 2023. These achievements are in keeping with the Prime Minister's, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, emphasis on the urgent need to increase productivity to further drive growth. As such, we in Jamaica are advancing the development of a national productivity policy and bringing stakeholders together this month for the first national summit on the Future of Work and Productivity. We are piloting a new electronic work permit system, and we have developed an innovative transformation project to streamline technological efficiencies in our ministry and improve service delivery. For the first time, we have also included persons with disabilities in our migrant work programme and we have launched the new 'I Am Able' campaign to increase awareness, improve access and integrate our persons with disabilities across all sectors in our country. Today we achieve another first for Jamaica with the launch of the largest and most robust social security programme called the Social Protection for Increased Resilience and Opportunity, the SPIRO project. This project, with the support of the World Bank, aims to accelerate the transformation of our systems for greater efficiency and it will also introduce the first ever unemployment insurance scheme, among other benefits, for our people. Tomorrow we will all recognize World Day Against Child Labour, and for Jamaica we are proud to be the first country in the Caribbean to implement the International Labour Organization's child labour risk model, reaffirming our commitment to the work of Alliance 8.7 and the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean to eliminate child labour in all of its forms. Now, fundamental to our social contract is our commitment to advancing decent work, and in particular the recognition of freedom of association and collective bargaining. Our strong tripartite partnership facilitates constructive social dialogue and it is the bedrock of harmonious industrial relations in our country. This collaborative approach is what accounts for Jamaica's rapid recovery from the impact of the pandemic and also now being far advanced in the bold overhaul of our public sector compensation system. Colleagues, in closing, Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to the goals and objectives of the Philadelphia Declaration and we call on all Member States to actively participate in the efforts to build a world where labour rights are respected, social security guaranteed and the dignity of every worker upheld. One love. Thank you.

Mr Adriano Rafael Moreira

Government (Portugal)

Chair, Director-General of the ILO, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is with great honour that today I am able to address you at this ILC. The ILO continues to play a crucial role in the promotion of a safe working environment that is centred on human dignity. Now its mission is more relevant than ever more, especially taking into consideration the challenges that we are confronted with in this period of insecurity involving digital technologies, climate change, economic problems and conflict. In this context, I would like to congratulate the Director-General for the report 'Towards a renewed social contract', which offers us an analysis that is in-depth of the challenges and opportunities

in the working world. Portugal believes that his report is an essential guide so that we may address issues such as social inequality, climate change and technological transformation, namely the changes that we are predicting in view of artificial intelligence. Portugal has also adhered to the Global Coalition for Social Justice because we believe that this initiative will promote international labour standards and will strengthen social dialogue. It will focus on the creation of jobs, on universal social protection and social justice. The world is undergoing great changes. The changes in the labour market and the new forms of labour relations mean that we need to renew the social contract, ensuring that social justice is a basis for long-lasting peace and shared prosperity. Let me now give you a few examples of the Government of Portugal's programme. It is focused on tripartism and has established the following policies. Our aims are, for instance, to relaunch true social dialogue with our social partners; promote a process of dialogue in terms of occupational safety and health that focuses on agreement that is discussed with the social partners and that follows a multiannual period; to focus on collective bargaining without specific conditions, namely on matters such as legislation and types of work, mechanisms for mobility, probation periods, working times and the like; to promote work and employment in all forms and increase productivity, especially increased opportunities for young people on the labour market. Moreover, the Government aims to actively promote equality between men and women at the workplace. The Government is also focussing a great deal on vocational training, namely in strategic areas such as the digital economy. And there is also a focus on fair wages, working alongside our social partners so that we can increase the minimum wage and the average wage in terms of gains of productivity. Now I wish to focus also on the importance of Portuguese speaking countries in the world. Portugal has collaborated with the ILO to give support to the CPLP countries, i.e. the Portuguese speaking countries in the world, namely in terms of projects to fight poverty, capacity-building and in terms of vocational training. Let me now give you the example, for example, of the adhesion of the Government of Cabo Verde's access to the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and Timor-Leste's adhesion to other projects on social protection. The session this year includes crucial discussions such as discussions on the care economy and the fundamental principles and rights at work. These are discussions that we consider to be fundamentally important. In Portugal we have made a great deal of progress in terms of regulation and a framework for the care economy, starting by identifying it as being the third sector of the economy in the country. This is crucial for a social economy. But there are also other aspects that need to be identified in this care economy. Currently, Portugal is undergoing great changes and we are holding a debate on such areas of work. We have a long way ahead of us in order to reach a consensus to guarantee the universal rules for decent work and justice in terms of wages. Portugal has taken on its responsibilities and is honoured to be able to participate in a standard-setting commission to adopt the new international standard on the protection of workers in terms of biological hazards. We also consider that the regulatory mission of the ILO is crucial, and Portugal has also focused a great deal on decent work conditions and fair wages in the country. Now Portugal has made a significant step in this context because it has ratified Convention No. 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment at work. These instruments are essential because they are crucial for the future of the world of work and it means that we will also be focusing on a post-COVID-19 inclusive, sustainable and human-centred world of work in the country. Portugal will continue to respect international law and international humanitarian law. To conclude, it is with great satisfaction that Portugal reiterates its commitment to the fundamental pillars of the ILO's agenda. We share the common

objectives for sustainable development and for social justice and dialogue, and we want to permanently promote work and guarantee the rights of workers. Thank you.

Mr Phan Dung Mai

Government (Viet Nam)

Mr Director-General of the ILO, distinguished ministers, heads of delegation, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to Mr Director-General of the ILO, honourable ministers, Excellencies and distinguished delegates. Distinguished delegates, advancing social progress and justice is the aspiration of all people and countries, including Viet Nam. The Government of Viet Nam identifies that it is our objective and mission to promote social progress and justice. By allowing all people to benefit from growth outcomes and be rewarded equivalently for their effort and have equitable access to developmental opportunities and resources, social progress and justice are recognized by our government as a fundamental factor of sustainable development. In order to advance social progress and justice, Viet Nam's Government is consistent with the strategy which puts our people at the centre and harmonizes economic growth with socio-culture development and environmental protection. From such a perspective, Viet Nam highly appreciates and welcomes the ILO Director-General's report on social contracts as well as initiatives to address injustice, inequalities and instability still existing in the world. Distinguished delegates, Viet Nam's Government has always put a high priority on promoting social progress and justice. That orientation is incorporated in all our socio-economic development plans and policies as measures to ensure prosperous and stable lives for people, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, to realize the goal of 'no one is left behind'. Consequently, Viet Nam determines improving social protection and the social welfare system as the crucial task in its socio-economic development. Specifically, the Government has set out that by 2030 Viet Nam will have, one, developed a sustainable, progressive and equitable social policy system. Two, further improved the material and spiritual lives for people. Three, developed modern, comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable social protection policies. Four, ensured access to basic social services, including healthcare, education, accommodation and information services for people, particularly ones with poverty or adverse circumstances. Five, developed a flexible, efficient and internationally integrated labour market to promote sustainable employment. And six, improved the management of social development to promote the protection of human and citizen rights. Distinguished delegates, on this occasion it is my honour to announce that in November 2023 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam promulgated the resolution on continuing to innovate and improve the quality of social policies in the new context and the following action programme to implement the resolution. Currently, Viet Nam is amending the Social Insurance Law to expand the insurance coverage. The amendment is planned to be adopted by the National Assembly in 2024. The drafted employment law is also under revision to further promote decent and quality work, develop human resources and strengthen the labour market. Suitable provisions of international employment laws and treaties are also considered to be incorporated in the drafted law. Thanks to all these efforts, Viet Nam has gained several socio-economic achievements. Notably, by the first quarter of 2024 Viet Nam's labour force has reached 52.4 million people, the average income of workers was almost USD\$350 per month and the unemployment rate was 2.24%. Distinguished delegates, on this occasion, I would also like to reaffirm our

commitment to the universal values of the ILO. We are committed to further improve the labour code and other relevant laws and policies to better address future employment and socio-economic challenges, including challenges that threatens the progress of social justice. Particularly, it is our consistent policy that we will not sacrifice social progress and justice and environmental protection for pure economic growth. In conclusion, I wish Mr Chair, Mr Director-General, ministers and all distinguished delegates good health and success. I thank you.

Ms Fathimath Zimna

Worker (Maldives)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim. Mr President, distinguished delegates, I stand before you today as the Worker delegate from the Maldives, representing the voices of those who toil tirelessly to build up our society. Our shared commitment to a fair and just world at work binds us together, transcending borders and oceans. The Philadelphia Declaration, which we commemorate the 80th anniversary of, remains just as relevant today as it did 80 years ago. The fundamental rights encapsulated in the Declaration, such as the freedom of association and expression, social justice and equality, are the cornerstone of a fair, just and equitable society. The freedom of association and collective bargaining are not mere privileges. They are the lifeblood of democracy within workplaces and communities. When the working class can organize, negotiate and collectively voice their concern, we build resilient societies that thrive on fairness, equity, accountability and shared prosperity. Yet, the attacks on the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining persist, and this is profoundly troubling. Nevertheless, as trade unions we remain steadfast, united and resolute in defence of these essential rights to face and overcome all challenges and opposition. Our commitment to foster a fairer, more equitable world for everyone is a commitment to uphold democracy. The labour movement stands firm in defending the core principles enshrined within the governing principles of the ILO. Mr President, despite positive global trends in average wages, millions of workers worldwide continue to earn wages lower than the cost of living, perpetuating poverty. Even so, I commend the ILO Governing Body's agreement on institutionalizing and operationalizing living wages. This is a significant stride forward to uplift human dignity. It increases the possibility of the working class to afford basic human necessities such as healthcare, education, housing and adequate nutrition. It is a step towards building resilient and productive societies. Mr President, migrant workers contribute significantly to the social and economic development of the Maldives and many other countries worldwide, yet it is extremely distressing that migrants are often working in precarious and vulnerable conditions. Numerous reports highlight issues such as fraudulent employment practices, non-payment of wages, deception, violence and various other human rights violations. These are and will remain deeply alarming matters. Addressing these requires transparency in the labour governance and urgent legislative and policy reforms. In essence, this requires genuine honouring of the international labour standards, integrated in the establishment of a fundamental tripartite labour governance negotiated by tripartite mechanisms. The impact of climate change on the people of Maldives goes far beyond sea level rise. We are more immediately affected by prolonged crises and increased flooding, coastal erosion and extreme weather events such as heatwaves. The working population and their families are the hardest hit, suffering from extreme heat, spikes in vector-borne diseases, compounded by weather induced disruptions of essential services such as healthcare, clean water, transport and

education. These challenges collectively reduce the productivity of our communities. Thus, I reiterate our call for the integration of climate resilience into labour policies which need to be negotiated within the tripartite frameworks at global and national levels. Additionally, the global climate financing framework must prioritize mitigating the impacts of climate change on livelihoods by promoting green jobs, skill development, sustainable practices and adaptation measures to protect both our planet and our workforce. In order to ensure that the decisions and commitments which are made within the policy frameworks of the ILO and the UN processes are [vgr INAUDIBLE 62:54] and transcended to working people and their families, we need to increase political commitment and strengthen the enforcement mechanisms so that labour and human rights are not compromised with impunity. We need governments to be responsible and accountable to lead and champion the cause of social justice. I call upon all social partners to engage in meaningful social dialogue and consultation for the advancement of social justice. I thank you.

Mr Yiannis Panayiotou

Government (Cyprus)

Mr President, Mr Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, it is an honour for me to address the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. The report and the initiatives of the Director-General discuss and promote a dual concept which is fundamental to the fabric of our societies, underpinning our collective existence and our shared aspirations: renewing our social contract based on social justice. We strongly embrace these efforts, and our active participation in launching the Global Coalition for Social Justice is indicative of our dedication towards this direction. For decades and centuries and thousands of years, people around the world are organizing societies, developing communities and establishing institutions to escape the hazards of extermination and the risks of enslavement. People are seeking protection and safety, justice and honesty, peace and prosperity within their states and through their constitutions. But, unfortunately, today every next election process highlights the growing distance between the demands of the citizens and the offerings of the political institutions. This deepening gap is forming a rough and harsh landscape where hope for conventional change and organic improvement is gradually limited and abolished as pointless and vain. Disruption and destruction become ends in themselves, and although aiming towards the punishment of the political establishment and the political elites, they end up to the self-harm of those in need of social protection and social support. A new social contract is an existential ultimatum for the revitalization of the welfare state and the guarantee of the wellbeing of our citizens in a globalized economic context of intense business competition. Acknowledging the value of our human capital, we are placing people in the centre of every political initiative, and through a new social contract we must aim to regain their trust for the years to come. Our government is part of a tripartite alliance between the state, the employers and the employees, and together with our social partners we practise social dialogue, we reach collective agreements and we serve the public interest. The positive outcomes of our mutual efforts can be game-changing for rebuilding the missing trust to political institutions if we promptly address everyday challenges and practically improve the everyday lives of our citizens. And I am very optimistic because I am aware of our commitment towards this direction to provide a comprehensive framework for fair and sufficient wages and pensions, within conditions of full employment and improved demographic characteristics, as our

flagship political initiatives. The way forward in contemporary policymaking is renewing the social contract and embedding social justice. And we will walk forward together, despite the difficulties and the challenges, because we are sharing a common vision for the future where social justice is an imperative and essential condition for universal and lasting peace between nations and within nations. Thank you, Mr President.

Mr Adama Kamara

Government (Côte d'Ivoire)

President, first of all the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire would like to address to you our heartiest congratulations for the excellent conduct of our work and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate also the ILO for the perfect organization of the 112th Session of the ILC. Côte d'Ivoire would also like to thank the Director-General of the ILO for presenting his report 'Towards a renewed social contract', through which it underlines the need to renew and to take on further the fundamentals of our social contract for greater equity and inclusivity in our responses to the present and future challenges. This report also emphasizes the growing inequalities due to globalization, rapid technological changes and environmental crises. It particularly invites us to have a greater cooperation between the governments, the enterprises and civil society in order to develop inclusive and durable policies putting the human being at the heart of its development. This approach is in step with the vision of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr Alassane Ouattara, which promotes a fairer and more united society which leaves no one behind. Internationally speaking, we have ratified ten fundamental Conventions of the ILO. So Côte d'Ivoire has indeed ratified ten fundamental Conventions of the ILO and is continuing its succession process to the other international instruments, confirming therefore the ambitions of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to ensure the dignity of workers. The commitment of our country is reflected in its accession to Alliance 8.7, to which it is vice-chair, as well as the Global Coalition for Social Justice aimed at further action, dialogue and advocacy. Nationally speaking, I am pleased to recall that the Government has continued its development fields through national plans for development and sectoral programmes aimed at social and youth questions. So the implementation of the two cycles of the social programme has enabled us to make tremendous progress. In particular greater access to electricity, drinking water, education, high-quality care at the least possible cost and to decent work. Moreover, through the reinforcement of a social contract aimed at greater solidarity, important reforms aimed at greater social protection have been initiated. In particular the regime of additional pensions for civil servants, social system for independent workers and those working in the informal sector and extending, of course, the universal health coverage, which at the present time includes 13 million people. At the end of the 2024 the objective is to achieve 20 million people of a population of 30 million. This progress has been made possible thanks to inclusive and constructive social dialogue which Côte d'Ivoire has been able to obtain tripartitely. The second Truce for the public sector, the increase in the minimum salaries in the private sector in less than ten years are further examples of this. We have also continued very laudable initiatives in developing a third cycle for the country programme for the promotion of decent work up to 2027. This major governance tool makes it possible to address priorities such as building people's capacities to take advantage of the opportunities offered by a changing world of work, promoting more effective and participative governance and accelerating the structural transformation of the economy through decent work. President, Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its commitment to building a

more promising social contract to advance social justice for all. In this respect, my country calls on all stakeholders to show greater solidarity. We are talking about active solidarity, and this is where the Global Coalition for Social Justice comes into its own. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Mr Piotr Ostrowski

Worker (Poland)

Mr President, distinguished delegates, I have an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the delegation of workers from Poland, which consists of representatives of three trade unions: the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions, the Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarność" and the Trade Unions Forum. The Report of the Director-General concentrates on the social contract as an institutional instrument to provide social justice through decent work for all. The document does not refer to the social contract as such but goes further, proposes the idea of its renewal to be successfully delivered by the ILO considering present and future challenges. We do agree that we cannot renew the social contract without institutional means which are at the disposal of the tripartite partners. However, the mere existence of the social dialogue bodies is not enough. The question is whether the tripartite partners recognize social dialogue as an important institution of co-shaping the socio-economic policy and whether they have every confidence in themselves and their role in the dialogue. In our opinion, the quality of the practice of tripartism is one of the key challenges for Poland. Lack of trust contributes to polarization, making compromise, consensus and creative problem-solving seem impossible. The ILO's principle that work is not a commodity remains as relevant as ever as well as understanding that tripartism and social dialogue are the most effective and legitimate tools for shaping universal minimum standards. Emphasis must be placed on the need for cohesion and cooperation, which is crucial to building confidence. To succeed in this process, all partners, trade unions in particular, need to be included and respected. In this context, we do welcome the statements of the current Polish Government, and the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy in particular, that social dialogue with social partners will be a fundamental element of all policies. We do believe that opinions of trade unions are going to be considered as important by the current government. We also welcome the Polish Government's announcement to join the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Ladies and gentlemen, collective agreements and procedures of collective bargaining at all levels remain the crucial element of social dialogue, also promoted and protected by the ILO. Unfortunately, Poland belongs to the European countries with the lowest level of collective agreement coverage and the lowest number of collective agreements at the sectoral level in particular. Moreover, we received alarming and unacceptable information that existing collective agreements are going to be terminated. This, for instance, is the case of Polish Post, the company which employs over 60,000 workers. Instead of weakening, we need strengthening of the collective agreements and social dialogue. Instead of terminating the existing agreements, we need their further adoption, in the public sector in particular. Thus, we urge the Polish Government to strengthen tools for effective collective agreements, in line with recommendations of trade unions, by using not only the EU directives but also the ILO legal framework. Social justice cannot be recognized without an access to labour justice. This is why we call on the Polish state to ensure an effective enforcement of and compliance with national laws and respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work. The state has a role to play in providing adequate and well-functioning dispute resolution mechanisms and

grievance procedures. On one hand by accessible and efficient labour courts, on another hand through well-financed and effective labour inspection, equipped with proper tools of sanctions and executions. Inclusion and ability to build bridges makes the social contract possible to happen. Inclusive governance based on social dialogue at all levels is critical for achieving our contemporary social and economic objectives. Thank you for your attention.

Ms Thea Lee

Government (United States of America)

Colleagues, I am delighted to be here today to reiterate the strong support of the United States for the International Labour Organization and its mandate to promote decent work and social justice. The Director-General's report notes all societies share a common foundation: a timeless and universal yearning for social justice, freedom, dignity, economic security and equal opportunity. This is as true today as it was at the founding of this organization. We have seen extraordinary progress and technological innovation over the course of the last century. At the same time, the last few decades have revealed cracks in the foundations of our global economy: a financial crisis shook the middle class, a pandemic exposed the fragility of our supply chains, a changing climate threatens lives and livelihoods, and democracy is under attack in many countries. President Biden often notes we are at an inflection point in history where the decisions we make today will affect the course of our world for the next several decades. This moment demands a new consensus, one that will build a fairer, more durable global economic order for the benefit of people everywhere, especially the precarious, the under-served, the unseen. Director-General Hounbo in his report asks, "How do we tackle the injustices, inequalities and insecurities facing us today?" The answer is clear. By grounding ourselves in the key values noted in the Declaration of Philadelphia that labour is not a commodity, freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress, poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere, and partnership between governments, workers and employers is essential. This is a particularly special year for reflecting on these values as this conference adopted the Declaration of Philadelphia 80 years ago, noting the war against want must be carried out with unrelenting vigour within each nation and by continuous international effort in partnership with representatives of workers and employers. We need this same unrelenting vigour which we collectively highlighted 80 years ago as we look towards the Second World Social Summit in 2025 and beyond. In the United States, a guiding principle of our domestic and international engagement is a commitment to worker rights, including the right to a free and fair choice to join a union and to dignity in the workplace. Because we know when workers are harassed, discriminated against or attacked anywhere in the world or compelled to work against their will, it is impossible to separate that harm from the products they make that are shipped and sold all over the world. When workers are shut out of economic opportunity based on gender, race, religion or sexual orientation or gender identity, it diminishes opportunity for us all. When workers cannot unionize, democracy suffers. Strengthening the enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining is essential to making progress on eliminating child labour, forced labour and discrimination and ensuring safe and healthy working environments. In November, President Biden signed the Presidential Memorandum on Advancing Worker Empowerment, Rights, and High Labor Standards Globally. It lays out five lines of effort to proactively integrate and elevate workers' rights around the world. First, we will engage governments, workers, unions, civil society and

the private sector to protect and promote respect for internationally recognized labour rights. Second, we will hold accountable those who threaten, intimidate or attack union leaders, labour rights defenders and labour organizations. Third, we will strengthen our own federal government's capacity to advance workers' rights abroad. Fourth, we will step up our due diligence and enforcement to ensure that our own trade agreements and supply chains protect workers and that we are not importing goods made with forced labour. And, finally, we will work with multilateral institutions to promote labour rights and standards. The ILO, with its unique tripartite structure, has been and will be a key partner in achieving decent work for all. The United States commits to continuing to work closely with the ILO, with governments, with workers and employers across the globe at all levels to realize this vision. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Mohamed Rahman Swaray

Government (Sierra Leone)

Mr President, Director-General of the ILO, Excellencies, ministers, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I bring fraternal greetings from President Julius Maada Bio and the Government and people of Sierra Leone. I thank the organizers for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival here a few days ago. We congratulate the ILO for organizing the 112th International Labour Conference event amidst the global economic and geopolitical security challenges. We note the Director-General's report on the theme 'Towards a renewed social contract', which foregrounds the nature and impact of trust deficits among governments, citizens, and global and state institutions. In Sierra Leone, my government has been re-elected to a second five-year mandate with a sharper focus on delivering human capital development which assures social justice, empowerment and a better quality of life for citizens. In simpler terms, the focus is on feeding the mind, feeding the body and taking care of the whole of the citizen through free, quality education, achieving food sovereignty and delivering affordable and accessible healthcare services for the population. This sits well with progressive governance reforms including a Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act that mandates 30% legal minimum in representation, participation and employment for women, and tackling vulnerabilities worsened by lingering socio-economic impacts of the global pandemic and other geopolitical downturns. Sierra Leone is establishing a social protection agency to coordinate social protection responses and extend social protection to the informal sector in accordance with ILO Convention 102. We thank the ILO for its technical support. Furthermore, we are far advanced in implementing a national health insurance scheme that includes persons with disabilities and other vulnerable demographic groups. Distinguished colleagues, President Bio has acknowledged our youth bulge as a potential bomb, boon and bane. However, our focus is on leveraging the dividends of a youthful population. With educational reforms that have increased enrolment, retention and completion alongside intensified vocational training, our government has committed to creating 500,000 jobs in the next five years. Working with the ILO, we are currently sourcing funding to implement Phase 2 of the country's Decent Work Programme, targeting the creation of 100,000 jobs in the next three years for women, youth and persons living with disabilities. I call on this august gathering to support our drive as it helps forestall the global threats of irregular migration. Excellencies, our government has enhanced tripartism by institutionalizing the social dialogue forum to promote inclusive and effective governance, to foster a shared understanding of the challenges faced by employers, workers and the governments, and to provide a forum

for the implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and other relevant Conventions and Recommendations. Sierra Leone has recently ratified nine Conventions and one Protocol and also reviewed our obsolete labour laws in a bid to strengthen the legal framework and protect the rights of workers and employers. Excellencies, Sierra Leone has migrant workers in many GCC countries and the Middle East. Sierra Leone wishes to add its voice to the global call for fair treatment of migrant workers, wherever they are, because the rights of migrant workers are also human rights. Let me close by thanking Mr Gilbert Houngbo for his effective leadership and guidance as we look forward to working more closely with the ILO to collectively address the current and emerging challenges facing the world of work. On that note, I thank you all for your attention. God bless.

Mr Michalakis Antoniou

Employer (Cyprus)

Dear Chairperson, on behalf of the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation, I would like to extend congratulations to the Director-General and his office for this year's report titled 'Towards a renewed social contract'. Although noble in its intentions, we have some concerns whether a new social contract is the most effective way to address the challenges outlined in the report. We are also sceptical whether a global approach is suitable, considering the limited application of existing standards. Uneven economic development, uneven institutional efficiency as well as the diverse cultural and social considerations between countries and within societies suggest that the best way forward is through a more targeted approach with measurable outcomes. Establishing sustainable enterprises, incentivizing work through social protection system reform and investing in skills development and productivity improvements may be more suited to help meet the social aspirations outlined in the report. Despite our reservations, Cypriot employers are ready to join a constructive discussion for a new social contract that preserves continuity and stays faithful to the ILO's mandate and mission while retaining the existing social contract's focus on governance, prosperity creation and solidarity. To achieve tangible and positive outcomes, the new social contract must address the challenges facing the world of work today, such as the employment impact of green policies or the new forms of work that are manifesting due to increasingly accessible digital technologies. Failing to adapt and adjust the new social contract to accommodate contemporary challenges will result in a less relevant and less effective outcome. Considering how it can help facilitate social and structural reform, it is equally important remaining dedicated to social dialogue. Although it may not be the most expedient means of deliberating an issue, in the context of securing a renewed social contract with the broad scope and outreach envisioned by the Director-General in his report, social and tripartite dialogue is the most appropriate mechanism to reach a consensus. Social dialogue is appropriate for discussing complex topics both at international and national levels. At national level, my federation, the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation, was an active participant to the tripartite negotiations that led last April to a Memorandum of Understanding between social partners regarding the way forward for the revision of the national strategy for the employment of third-country nationals. The existing strategy was approved by the previous government in early 2023 but helped meet the needs of our fast-growing economy only partially. Dear Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen of the plenary, dear colleagues, in the past ten years the Cypriot economy went to hell and back. First, we faced a financial crisis where private deposits were used to rescue our banking system from collapse. Then we had to

implement a harsh but necessary reform programme agreed with international lenders. The moment we thought the worst was behind us, we faced head on a global pandemic, and we all know how that went. At no point did we cower or lose hope, keeping faith in our partners and in our institutions. Social partners, as needed, made painful concessions, and within ten years' time we went from debating layoffs to debating how to bring foreign workers to cover the needs of our economy. As far as Cypriot employers are concerned, our commitment to social dialogue remains unwavering. Thank you for your attention.

Ms Cyrene Waern

Worker (Sweden)

Mr President, esteemed delegates, as the delegate of the Swedish trade union movement and representative for the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, I note with sadness that we live in dark times where democracy is receding rather than advancing. Union representatives are accused of being extremists when representing workers' legitimate interests. In countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Belarus, Ecuador, Guatemala, the Philippines, Eswatini, Tunisia, China, Iran, and many more, union representatives are imprisoned, tortured or even murdered, and on both Belarus and Myanmar we have resolutions under article 33. Trade unionism is not a crime. It is not extremism. It is a fundamental human right. Too many governments and companies in the world facilitate union busting, violation of civil liberties and denial of the right to organize and to collective bargaining. However, in today's world, as democracy is decreasing, every organization needs to step up to contribute to the democratization of the world. Armed conflicts are ongoing in Ukraine, in Gaza and in many other States, and civilians, many of them children, women and workers, are severely affected. In my own country trade unions are facing cuts in development cooperation funds, and our possibility to support the creation of strong democratic trade unions in different parts of the world is affected. When democracy is attacked, it affects us all. The trade union movement has an important role in contributing to democracy building. Women's rights are deteriorated in several countries. One recent example being Argentina where the Government erodes the rights of women and sexual diversity by closing the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity, seemingly reducing policies against gender-based violence to a mere bureaucratic decoration. Crises, whether economic or armed conflict or other, should not be paid for by workers. Governments and big companies need to use economic gains from good times to get through tough times and keep skilled workers so as to be prepared for growth after the crisis. Remember, as it has been mentioned many times today, labour is not a commodity. We must protect and promote fundamental rights everywhere. Only by doing so can we achieve peace and prosperity. And in a world where autocracies increase and democracies decrease, we need to join efforts more than ever to defend fundamental rights. Again, trade unionism is not a crime. Trade unionism is not extremism. Trade unionism is peace, democracy and engagement for a better future for all. So focus needs to be on a just transition to meet the challenges of, above all, climate change. The foundation of the ILO, social dialogue, must guide us towards a greener world, respecting all fundamental principles and rights for workers. A just and fair democratic country will not engage in armed conflict, so by promoting decent work, the recommendation of the ILO contributes to social justice and equity. Last year I delivered the Swedish trade union movement's message to this forum, and I repeat it this year: every worker deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion or socio-economic

background, independently of where you live in the world. On behalf of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees, I express our profound solidarity with the workers of Palestine. The illegal occupation must end. An immediate cease-fire in Gaza must be achieved. Supplies of food and medicine must be delivered to secure the lives of Palestinian refugees in Gaza. A plan for reconstruction of infrastructure, homes and vital institutions must be put in place. We reaffirm our support to international forces that tirelessly continue to work for a lasting and peaceful solution: a two-state solution. We call on Member States of the ILO to follow the example of Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Spain and recently Slovenia by recognizing the state of Palestine. Thank you.

Mr Steven Humphrey Mac Andrew

Government (Suriname)

Mr President, colleague ministers, representatives of the social partners, a good morning to you all. We have taken good note of the Report of the Director-General and thank him for his reintroduction of the concept of the social contract. This concept is introduced with the objective to achieve the goals of the ILO, which have become more relevant over the years. In particular, the need to have social justice in our society is currently a crucial one. We agree that social contracts are of utmost importance. Therefore, in Suriname we are negotiating another tripartite agreement after the historic first one which was signed in November 2021. The structure of the tripartite dialogue process has been modified in order to ensure a more efficient execution of the agreement. I wish to point out, Mr President, that Suriname is also currently in the middle of the implementation of its third Decent Work Country Programme, and I immediately wish to thank the ILO, in particular the decent work team and Office for the Caribbean for their unwavering support and valuable technical assistance. Mr President, we agree with the Director-General that climate change is indeed having a profound impact on our labour markets and putting social contracts under pressure. The transition to a more sustainable future will need the creation of new green job opportunities, but it can indeed cause social and economic turmoil by the loss of certain jobs and the decline of some businesses. Suriname is now preparing the establishment of a National Just Transition Commission in order to have a comprehensive policy to cater to the needs and implementation possibilities of Suriname. A positive point in this regard, Mr President, is that our institutions within the system of labour market administration have recently proved that they are able to execute active labour market policy interventions through skills programmes at the national level. We also believe, Mr President, that adequate labour protection is an integral and crucial part of the social contract. Suriname recently approved the ratification of four ILO Conventions. These are related to the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, No. 131; social security, No. 102; maternity protection, No. 183; and labour inspection in agriculture No. 129. The President has already given the order for the publication of these approved ratifications and soon, after the publication, the ratifications will be registered with the ILO. In this regard, but also in the context of the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme, Suriname again thanks the ILO for its intensive technical assistance to conduct a social protection expenditure review with broad participation and ownership of a wide range of state and non-state stakeholders. A crucial next step was the development of a national social protection strategy, which will ensure an upgrade of the social protection system in Suriname. The DG also mentioned the advancement of democracy at work as part of the social contract, and I am pleased, Mr President, to

indicate that Suriname has already submitted a draft law before parliament which is focusing on social dialogue at the level of the enterprise. However, it is good to point out that even though Suriname subscribes to social dialogue and tripartism, we do believe that elected governments who are trying to bring about development in their respective territories should not be put in a position that they cannot rely on promised support of the ILO, due to contrasting views of some social partners, because this might jeopardize democratic processes in Member States and the ILO should not entertain this. Suriname has also witnessed a surge of informality, and the Government of Suriname is currently seeking the establishment of a National Commission on Informality as part of the implementation of its third Decent Work Country Programme. Mr President, I wish to conclude by wishing the newly elected Governing Body of the ILO much success with its work during its tenure. I thank you.

Ms Anousheh Karvar

Government (France)

At a time when crises are shaking the world, France feels closer than ever to the International Labour Organization and to the standards on which it was built, to the standards it continues to build and its essential supervisory mechanism. Our country is working in favour of this valuable standard-setting edifice. We are the second State to have ratified most ILO Conventions. Convention No. 190, whose fifth anniversary we are celebrating this year, recently came into force, and the process of ratifying Convention 155 is well underway. As a result, France is on the way to regaining its place among the countries that have ratified all the ILO's fundamental Conventions. We welcome the involvement of the DG of the ILO in the preparation for the 2025 World Social Summit. Because of its mandate and its tripartite nature, the ILO is the reference agency for the protection of social justice, the protection of social rights and the creation of productive employment. The ILO must play a leading role in the DG's decision to devote his report to the new social contract, which is called for by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 'Our Common Report'. I would like to thank the DG for having organized, in the context of the Conference, a world summit and its exchange with the summit's two co-facilitators, Philippe Kridelka and Omar Hilale. We would like to reiterate France's unwavering commitment to these values. These values are the major conditions for peace and justice. This commitment to multilateralism is shared by the French Government, of course, but also by our constituents, which is why we have decided to draft a tripartite contribution to the ILO's work in order to promote food for thought ahead of the Social Summit. I am therefore proud to present to you today the result of the work, a symbol of fruitful social dialogue. For the French constituents, this new social contract must enable us to respond to the three major challenges of our time: democratic, digital and ecological transitions, whose implications for existing challenges, inequality and poverty, are enormous. We feel that this new social contract should enable us to reaffirm joint and universal values for the human being to ensure a balance between the social and economic and environmental dimensions of globalization, to propose a common horizon for the coming few years and to mobilize all the stakeholders, governments, social partners, enterprises and actors of civil society. In order to respond to these challenges, our French constituents have identified several cross-cutting priorities to put an end to persistent informality, to improve conditions of work in the supply chains, to ensure gender equality, to ensure high-quality social protection for all the workers, to ensure full productive employment and to guarantee access for all to high-quality public services. Our actions should be guided by four

cardinal principles: to build through tripartism and social dialogue; to strengthen the coherence of actions, and here we welcome the Global Coalition for Social Justice, a few days away from its inauguration; to rely on the law as represented by ILO standards, principles and Declarations; and to evaluate the results of the summit. The summit is a major opportunity to overhaul our social contract, an opportunity that we must seize together. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms Corina Ajder

Government (Republic of Moldova)

Dear Chairs, esteemed delegates, I am proud to be here representing my country, Moldova, in this conference again. This past year we made important strides, tackling informality, strengthening institutions, boosting worker protection. Yet, as I stand before you, it is impossible not to recognize that for over two years our neighbour, Ukraine, continues to be under attack. Moldova stands firmly with Ukraine and with all Ukrainian workers. Many of them found a home in Moldova. Allow me to share some of their stories. Tatiana, a refugee from Odesa, is now a librarian in the Anenii Noi District Library. Marina from Nikolaev has found a job in the same library, helping with maintenance. Viktoria has joined the Department of Social Assistance, Youth and Family Protection as a physiotherapist in the mobile team providing essential support to people with disabilities in the district. These examples are moving and encouraging, but many other workers are still trapped. War devastates economies, displacing millions from their homes and livelihoods. It strips away the dignity of workers, forcing them into unsafe conditions and pushing them into the informal economy. It undermines self-worth as individuals struggle to find stability and purpose amid chaos. We should not forget their struggle. Let us strive to make their worries our own, working side by side to achieve social justice. This is the way to uphold the spirit of the Philadelphia Declaration. Dear delegates, over the past year Moldova persevered on the path of reforms. We set out to break through stagnation and determine to initiate a fresh start in every area. One year ago, the employment agency placed around 8,000 workers per year on the job market. Today the number grew by over a third, helping both citizens and refugees find stable and rewarding employment. One year ago the labour inspectorate found just 80 cases of undeclared work per year. Since last June our labour inspectors found 800 cases and legalized half of them, more than in the last seven years combined, a great step towards formalizing our economy. I want to acknowledge our inspectors' great efforts. Since we met last year we worked with social partners, successfully increasing the minimum wage by a quarter, and ratified ILO Convention 190. Important steps to promote decent work for everyone. Just a few years back European integration seemed a distant and, frankly, unrealistic dream. Today Moldova and Ukraine are both EU candidate States. Provided that we work hard, we are confident that EU accession is within reach for this generation. When I first joined the ILC, three years ago, holding the ILC presidency seemed beyond our grasp. Yet, a week ago I proudly witnessed my colleague, Minister Buzu of Moldova, appointed president of this prestigious event. Dear delegates, the Conference is an opportunity to return to the fundamentals and reconnect with our shared mission. It reminds us that, beyond the pressures and concerns that fill our daily lives, our work is about something far more essential. It is about human dignity, self-worth and the economic freedom that employment provides. In these difficult times, the Conference also reminds us that all of these values are at risk. Our conviction remains undiminished. We believe there is a bright future for our democracies and our workers. We believe our country belongs to

the European family and we are not afraid of hard work. Let me use this stage to recommit to give our absolute best to make this vision a reality. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Ignatius Baffour Awuah

Government (Ghana)

Your Excellency the President of the session, permit me to stand on the earlier protocols. I wish to join previous speakers to commend the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO for their reports. The Government of Ghana associates with the contents of the reports as we join hands to navigate the complexities of today's world of work. Social contracts between governments, workers and employers have always been an anchor of sustainable development. However, the unprecedented challenges posed by technological advancements, demographic shifts, climate change and geopolitical tensions have put in jeopardy the benefits governments derive from social contracts with their people. Today, we must renew our social contracts to advance sustainable development that leaves no one behind. Our renewed social contracts must embrace diversity, ensure inclusivity and promote social cohesion. We must create avenues that promote access to fair employment opportunities and adequate social protection systems. Ghana has taken substantial strides in promoting inclusive employment opportunities for all its citizens. Through interventions such as the National Employment Policy, Social Protection Policy and the National Youth Policy, the Government of Ghana is transforming the lives of its people with focus on the youth who are the future. Ghana's Labour Act, which is being reviewed, will also provide additional protection for all actors in the world of work. The ILO has been instrumental in the review of Ghana's Labour Act by offering both technical and financial support throughout the process. On this august occasion, the Government of Ghana reiterates its profound gratitude to the ILO as this gesture reinforces our commitment to the promotion of tripartism and social dialogue. We are confident that the bill, when passed into law, will deal comprehensively with the varying decent work deficits that characterize this sector. Whilst issues of child labour, forced labour, irregular labour migration and unfair labour practices will be addressed more comprehensively, provisions will also be introduced to cater for the digital economy. This is necessary considering that artificial intelligence is causing a shift in how we work and the types of jobs organizations are engaging in. We must recognize that AI will not displace labour but complement it to enhance productivity in competitive ecosystems. The Government will leverage AI and institute the appropriate regulatory frameworks to maximize its benefits and improve decent work in the world of work. The Government is also investing heavily in education and skills development in response to the changing world of work. Digital technologies are at the forefront of this transformation to enable the workforce to keep pace with the changing work landscape. These investments will seek to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability to an increasingly digital and dynamic economy. Furthermore, the Government is implementing various policies and programmes to facilitate a just transition to an environmentally sustainable economy and society. We are partnering with the private sector and multinational enterprises to maximize the benefits of a plethora of opportunities in Ghana's green economy towards decent work creation and sustained economic growth. In conclusion, Mr President, permit me to reaffirm Ghana's commitment towards a renewed social contract where effective partnerships and cooperation will be central. Collectively, we will overcome the challenges facing labour markets, promote inclusive growth and create a better future for all. Thank you, and God bless all of us.

Mr Daniel Ysaú Maurate Romero

Government (Peru)

Director-General of the ILO, Alexei Buzu, President of the 112th Session of the ILC, delegates, I would like to wish you a good day to begin with. Now the Government of Peru welcomes the tripartite delegations that have come to this 112th ILC. Let us begin by reflecting on some of the indicators or events that are occurring in the world. There are 700 million people living in poverty. 181 million of these people are in Latin America. In my country we have 9.9 million people living in poverty, approximately. This is very difficult. They have difficulty in accessing basic services such as education, healthcare and others. This is an abhorration against human rights in the world. On the other hand, we have over two million workers in the world. 13 million people work in the informal labour market in my country. They do not have a guaranteed minimum wage and they do not enjoy social benefits. Informality and unemployment are highly problematic for all societies. Moreover, child labour, forced labour, lack of opportunities, juvenile delinquency and political manipulations are all scourges in this world. I fully adhere to Gilbert Hounbo's reflections. Since 1919 and since the foundation of the ILO, many events have occurred in the world. As we say in my country, a lot of water has run under the bridge. The current setup in the world is very different to when the ILO was founded. It is a good opportunity right now to think about a renewed social contract, and I would now like to repeat what the Director-General has said. Social cohesion is under pressure. Political polarization is becoming more and more problematic. Many people believe that the system is turning against them, and that should not be the case because nobody should be left behind. This is a true reflection of what many people believe. The current systems are not resolving the population's problems. Many people are living in situations of vulnerability, poverty, informality and unemployment. Such situations can generate anti-system feelings. Large proportions of the world's population may wish to express their discontent in ways that will affect peace. If the systems are not able to resolve the problems, then there will be an increasing anti-system sentiment. We must think of all this when we establish a renewed social contract that involves workers, employers and governments, where these three parties can found a new system based on social dialogue. All of us are part of the construction of a better way of life. Employers must be able to develop their businesses, and the development of these businesses will be possible thanks to the actions of workers. Workers, on the other hand, must understand that there is no way of improving working conditions without the existence of companies and regulatory systems. Workers, employers and governments must understand that it will not be possible to reach a social balance unless we create solid mechanisms to fight informality and unemployment. Decent work is a fundamental tool to achieve this. Indeed, it may be the only tool to eliminate poverty. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Dichun Wei

Worker (China)

Dear Chair, colleagues, dear friends, good morning. First of all, I want to say that the All-China Federation of Trade Unions supports the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. The report emphasizes that social justice is a necessary condition for achieving universal and lasting peace, and I fully agree with this. China has always been committed to safeguarding social fairness and justice, insisting

on improving people's livelihood and well-being during development, striving to promote common prosperity for all people and achieve all-around human development. It is the basic responsibility of China's trade unions to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of workers and serve the workers wholeheartedly. There are currently over 80 million workers working in the digital and platform economic sector in China, including truck drivers, online ride-hailing drivers, delivery men and so on. Due to uncertain labour relations and employment instability, this group has always faced social security problems and issues. In order to solve this problem, China's trade unions have formulated and implemented a three-year action plan to strengthen workers' rights protection services in new employment forms. Up until now we have established unions at all the headquarters of 12 leading platform companies, unionized a total of 14.18 million workers in new forms of employment and invested 50 million yuan to provide mobile health check-ups for workers there. To provide drinking water, battery charging services and toilet facilities for outdoor workers, we have set up 184,200 union stations and 1,800 homes for drivers, serving more than one billion people annually. We have developed a hotline to answer calls from workers 24/7 to respond to their needs. We have proactively utilized the digital and intelligent tools, promoting the digitalization of unions and developing applications for our work. We have also carried out a special programme to promote adequate and high-quality employment. Chair, dear friends, The world today is in turmoil. Humanity is facing unprecedented challenges, and the world of work has reached a critical crossroad. Facing the current situation, the ILO and its tripartite constituents should take up their mandate, meet the challenges, support each other and form synergies to lead the development of global labour governance. To this end, I would like to propose the following. First, we must always adhere to peaceful development. Peace is the prerequisite and development is the key. It is necessary to accelerate the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, narrow the gap between rich and poor, bridge the north-south divide, and safeguard workers' rights to development. Second, we must always uphold fairness and justice. Following the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, we should make the cake of mutually beneficial cooperation bigger so that workers from all countries can benefit from development more equitably. Third, we must always support win-win cooperation. We need to abandon zero-sum games, advocate mutual respect, inclusiveness, openness, exchanges and mutual learning, and safeguard the common interests of workers in all countries. Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, China's trade unions are willing to strengthen dialogue and exchanges and deepen pragmatic cooperation with unions from all over the world so as to promote the development of the international labour movement and jointly build a better future for the world of work. I thank you all.

Mr Nalin Manusha Maligaspe Koralege Nanayakkara

Government (Sri Lanka)

Mr President, trade union and employer representatives, Excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure and a privilege to address this August assembly on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka. I want to thank the ILO Director-General for the timely report on the social contract, which addresses the injustices, inequalities and insecurities we face today while reaffirming our commitment to social justice. Mr President, the Sri Lankan economy began its recovery in 2023 following the deep crisis of 2022, which was already aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Decisive policy adjustments and structural reforms implemented by the Government, with the

support of development partners, helped restore macroeconomic conditions significantly. The economic adjustments programme yielded promising outcomes in 2023. By the end of the year, inflation was contained at single-digit levels and the economy expanded in the second half of 2023, ending two years of economic contraction. Foreign reserves have also been steadily increasing, bringing hope to our people. This progress is partly due to government interventions promoting safe, orderly and regular migration for employment. Mr President, every successive government has struggled to improve the living conditions of Ceylon tea plantation workers. Last month we increased their salary by 70%, the highest increment they have received in the last 200 years. Mr President, I am pleased to inform the DG of the ILO that we are enacting a new labour law, the Employment Act, to reform existing labour legislation, streamline the legal framework, eliminate discrimination and address contemporary challenges in the world of work. Once enacted, this law will cover domestic workers and we will ratify ILO Convention 189. Additionally, we plan to ratify ILO Convention 155 and 190 with the enactment of this act. As a government, we believe in the importance of the comprehensive social security system, as outlined in ILO Convention 102. We are developing a comprehensive social security policy with the ILO's support. Furthermore, my ministry has embarked on a journey to bring social justice to informal sector workers. The Dignity of Labour programme aims to enhance the recognition, safety and dignity of informal sector workers nationwide. Under this programme, informal sector workers will be organized and national-level councils will be established based on their occupations to determine employment terms and conditions. Mr President, we are also digitalizing the entire labour market by developing the National Labour Market Information System and the process of migration for employment. Mr President, lastly, to increase female workforce participation and ensure decent work for women, we have initiated a programme to train 10,000 care workers in collaboration with the ILO and the IOM Colombo Office. I urge representatives present here to support this initiative in any way possible. I thank you.

Ms Mónica Recalde de Giacomi

Government (Paraguay)

President, ministers of labour, delegates from the Member States, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour for me to address this International Labour Conference representing the Government of Paraguay. I would like to begin by congratulating the President for his nomination to chair the plenaries of this conference. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Gilbert Hounbo, for his report, 'Towards a renewed social contract', which promises a productive debate on social justice and defining it as the basis for long-lasting peace, shared prosperity, equal opportunities and a just transition. The first nine months in office of Don Santiago Peña Palacios, President of Paraguay, has reflected these values by consolidating the basis of social justice in the country and addressing the challenges that the world of work is facing. Indeed, these are gender equality, informality, low levels of social protection, which affect mainly the most vulnerable, and all these matters require effective policies to achieve sustainable social development. Our government has defined four main axes, including one that focuses on the creation of jobs. 500,000 jobs have been created, and the Government is also fighting against informal jobs. The social security of our population is a central pillar of our work. We are convinced that by strengthening the world of work and providing our population with better tools to work, such as training and the like, we will be taking advantage of our macroeconomic stability, and we will be

able to achieve a just transition towards a more prosperous society. We agree with the Director-General's statement that governance should be based on social dialogue, and this is crucial in order to achieve the social and economic objectives in place. Here I would like to highlight the adoption of Law No. 7235 of 2023 which regulates the supervisory role of the state for pensions to comply with article 95 of the national constitution of Paraguay. This is a tripartite achievement. It was the product of our tripartite consultative council, which represents progress towards strengthening the governance of our social security system. Tripartism is a key tool for us. We have therefore renewed our Tripartite Commission for Equal Opportunities after six years of inactivity. The aim is to analyse the participation of women on the labour market to promote the development of policies that promote equality between male and female workers that is based on consensus and democratic participation. Moreover, we aim to undertake an initial study for Convention 190. We wish to comply with the fundamental Conventions, especially by means of our national commission for the prevention and eradication of child labour and the protection of teenagers as well as by means of the national commission for fundamental rights at work and the prevention of forced labour. Both these commissions are reassessing their progress and the challenges that they are facing and their work is mainly focusing on work that is characterized by horizontality and tripartism. We have high expectations of a project that is currently in place that is implemented by the ILO in the livestock breeding areas of Brazil and Paraguay and that enjoys the USA Department of Labour's support. I would like to focus as well on the fact that our government is establishing a national system for vocational qualifications to improve technical education and training for the young people in Paraguay in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science. We have an inter-ministerial technical unit for national education and labour that is working together in order to reach its objectives. Finally, I would like to thank the ILO for the support that it has given us, especially in terms of our tripartite initiatives. We are looking forward to future collaboration because the ILO's support is crucial to us in these times of profound social change. Thank you.

Mr Igor Zubcu

Worker (Republic of Moldova)

Distinguished Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, honourable delegates. It is a great honour and privilege to address you at the 112th ILC as President of the National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova. I strongly believe that ensuring decent work is the number one priority for the trade union movement across the world. Decent minimum wages that cover the needs of workers and their families are thus imperative and their increase remains on the agenda of social partners in the Republic of Moldova. Through social dialogue we have achieved an unprecedented 25% increase in the minimum wage of this country in 2024. In the coming future we intend not only to transpose but also to implement the EU directive 2020-2024 on adequate minimum wages in the EU so the minimum wage would represent 50% of the average wage in the economy. Furthermore, we are going to develop, together with the social partners, an action plan to ensure that 80% of employees are covered by collective bargaining. I would like to point out that this rate is around 40% at the moment. A major achievement of the year 2023, obtained at the insistence of trade unions, was the ratification of ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work. With the support of the ILO, trade unions have launched capacity-building action for trade union members on combating violence and harassment at work, including training at a local level.

Moreover, I think it is worth highlighting that recently, at the Youth Forum organized by the National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova, the participants addressed the challenges young people face, their desire to be heard and to be promoted, to get decent wages and secure jobs that promote innovation and personal development, as well as the assurance of a work-life balance, fair rights and working conditions. Considering the above-mentioned reasons, it is essential to promote gender equality and equal opportunities in the process of labour market integration and career development that will also contribute to reducing the wage gap on the labour market, which amounted to 15.5% in 2022 in the Republic of Moldova. Dear delegates, it is fundamental that states focus not only on creating the conditions for reconciling work and family life but also on ensuring decent work for people in the care economy who make a significant contribution to economic development but are often disadvantaged in the labour market. We, the trade unions, also insist on the ratification of ILO Convention No. 156 on the pivotal issue of equal treatment and equal opportunities for working men and women, involving workers with family responsibilities and greater investment for the creation of care services and their support. In the context of the topics addressed at this year's Conference, we strongly believe that safe working conditions without any exposure to biological hazards and other factors affecting health must be guaranteed for all workers. Hence, occupational safety and health is an investment not only for the workers of the present but for future generations, too. Labour inspection has an important role to play here. The fact that the Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Mr Alexei Buzu, was elected the President of the ILC, and let me take this opportunity to congratulate him, is an important achievement and illustrates the firm commitment of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to a genuine social dialogue and the promotion of decent work principles. Moreover, we are firmly convinced that the Republic of Moldova will bring its national framework in the field of labour inspection in line with international standards. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the ILO for the constant support provided to the Republic of Moldova for the development and improvement of social dialogue and the labour market. We constantly put considerable efforts to strengthen social dialogue, and we utterly condemn any attempt to interfere in the work of trade union organizations, especially on the part of employers and public authorities, which is unacceptable for a country on its path to European integration and that has committed to bringing its legislation and practices into line with international and European labour standards. Finally, I would like to underline that a skilled and protected workforce is the key pillar for progress and prosperity, and the strength of our economies and societies is based on the hard work and dedication of workers. Dear delegates, I want to urge you to work together to ensure a brighter future for the world of work, where the rights and aspirations of every worker are honoured and upheld. Thank you very much for your attention.

Ms Pia Rolle

Government (Bahamas)

Chair, Honourable delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to greet you today on behalf of the Government of The Bahamas and our people as we gather to discuss the roles our nations must play in the renewal and reimagination of the social contract. The world of work is undergoing rapid changes that require us to work cooperatively in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. The development of a renewed social contract, the pursuit of social justice and the rollout of strategies to

successfully navigate the triple transition of climate, digital and social change are inherently interconnected. The Bahamas understands that our national development strategies must be fully integrated in these concepts at the core of our approach to ensure that we continue to thrive over the next few decades. Near the top of our agenda, the achievement of decent work for all looms large in the push toward social equality. The Government of The Bahamas is grateful to the ILO Caribbean Office for its technical support as we roll out the first second-generation Decent Work Country Programme in our region. Through this programme we will strengthen our approach to social dialogue and governance. We have seen historic success in collective bargaining through a proactive and welcoming approach to social dialogue, maintaining an open-door policy with all stakeholders as we work together for the benefit of Bahamian workers. Tripartism is as strong as ever in The Bahamas. Our government respects workers' rights to associate and we have strong representation from our workers' unions. As we turn our lenses, along with the world, toward the triple transition, we are committed to sustainability through legislative reforms. On that note, in July, we will host a symposium where we will invite all major labour stakeholders to work together on the development of a white paper for comprehensive legislative, regulatory and policy reform. We will continue to work together, advocating for social change now to develop a sustainable and productive workforce for the future. As part of our Decent Work Country Programme we are also moving ahead with our nation's first ever National Apprenticeship Programme which was passed in our parliament in April. We remain cognizant of the need to adapt to the triple transition. Our Prime Minister, the Honourable Philip Davis, continues to advocate on the world stage for climate justice, emphasizing the fact that we cannot have a just transition until every country is equipped for climate resilience. We have explored our own climate solutions through our ventures into blue carbon credits and the launch of our \$500 million Sustainable Investment Programme. When it comes to digital transformation, we have fully embraced the power of technology. AI is being used to detect leaks at our Water and Sewerage Corporation and our Ministry of Tourism is using AI to target potential visitors. Within the public service we are well on our way, with the implementation of a digital document management system and the rollout of a new HRMIS system, to digitalize all government HR and payroll systems. At the Department of Labour we are preparing for a significant expansion of our labour skills bank to accurately reflect the composition and availability of talent within our workforce. The Government of The Bahamas remains fully committed to a social-justice-driven labour agenda as we strive to create a fairer, more prosperous and more just society for all. Today I am pleased to announce that The Bahamas will join the Global Coalition for Social Justice as we collaborate with the ILO and global partners to advance the cause of social justice for everyone. We listened carefully to the Director-General's opening statement at this session, and I would like to thank him for the attention given to the situation in Haiti. It is important for Haiti and for the region that the world does not turn its back on that country, and we ask for the ILO's continued support and advocacy regarding the situation in Haiti. In Director-General Houngbó's 2024 report, we have a roadmap for how we can achieve greater social justice. As ILO delegates, we must continue to work together to redevelop the social contract to be more transformative, responsive and inclusive. The principles of the ILO continue to provide a strong foundation from which we can create positive momentum toward our collective goals. Thank you.

Ms Elbia Pereira**Worker (Uruguay)**

Good morning, President, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour for me to address this assembly on behalf of the workers of Uruguay. The Director-General, in his report, stated that a clear indicator of the efficiency of a social contract is its ability to achieve social justice by means of decent work. We fully agree with that statement. Today we find ourselves confronted with the false belief and discourse that the freedom to work cannot go hand in hand with decent work. This is based on a wrong idea of modernity where no regulation of work is required, and this is due to technological advances, according to this false belief. The right to decent work is dear to humanity and so is freedom, but this is used as a tool in order to call into question the regulation of work and social protection. Such policies increase inequality and widen the gap between the ultra-rich and the poor, and it is having a very severe impact, especially on women. Instead of being a tool that allows workers to improve their lives, work is now a simple means of survival. Many workers have no prospects for the future, which creates discontent and mistrust in the institutions. Platform work is an example of what has been defined as the adaptation of local legislation to the demands of multinationals because the argument is that even if jobs are of low quality, jobs are being created. And this is also presented as being a model of entrepreneurship. This business model is based on the exploitation of their workers' working times. The workers bear the costs through bogus self-employment, and they are burdened with the expense of healthcare and social security. Many people also suffer from occupational accidents. Workers and society have to cover the costs, and the multinationals profit. This is increasing inequalities. Fundamental rights such as the ones defined in standard-setting instruments of the ILO are considered the privilege of a small proportion of workers. The policies in place do not improve the conditions of work for the majority nor their protection. Let me give you an example. Our government is implementing actions that violate freedom of association, and this in the broadest sense. Indeed, sanctions are being imposed on trade unionists that are in the public education sector when they exercise their right to freedom of expression. The Government is unilaterally changing the medical certificate regime, causing the lowering of salaries in many sectors for the workers, and this is an open violation of Convention No. 151. Peaceful demonstrations are quashed and our trade unions president is spied upon. Society should take urgent measures to fight against such actions so that people may make a living thanks to work, and work should be accessed by all. Moreover, decent work should be ensured and people should be protected in the event of a job loss. Moreover, people's timetables must be compatible with life and society. Most of the jobs in the world are created by SMEs. However, countries are giving privileges to multinationals and they are leaving those behind who are creating jobs and who feed the local economies. Today, in the world we are spiralling downwards by taxing the rich less, and that goes against tax justice which is an essential instrument to fight the unbearable inequalities that we see in the world. Yes, we do need a new social contract, and we must follow a path that is in the exact opposite direction of the one we are currently going down because this one has only served to cause misery and conflict. Thank you.

Mr Rajeev Dubey

Employer Vice-President (India)

Thank you very much, madam. This concludes our list of speakers for this sitting. I thank all of you for your contribution to this morning's proceedings. The sitting is now closed.

Ms Béatrice Lestic

Worker Vice-President (France)

Delegates, please take your seats. The meeting will now begin. Ladies and gentlemen, delegates, you are welcome here at this the 13th plenary session of the 112th International Labour Conference. Would you please take your seats? Can we have silence in the room? This afternoon we are going to be continuing our general discussion of the Governing Body Chair's report as well as the report of the DG. Before we begin, I would like to remind you that, in accordance with the provisions approved at the opening session regarding the methods of work for the special session dedicated to the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, the annex of the DG's report on this issue was considered at the special session which was held on Thursday. So I therefore encourage you to prioritize the reports 1(A), 1(B), 1(C) in your statements. Thank you very much. Along the same lines, I invite you to respect the principles of our work and use parliamentary language, respect the opening times of our meetings and the duration of the statements, which should not go over five minutes. Finally, I would also like to note that rights of reply and points of order are not supposed to interrupt the discussion. If a delegate should like to request a right of reply or a point of order in the plenary session, it will be enough to raise your flag. A member of the personnel will approach you in order to respond to your request. In the framework of rights of reply, I would like to ask you to clearly inform the members of our personnel of the statement that you will be responding to. I would like to remind you that rights of reply should only be related to the topic at hand. The duration of the right of reply should not go over two minutes and should be made using respectful parliamentary language. Our organization does not make a habit of authorizing rights of replies to replies. Therefore, now we will hear our speakers, and I call on Mr Guilarte de Nacimiento, the Workers' delegate from Cuba. You have the floor.

Mr Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento

Worker (Cuba)

President, distinguished delegates, distinguished guests, five years have now passed since the centenary of the ILO, and today we are here to celebrate our commitment to the mandates, and these have been approved but we are facing challenges in the world. This 112th ILC was called by the Director-General and it is taking place in a situation of global complexity. There is an increasing number of threats against peace. The impact of digital technologies is growing. Climate change is a problem. There is more and more precarity in terms of contracts, and poverty is getting worse. Moreover, there are problems for women and young people on the labour market. Trade unions defend the rights of workers. They fight injustice, job insecurity and inequality. All these elements are signs of a failure of the social contract. There is a lack of good will in terms of maintaining a dialogue concerning fundamental rights at work and healthy working environments. We cannot accept that these scientific and technological developments have a severe impact against people when millions of dollars are spent on weapons and wars. Indeed, underdevelopment and poverty are a reality in many economies, and globally there are huge inequalities. Now, as a sovereign nation, Cuba continues to be weakened in terms of its socio-economic model. We have been able to resist the attacks against our nation, and workers have been affected by unilaterally imposed sanctions by the United States. We have continued undertaking

action to try to access investment and other means of funding. We have also achieved great levels of education and healthcare in our country, the fair distribution of wealth, the fair treatment and equal treatment of workers based on solidarity and cooperation. Delegates, the Cuban federation of trade unions will continue working in order to perfect its commitment to the ILO's mandates by rendering its institutions more and more democratic and focusing on social dialogue and tripartism. The organizations that we represent here demand that the ILO find solutions and responses to the problems that we are discussing here. We require a renewed platform for a future of work that is based on justice and social justice for all. Thank you.

Mr Tseliso Mokhosi

Government (Lesotho)

President of the Conference, deputy presidents, Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, my delegation wishes to express our gratitude for the opportunity to join those who are participating in this debate on the report submitted to the Conference by the Director-General. We bring with us warm greetings from the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. I wish to congratulate the Director-General for a well-crafted report which is not voluminous and yet rich and relevant to issues that epitomize the core of human dignity. The social contract initiative encapsulates a web of fundamental principles and rights at work as well as other labour standards which contribute to the decent work which we should all aspire for. I understand that this year the Committee on the Application of Standards, CAS, which is the bedrock of this conference, discussed a General Survey on labour administration which forms the core of governance and service delivery in Ministries of Labour. Regrettably, these ministries are traditionally underfunded, yet if we are to realize our quest for lasting peace and social protection for all, these ministries as well as the labour market institutions which they host must be well resourced, lest we pay lip service to the Decent Work Agenda. Equally, labour inspection services, dispute resolution systems, public employment services and labour market information systems are essential to realizing the social contract. Mr President, I wish to further embrace this report and therefore wish to highlight how much it resonates with a number of initiatives that my country has taken to enhance decent work. Namely, labour protection, by enacting two legislations that improve on rights at work and seek to enforce workers' rights to health and safety in a very distinctive way. We are also determined to finalize the social security legislation which will usher in a new form of social security structure that addresses the deficits that are currently obtained as a result of fragmented safety nets. Additionally, there are efforts that have commenced to strengthen the inspectorate by increasing the number of inspectors, without which workers' rights, including migrant workers, cannot be protected. With regard to workers' rights, the Government of Lesotho has introduced a paradigm shift by extending the full rights of workers to workers in the public sector, which was not the case before. The new Labour Act 2024 takes precedence over all labour legislation, and for the first time fundamental principles and rights will be extended to workers in the public sector. To conclude, the Director-General's report rightly mentions the importance of evidence-based policy making. Whilst I agree with his submission wholeheartedly, periodic production of labour market information requires a dedicated budget. I would therefore wish to appeal to the Director-General to use his position to support the resolution of the SADC Ministers of Labour and Employment to produce labour market information biannually. Mr President, it would be remiss of me to conclude without acknowledging the support of the ILO and the

Government of the United States of America in assisting Lesotho in her endeavour to protect workers' rights and contribute to economic development. I thank you.

Mr Branislav Rugani

Worker (France)

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, delegates, I am the Confederal Secretary of the international/Europe sector of Force Ouvrière and I am speaking on behalf of the French workers' trade unions. First of all, I would like to confirm my solidarity with all trade unions that continue to be repressed, imprisoned, killed in various parts of the world. Over the last few years we have seen an acceleration and an increase of the impact of crises, climate change, technological evolution, the return of war on different continents, the rise of authoritarian regimes or, as we have just seen in the results of the European elections, the rise of extremists, which will never be in the interest of workers. It is quite the opposite. All of these crises show the need, and I share this conviction with the Director-General, for a new social contract. Modernizing the social contract should not lead to us backtracking on our social gains. If I am insisting on this, it is because unfortunately, even in France, we are seeing a violent social regression. Social justice means being able to benefit from decent work with a salary that enables a person to live and not just survive when faced with inflation. Social justice means being able to live better and longer in a better world. It does not mean working for longer while the healthy life expectancy keeps dropping. We will continue to fight for a return to retirement at 60 years of age. Social justice means developing systems of social protection by respecting social dialogue. It is not, as we see in France, contributing to the difficult situation of the most vulnerable workers with a new reform of unemployment benefits, which is unhelpful and dangerous to the social contract. Social justice is believing in the strength of social dialogue and collective bargaining and strengthening the right to strike. The attacks in France and the threat of restriction of the right to strike are unacceptable. Social justice means maintaining the occupational safety and health of workers, which is a fundamental right. It does not mean dissolving the committees that handle OSH issues. This leads to the bad results in France. Two workers die every day at work. Social justice means providing true employment contracts which protect people socially, for all platform workers, and we hail the work to come in this area. Social justice means continuing to fight against discrimination and to guarantee equality between all workers. The Philadelphia Declaration will soon be 80 years old, and at the same time in France we are adopting yet another law on immigration which uses foreign workers as a variable for adjustment of the labour market. Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic we thought that we would have been able to learn the lessons of the malfunctions we saw worldwide in order to move towards a new model. However, several years later we have to admit that we failed. Far from learning from our errors from the past, our governments continue and are stuck in the same deadlock and are returning to austerity measures. Union rights are being attacked virulently in a number of regions of the world and the respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work have been stuck since 2017. Child labour has even risen since 2017. The new social contract must initiate true change which will lead to better rights, more rights for workers as well as a better distribution of productivity gains. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize the relevance of the work of this ILC, which has to do with biological hazards in order to follow up on the pandemic and also has to do with the care economy where workers were at the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, proposing a new social contract means recognizing the

complexity and interdependency of global economies. It means developing a regulation of globalization which would finally be fair for workers. We have significant expectations when it comes to the discussions to come on supply chains in order to ensure that trade unions have a role to play in the due diligence process. And finally, to conclude, I would like to recall the commitment of French workers to the International Labour Organization and I would like to commend and to hail, as I have just mentioned, the 80th anniversary of the Philadelphia Declaration which reminds us of the need to strengthen the role played by the ILO in the multilateral system in order to accord to the world of work its full importance and ensure that work is never ever considered a commodity.

Mr Rajathurai Perumal

Worker (Sri Lanka)

Mr President, Director-General of the ILO, honourable ministers, Excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon everybody. It is indeed a great pleasure and privilege to deliver this statement as the Workers' delegate from Sri Lanka. I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the ILO for organizing this ILC during a challenging period of time prevailing globally nowadays. The main objectives of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent work opportunities, decent income, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. Sri Lanka joined the ILO in 1948 and has a rich history of 75 years. There are more than 20 active trade unions functioning in Sri Lanka to protect workers' rights. The ILO, by its tripartite approach, involves to make consensus between the Government, employer and trade unions on worker-related issues and to make efforts to find a lasting solution to the issues. There are several sectors like tea, rubber, coconut and palm oil plantations, government industries, tourism and other industries in Sri Lanka where huge numbers of workers are involved. The main piece of legislation which governs the prevention, investigation and settlement of industrial disputes is the Industrial Disputes Act of Sri Lanka, Act No. 43 of 1950. In the context of the Sri Lankan national economy, the tea industry is playing a very, very vital role in bringing foreign exchange income to Sri Lanka. This industry had been managed and governed by the Government after independence. In 1992 the Government of Sri Lanka decided to privatize the management in the governing of the tea, rubber, coconut plantations and handed over those industries to 23 regional plantations private companies while keeping certain JEDP and SLSPC estates under government control. After the privatization, since 1997 the collective bargain process has come into operation where the collective agreement has been entered between the employers and trade unions with regard to the wages and other welfare facilities of the workers as a matter of practice and the said collective agreement had been renewed once in two years after discussion by the relevant parties. In 2021, the collective agreement regarding the wages of the workers expired. Since the employers are not willing to increase the basic salary, the parties to the said collective agreement have to abrogate the said collective agreement process due to unavoidable circumstances. In terms of industrial disputes, the Minister of Labour has summoned the Wages Board for tea and rubber industries and fixed the daily wage as 1,000 rupees, it is a little below \$3.30, by publishing the Gazette Notification. But the employers have filed a writ petition at the Court of Appeal Sri Lanka to revoke the said Gazette. Later, the Court of Appeal, after due inquiry, the writ petition has been dismissed which has been filed by the employers. Again in 2023, a remarkable year in Sri Lankan workers' context, the trade unions requested the Minister of Labour to convene the meeting with the employers to resume the discussion

of the collective bargaining process. But even though more than three meetings were summoned by the Minister of Labour, the employers kept away from attending the meeting without even assigning the proper reasons. Thereafter again, in terms of the Industrial Disputes Act, the Minister of Labour has summoned the Wages Board for rubber and tea industries and fixed the daily wage as 1,700 rupees, that is nearly USD\$5.60, by publishing the Gazette Notification No. 2382 dated 20th April 2024. Again the employers have filed the writ petition at the Court of Appeal by seeking an interim injunction and a stay order at the inception to stay the operation of the said Gazette Notification. But after due inquiry, the Court of Appeal has refused to grant an interim relief which is sought by the employers and fixed a further inquiry, coming this 26th June 2024. We as trade unions take this opportunity to thank the Government of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Labour and the Minister of Labour of Sri Lanka. I wish to place on record that there are certain critical issues faced by the workers in Sri Lanka, especially the plantation area. Due to low wages they are compelled to live in poverty, living in over-crowded and inadequate housing conditions. Workers are compelled to work without proper health facilities and encounter challenging safety issues. Workers' children have limited access to quality education and opportunities. Women workers are often faced with gender-based violence and discrimination. Labour rights violations, such as denial of the right to unionize, lack of social security benefits and arbitrary dismissals. Migrant worker issues are prevailing in Sri Lanka, compelled to live low economically, dependent on the plantation system and limited opportunities to seek alternative employment. Child labour issues where children are being employed in hazardous conditions, often to supplement family income due to their parents' low income. Social exclusion: the plantation workers are often socially excluded from mainstream society, leading to a lack of political representation and access to public services and welfare programmes. Environmental degradation: the environmental impact of tea plantations, including deforestation and soil degradation, could have adverse effects on the local communities. Economic pressures such as global market pressures and fluctuating tea prices can lead to cost-cutting measures by plantation owners, often at the expense of workers' wages, benefits and working conditions. Challenges to labour unions such as inadequate bargaining power, fragmentation and occasional co-option by political interests. We as the trade unions urge the ILO to intervene to solve the above-mentioned issues which are prevailing in the member countries and make necessary recommendations to settle the said disputes by using the ILO's tripartite role by bringing the Government, employers and trade unions, who are the key stakeholders, to a common table to find out lasting solutions as per the ILO mandate. Thank you.

Ms Mabel Grossi

Worker (Italy)

Director-General, Chair, distinguished delegates and guests, I bring this contribution on behalf of the three Italian trade union confederations: CGIL, CISL and UIL. We are gathering at this year's International Labour Conference faced with a more fragmented and polarized world, a world that seems to have returned to considering war as a normal tool for resolving international disputes. Too many other issues are contributing to the increase of global inequality, insecurity and injustice: the deregulated system of hyper-globalization, financialization and neoliberalism, new forms of precarious and insecure work, industrial production relocations, the defunding

of public social infrastructure and a general, not even so concealed, attack against trade unions and freedom of association. Authoritarianisms, in all their various forms, always assert themselves on weakened, fragmented, divided societies, and democracy can thrive only if social justice can be fully established. Italian trade unions insist that an inclusive, cooperative and equitable multilateralism is more necessary than ever. The ILO DG's initiative for a Global Coalition for Social Justice is a renewed opportunity that gives greater recognition to a global common than to global power blocks and that places human rights and environmental conservation before capital and war. Peace is a core value of trade unionism, the precondition for realizing any form of justice and equality. Italian unions believe the ILO should take a more active role in engaging its tripartite constituents in promoting global disarmament and industrial reconversion, giving full effect to ILO Recommendation 205. CGIL, CISL and UIL strongly believe in ILO tripartism. The ILO should promote a much stronger supervisory mechanism with a sanction approach when violating fundamental Conventions. We are concerned with the ongoing violations of human and trade union rights in Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Belarus, Argentina and Tunisia, and call for further ILO attention and support to trade unions in these countries. At the same time, we are also worried by the persistence of violence and harassment against women and the ongoing incidents of forced labour in the world. Women and migrant workers are the first to pay the price of segregation, and we strongly call for this year's general discussion to recognize care as a human right. Following last year's discussion at the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards, we welcome the Italian Government's commitment to engage in tripartite discussions to improve the labour inspectorate in our country, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation in this regard. Also, Italian trade unions strongly welcome the ILO Vision Zero Fund to promote effective implementation of occupational health and safety in workplaces and welcome the commitment of the Italian Government to join and support this fund. More still needs to be done in Italy to give real effect to the ratification of ILO Conventions 155 and 187, and we can no longer accept the increasingly persistent work-related deaths, occupational injuries and illnesses in Italy and in the world. We call on the Italian Government to start to move in the direction of concrete and adequate minimum living wages. As the ILO DG points out, it is the key to deliver decent living standards for workers and their families. Let me conclude saying a few but important words on the ILO Training Centre in Turin. Welcoming its new director, Italian trade unions strongly believe in the value of publicly-funded training and education for workers around the world, and we call on the ILO to continue to invest adequately in the structure. In our societies today there are different forms of injustice. But there is only one form of social justice: the one that guarantees safe and decent work, the same rights and same opportunities for everyone everywhere. Thank you.

Mr Phongsaysack Inthalath

Government (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

Excellency Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honour to represent the Government of the Lao PDR in the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference and I would like to begin by supporting the adoption of the Report of the Director-General of the ILO and extending my sincere congratulations to the Chair for being elected as the chair of this ILC Session. I also have the strong belief that, under your chairmanship, this conference will bring about a fruitful achievement. Excellency Chairperson, distinguished delegates, to ensure the social justice advancement and decent work promotion, the Government of Lao PDR has

been accelerating the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy. The strategy aims at promoting and improving the implementation of social protection policies, contributing to human capital development, contributing to the goals and objectives of other relevant sectoral and socio-economic development plans. To achieve these, the strategy sets its vision until 2030 of achieving for Lao people access to basic social protection services consisting of health insurance, social security and social welfare. The three main goals are the health insurance system, the social security system and the social welfare system. All are further developed and strengthened. In addition, late last year the new project called 'Accelerating Universal Social Protection for Achieving the SDGs and Ending Poverty through Strengthened Governance and Digital Transformation' was officially introduced. The project aims to support the Government of Lao PDR to accelerate progress towards universal social protection through strengthening policy design, enhancing governance systems and broadening coverage to encompass a larger population. The focus includes collaborating with national stakeholders to boost institutional capacity in planning, coordination, financing, implementation and monitoring of the National Social Protection Strategy and ensures that by 2030 Lao people will have access to basic social protection services consisting of health insurance, social security and social welfare in an equitable, adequate, effective and sustainable way. Besides this, the continuation of the Decent Work Country Programme for the period of 2022-2026 is another good work that brings sustainable benefits to workers, employers and national citizens as it builds on the progress, partnerships and lessons of two earlier Decent Work Country Programmes. It is also designed to support the implementation of the decent work elements in the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan as well as contribute to the long-term realization of the Lao PDR's Vision 2030, the national Sustainable Development Goal road map, and to relevant national laws, policies, strategies and plans. This further aligns with the ILO Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. On this auspicious occasion, the Lao PDR would like to express its gratitude and thanks to the ILO, particularly ILO in the country and regional office as well as other international development partners for their long-standing support extended to the Government of Lao PDR and its national stakeholders. Thank you very much for your attention.

Ms Anna M. Mokgethi

Government (Botswana)

Mr President, I would like to commence by congratulating you and your Vice-Presidents on your election and the exceptional manner in which you are overseeing the activities of this conference. Please be assured of Botswana's delegation's full commitment to support and collaborate with you to achieve the objectives of this conference. I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr Gilbert Houngbo, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, for the report he presented to this plenary, which calls for movement towards a renewed social contract. This report is particularly pertinent as the Second World Summit for Social Development, scheduled to be held by the United Nations in 2025, is rapidly approaching. It provides ILO Member States and social partners with the opportunity to contribute to the summit's agenda. The primary objective of the 1995 inaugural World Summit for Social Development was to raise awareness on social responsibility, promote social inclusion, create job opportunities and address poverty. Since then, collective efforts to advance social development have been greatly impeded by the disruptive effects of climate change,

structural inequality, demographic changes and technological transformations. Despite these challenges, moving towards the upcoming World Summit for Social Development, renewing the social contract to ensure that it is fit for purpose remains the only way to attain social development. In the ILO, the core of any social contract is the application of social justice principles which are complemented by the four dimensions of decent work: the promotion of full and productive employment, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism, and fundamental principles and rights at work. For the renewal of the social contract at national level, we as governments have the responsibility to provide an enabling environment for institutions of social dialogue and tripartism to thrive, while the ILO provides technical assistance. Traditionally, social development activities in Botswana have been primarily related to the equitable public provision of social services, particularly on education, health, housing and social welfare. However, since the mid-1980s there has been a new approach toward social development in the country which addresses a range of issues such as social inclusion, human dignity, tolerance, cultural identity, social awareness, empowerment and the participation of civil society in the development process. Mr President, Botswana's aspirations in social development are effectively encapsulated in Vision 2036, a long-term national development plan that aims to transform the country into a high-income nation by 2036. The plan's Pillar No. 2, human social development, specifies that Botswana aims to be a moral, tolerant and inclusive society that provides opportunities for all by 2036. In the National Development Plan 11, under the thematic area of social upliftment, social development is defined as the process of enhancing well-being as well as implementing and maintaining strategies designed to enhance the nation's social responsibility. The nation's primary goal within this thematic area is to ensure that all citizens have a dignified existence by instituting programmes and projects that assist the economically marginalized and socially vulnerable. We welcome the DG's appeal for the renewal of the social contract as it is consistent with the country's aspirations outlined in the national development plans and Vision 2036. Social contracts are necessary because they define how our needs will be addressed throughout our lives, including access to basic services, work opportunities and social protection. These establish standards for interactions between individuals and institutions, including women's rights and other societal issues. Mr President, allow me to conclude my statement by assuring you of Botswana's unwavering commitment and support of the ILO's work. I thank you for your attention.

Mr Adán Celis Michelena

Employer (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Good afternoon, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to begin my institutional message on behalf of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Production of Venezuela, Fedecámaras, the organization that is most representative of employers in Venezuela and which I preside, to celebrate this 112th ILC. Events such as this one allow a healthy discussion and exchange of ideas and the optimization of relations between governments, workers and employers. Events such as these allow the design and execution of joint public policies which, from the level of the state, allow better conditions of employability. We welcome the report that was presented by the Director-General: 'Towards a renewed social contract'. This report focuses on the need to promote the structural transformation of the social contract in order to continue developing and updating labour relations in a more realistic fashion and in response to the many issues that occur when designing employment policies. We must work in a

more collaborative and coordinated fashion in order to integrate policies that reduce inequalities. And we must not, however, have a negative impact on companies that invest a large proportion of their profits in improving the conditions of life of their workers and the environment. Venezuelan employers also defend the reality that tripartism and social dialogue are the essential tools that will allow the exchange of information for policies and universal standards in order to reach more humane and fair working conditions. We must also ensure that trust is generated amongst all the different interested parties. We must contribute to the renewal of the social contract and by focussing on the fundamental principles and rights at work. We would like to thank the ILO for the support that it has provided us with over all the phases of the social dialogue process that we are undergoing. Indeed, we have also been implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. Its support has been truly helpful in order to relaunch the tripartite dialogues in our country. Venezuelan employers continue to believe in a sincere and respectful dialogue with the representatives from the Government and workers. There have been many productive discussions that have taken place and also agreements that have been reached. We recognize the efforts made by the Government in terms of creating forums for social dialogue. There are, however, still some fundamental problems that have been identified by the tripartite commission. One of the most important ones is on how to create a new labour law that will regulate labour relations in a more beneficial way for all tripartite players. The Governing Body of the ILO held a meeting in March 2023 at which it nominated a social dialogue expert, Christian Ramos. The role of Mr Ramos was to continue focusing on the Venezuelan case, and his presence was of great help within the framework of our meetings. We insist that the ILO requests that the Venezuelan Government immediately continue facilitating access to the country to this expert so that he may continue working on areas in the country that are problematic, such as, for example, compliance with Convention 87 on freedom of association. We believe that the support of the ILO with the good will and availability of the different parties will help us achieve good results in terms of social dialogue. We believe in a future of work that generates well-being for all the Venezuelan population. On the 28th of July there will be very important elections in our country, and we do hope that all Venezuelans will come together. Moreover, we hope that we will have the support of the international community so that entrepreneurs and workers may reach an agreement. Thank you very much.

Ms Adidjatou Alayi Mathys

Government (Benin)

Madam President, Chair of the Governing Body of the ILO, Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, ministers, heads of delegations here in the room today, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. The work of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference begins in a difficult global context which is marked by complex challenges that negatively impact the world of work. First of all, climate change today is a Damocles sword which is hanging over the heads of workers around the world, rural and informal economy workers especially, forcing them to abandon their natural environment of production in order to invest in areas and sectors of activity that they have neither mastery nor the requisite skills of often. Extreme climate phenomena also expose many workers to health-related risks in environments of high heat or humidity. The dizzying rise of social inequality related to different levels of income in regions and parts of the world and linked to actions of exclusion complicate the efforts of stabilization initiated by the authorities. The pronounced nature of these inequalities

lays bare the limits of social dialogue, which is failing to realize compromise and consensus, which are timeless. Strong disparities characterize global unemployment levels depending on the country or age groups. It is higher in lower-income countries and lower in countries with medium or high income levels. Moreover, the global unemployment level for youth remains thrice the amount of adults. Almost 22% of youth have neither employment and are not studying either. In my country, in Benin, there are a number of projects to involve youth in employment, and this has been implemented for a number of years now and has been providing results. Approximately 60% of the global workforce is in the informal sector. 85% of informal workers are located in developing countries. Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, regarding what I have just said, it is reasonable, even imperative, to ask questions about the relevance of the choices that we have made to this point regarding the implementation of the mandate of our organization. When faced with such mixed results, should we not review the social contract? As you can probably guess, my response would be affirmative. It is beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is a need to readjust our strategies in these difficult circumstances if our organization will continue in its second centenary to deserve the trust of its constituents and its partners. Along these lines, the report by the DG for this 112th Session which introduces the discussion of the need to move towards a new social contract should be commended. Showing enlightened leadership, the Director-General in his report has showed us the path and is inviting us to think about how to build a strong organization that is dynamic and useful for its members. In this analysis we see that, following the diagnostics, the report reminds us of the importance of the social contract and asks questions about the world of work as well as laying the path for solutions to address these issues. Social justice and decent work, proposed as measures to review the social contract, is in line with our perception of the new social contract which we should prepare in order to achieve a sustainable world of work that is satisfactory for the tripartite constituents. It is in this perspective that Benin, through me, joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice in April 2024. This is an initiative that brings together various interested parties to combat social injustice and to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. By joining the coalition, Benin plans on accompanying the Director-General in his fight against economic and social inequality. From this platform, my country plans to play a significant role in reducing inequalities for the SDG period ending in 2030. Proof of our strong commitment can be seen through the formulation and validation in November 2023 of the integration road map for Alliance 8.7 to eliminate child labour in all its forms by 2025 and eliminate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030. In April 2024 Benin became a pioneering country of the alliance, recognizing its efforts throughout the last few years in combatting child labour, the last ten years, of course. In order to achieve SDG 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive, sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, the Government of Benin has engaged in reforms that are to facilitate the creation of enterprises and recruitment of the workforce. Now it is possible to create an enterprise in 24 hours. It is in this framework that we have created the industrial zone of Glo-Djigbé, called GDIZ, which is a developed industrial zone based on a business city model that is integrated and provided with cutting-edge infrastructure. By 2030, based on our prognosis, we will have approximately 300,000 direct employment here. This is important for our youth. Today approximately 10,000 young Beninese are working there now. This project brings together the environmental aspects and the goals of a just transition. Regarding what I have mentioned, I would like to wish that these efforts enjoy the consistent support of the ILO, enable us to maintain and strengthen mutual trust in order to base our future world of work on people. Finally I would like to reiterate the

gratitude of the Government of Benin to the DG and his team for their excellent work. It is on these words, ladies and gentlemen, that I would like to conclude my statement and wish you every luck in your work. Long live the ILO, in the interest of social justice and peace throughout the world. Long live Benin. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Flemming Grønsund

Worker (Denmark)

Chair, Director-General, Excellencies, delegates, friends. 'Towards a renewed social contract', this is the headline of the report submitted by the Director-General, and a renewed social contract is needed more than ever. The insecurity of the world today, with armed conflicts that affect ordinary people and workers, makes it essential to reinstall a sense of security. We hear and worry about the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, but we must not forget the many other crises in the world. We must not forget the consequence of growing inequality, of high unemployment rates that make people worry about tomorrow. We welcome the report and how it outlines the way forward for a new social contract. We need a new social contract if we are to live up to the commitment that no-one should be left behind. The ILO estimates that \$133 billion would be enough to provide basic child, maternity and disability benefits and essential healthcare to the population in all the poorest countries. It should be possible to deliver on that. We have to deliver on that. The report stresses that social dialogue is a core element in delivering decent working conditions and decent lives. I could not agree more. However, as a representative of the Danish trade unions, I would like to mention that the Committee of Experts has again asked the Danish Government to respect Danish trade union rights in the collective bargaining process. Namely, that Danish trade unions can freely represent all their members working on ships sailing under the Danish flag regardless of whether they are within or outside Danish territorial waters. This is a serious issue that has yet to be resolved. Any progress on this issue will have to be reported to the ILO in 2025. I do hope that a solution will be found and real progress made by then. I will end by expressing my sincere thanks to the Director-General for the report on a renewed social contract. We have a huge task ahead of us, and we will do our part to move forward in the creation of a social contract that is relevant for the world today and tomorrow. Thank you very much.

Mr Julio Gabriel Cordero

Government (Argentina)

Director-General, President of the Conference, congratulations for your nomination. Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and fellow Argentinians. So, the Report of the Director-General reminds us of the need to reflect on a new social contract, a review of the institutions that shaped the ideology of greater welfare for our citizens, and in particular for our workers. The statements made by the Director-General confront us in Argentina with the realities of our truths and certainties of a narrative which has gone through the political arena very quietly with an aspirational model of social justice, the results of which are in plain sight. Indeed, most Argentinians live in poverty. The people have often moved from labour informality to becoming poor formal workers. So constructing a new social contract in Argentina is problematic. We need to rebuild the capacity to hire and be hired. We must create wealth, get out of the corporative state, develop conditions for investment, prioritize economic stability as a value for the whole

of society, modernize our labour force, always looking for quality employment, train our workers and, finally, give due protection to the most vulnerable sectors, trying to incorporate them into the productive sector. The path that we are following is not an easy one. We are fully aware of the sacrifice of our citizens and the cost of the transition towards this projected society which most Argentines want. Our policies will be focused on the worker and based on dialogue between the Government, workers and employers. Change will be possible if everybody works on it. Transformation is waiting for us. We are expecting a transition, and it will only be possible if this is done within the framework of a social dialogue that is based on participation and that is institutionalized. This is what we are aiming for. We want an Argentina that will focus on concrete and tangible realizations, one that focuses on the full freedom for all. This will be an instrument for social insertion and it will be good for production. We need to promote excellence in education and create jobs that are based on social justice. We need to return to the culture of work and give rights within the world of work, and these will be based on international values. We are fully aware of the challenge of creating a society that allows its workers to have a dignified life in a freely chosen job with high-quality education to enter the new world of work in the world. Another form of social contract is possible and we believe in it. We are heading to it, to improve the quality of work, decent work, and so that all may benefit from freedom for us, for the future and for all the people in the world who will live in Argentina. Thank you very much.

Mr Rodolfo Antonio Parra Rojas

Employer (Cuba)

President, delegates, we welcome the choice of subject matter in the Director-General's report, i.e. reflections on the pertinence of a new social contract for the world in recognition of the fact that the current social contract is no longer working. We agree with the fact that the existing social contract has not reached its objectives. Global progress against child labour has stagnated. The number of victims of forced labour has increased. Violence and harassment against women, migrant workers, refugees, and religious and ethnic minorities persist. Practically three million workers die every year due to occupational illnesses or accidents. In many cases freedom of association and collective bargaining are not a reality. Over half the workforce in the world works in countries that have still not ratified the fundamental standards that are related with these principles. The conditions to obtain loans from international financial institutions have mainly focused on the reduction of public spending, which has in turn impacted basic social services such as healthcare, education and social protection. The fact that sustainable companies play a fundamental role in strengthening social contracts is true. These companies offer stable employment and high-quality jobs. They respect the environment by means of innovation and they promote trust and cooperation with local communities. President, we agree with the need to reformulate the current social contract by means of social dialogue. It must be human-centred and it must reflect the profound transformations of the world of work, driven by technological innovations, demographic change and environmental and climate change. We believe that the new social contract should be focused on social justice. It should be based on national social contracts and adjusted to agreed-upon standards on an international level and be the object of consensus. We must guarantee appropriate protection for the workers in terms of their health, and they must be protected against the loss of income and ageing. We must invest in developing their capacities, promoting the fair distribution of wealth, gender equality and the eradication of any form of discrimination. Indeed, here the ILO's

Declaration on the fundamental principles and rights at work is an essential guide. Social dialogue must promote the existence of a favourable environment for sustainable companies who are drivers of economic growth and the creation of decent jobs, recognizing that productivity is the product of entrepreneurial dynamics and competition, and investments in technology and innovation are key to achieve the social objectives. We call for strengthened international cooperation and a reform of the international financial system so as to allow countries to invest in policies and social institutions that are necessary to promote social justice and finance a just transition on a national level so that all countries and companies may have equal opportunities. One example of the reformulation of the current social contract would be to stop the inhumane blockade that is imposed by the Government of the United States against our country. And this has been the case for 60 years. It was condemned by the General Assembly of the United Nations for 31 years consecutively, and it has been made worse over the later governments. The measures violate international law, affect trade and violate the human rights of the Cuban people, and they constitute an obstacle for the development of Cuban companies, including 11,000 SMEs. The stop of this blockade would be a positive example of a changed social contract. Thank you very much.

Ms Yolanda Díaz Pérez

Government (Spain)

Our country shares the objectives of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We have adhered to it in January, and we have also brought our contribution to the Global Accelerator for Social Justice. Our progressive government has also promoted the establishment of banks of development. Now we have also seen that the best economic policy is a labour policy that protects workers and that it is possible to develop policies that favour economic growth at the same time as creating high-quality jobs. This is the principle that has guided the in-depth structural reform of the labour market, and this has been done hand in hand with social dialogue. The figures are demonstrative. Today, over 21.2 million people are in work, and that is a historic figure. Temporary work has reduced in the private sector, too. It has been halved. Since 2018 the minimum wage in Spain has grown by 54% and the gender wage gap has reduced by 5.3 points, which is a drop of 25% in only five years. We remain committed to eradicating any form of discrimination. As a result, Spain has adhered to the international coalition for wage equality. Our country has also improved conditions for families. Now parental leave is of equal length for both parents. Equal opportunity plans are more common in companies and more attention is being paid to both care workers and domestic workers. This is reflected in our ratification of Conventions 189 on domestic work and 190 on violence and harassment at work. As a result, we have also a record number of women in work: over ten million female workers are working in our country. Social dialogue must serve to address the main challenges of our days. It is clear collective bargaining and occupational health must take into account the ecological transition so that justice may truly be achieved. This must be done with workers and others. Moreover, new rights for the digital world must be created. As you know, our current government is also focusing on other aspects. We want to reduce the working week from 40 hours to 37 hours and a half, without any pay cut. We know that it is necessary to work less in order to live better. Another great objective for the upcoming years is to render the job centres more democratic and increase worker participation in decision-making processes. As you can see, there are many challenges that we are facing. It is necessary to construct a global social contract to extend labour rights that incorporate the fight against climate

change, inequalities and promote equality between men, women and LGBTQI+ people. Precisely for this, our country has been drafting a charter for labour rights. This would be a new reference which will serve us at the global Social Summit in 2025. We continue to defend an ILO that is adapted to today, and today Spain has also proposed that everybody, all members, have the same rights of vote. Spain continues to defend labour rights and we also believe in the fact that work is not a commodity. We believe in the Declaration of Philadelphia. You can count on us. Thank you very much.

Mr Temistocles Rosas Rodríguez

Employer (Panama)

President of the Conference, Director-General, delegates, on behalf of the National Council of Private Enterprise, we have welcomed the Report of the Director-General on a renewed social contract. It focuses on the objectives of social justice and on a new social contract. The report focuses on social justice as a fundamental condition to reach universal and long-lasting peace by means of decent work. It states that work is a central element in the life of people and communities. We agree with this and consider it important to highlight the role that the private sector plays in this matter and the need for a favourable environment for the development of sustainable companies and the creation of decent work and high-quality work. Currently, there is a lot of inequality in the world, and this has been made worse by COVID-19 as well as technological changes, as presented in the report. We want to recognize the fact that tripartite dialogue is fundamental and that social dialogue is crucial in order to implement concrete actions so that we may face up to the complex challenges that we are currently facing. CoNEP works with all the key sectors in the country and we push for high-quality education which promotes the development of competencies that focus on new opportunities on the labour market and as well as paying attention to the new trends and needs and opportunities that these present. The Report of the Director-General focuses on the respect for social protection. This is a priority for Panama who wants to reform and modernize its social security system. To achieve this, we have presented a proposal that is based on three strategic pillars that allow the situation to be dealt with and so that the pension system may be sustainable. Reducing informality must also be a priority, and we must strengthen the creation of productive employment that is long-lasting, as well as decent work. It is necessary to create a favourable environment for companies so that they may be sustainable in the long-term. Recently, a memorandum of understanding was signed to launch the Decent Work Programme in the country for 2024-2027, which will consolidate the other sectors and will reflect the efforts that have been made in terms of entrepreneurial conduct and responsibility. Matters of interest here are occupational health and safety, the eradication of child labour, gender equality at the workplace, only to mention a few. CoNEP has also recently updated its Vision 2050 document that is based on democratic governance and political sustainability with the following strategies: inclusion, productivity with sustainability, competence and economic opening. All these efforts are being strengthened by the decision to create an office in Panama for the ILO which will allow greater synergy and greater collaboration with the ILO. CoNEP would like to reiterate its commitment to respecting tripartism by means of social dialogue and to seeking consensus for all matters that are relevant in the country. We wish to say that we will not succumb to any form of pressure that affects social peace and the fundamental rights of humankind. We would like to urge the ILO to continue using the existing mechanisms for dialogue. Now, thanks to other aspects,

such as the agenda for 2024-2029 and tripartite social dialogue, we believe that we can attain the Panama that we want. Thank you.

Mr Anthony Yaw Baah

Worker (Ghana)

Mr President, distinguished delegates, I would like to thank the Director-General and the ILO for bringing back social justice and decent work into the limelight once again through the creation of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Ghana Trades Union Congress is a proud member of the coalition. We urge all unions that have not yet joined the coalition to join without further delay. This noble vision of the Director-General does not only enhance the ILO's image in the multilateral system but, more importantly, it is also a clarion call on all of us, that is governments, trade unions, employers, civil society organizations, NGOs, multilateral institutions, and especially the international financial institutions, to review and re-examine our goals, our policies, our laws, practices, activities, traditions, cultures and norms within the framework of social justice. The creation of the coalition is very timely given the fast-changing world of work and the acrimonious geopolitics we are witnessing today. Last year, the Prime Minister of Barbados reminded us that social justice is simply about fairness. She said, "If we are fair to one another, we will achieve social justice." And I agree with her. Social Justice is a universal principle that must be embraced by all, regardless of our nationality, race, sex, ethnicity, socio-economic status and our location on the globe. If we, the social partners in the ILO, are promoting social justice, then we should demonstrate that we are ahead of those we are inviting to join the coalition. Governments must be fair to their people, especially the most vulnerable citizens. Employers must be fair to their employees and their trade unions. And unions must be fair in their dealings with employers and governments. And together, as social partners operating in the labour market, we must be fair to women, we must be fair to young people, we must be fair to the informal economy workers, we must be fair to migrant workers, and we must be fair to workers from minority groups as well as people with disability. One of the things we can do together as social partners is to continue to adopt appropriate Recommendations and Conventions here at the International Labour Conference to protect the most vulnerable in the world of work. Governments, businesses, policymakers and international institutions should not focus exclusively on economic growth, on power and money. We should pay attention to social justice in all that we do because that is the foundation for universal peace and harmony. As one great son of Africa said, and this was Archbishop Desmond Tutu, he said "Do your little bit of good wherever you are. It is those little bits of good that together overwhelm the world". I thank you for your attention.

Mr Nuno Biscaya

Employer (Portugal)

President, on behalf of the Portuguese Employers' delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your nomination, and I do wish you the best of successes. The centre of our debate is the report of the Director-General, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. This debate takes place against a complex and unpredictable backdrop. It is one in which there are armed conflicts, both in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East, in which energy costs are increasing. Dependency on raw materials, inflation, interest

rates are all increasing and there is a shortage of human resources. These are all having a profound impact on a human, social and economic level. This is something that we have to manage, such as the digital and energy transitions that have to be seen so that we may reach a more sustainable form of development. The Director-General recognizes this when he says that we are facing many challenges and there are many transformations ongoing and it is urgent to renew the current social contract and our mutual commitments. So, in order to do this, we are convinced that social dialogue has to play a central role. It is necessary to implement the measures that are in an agenda for international and national commitments that involve governments, companies and workers in the definition of strategies and policies that focus on economic and social development. Portuguese employers believe that the challenge that is defined and identified by the Director-General will have a real impact on the world of work. The private sector plays an essential role here and there is a need to create an environment that is favourable to economic growth and to the development of companies and the creation of jobs. On this basis, government's role is also fundamental in order to create a solid basis that provides trust. This has to take place by strengthening credibility in the institutions, respecting the autonomy of the social partners and the execution of public policies that aim to fight corruption and the informal economy. Indeed, corruption and the informal economy have impacts that are negatively affecting entrepreneurship. And this renders more fragile the world of work and these are aspects that we need to focus on immediately. The report also focuses on environmental, technological and demographic issues. However, it is fundamental that we focus on the practical challenges that lay ahead, such as a high level of informality, corruption and the absence of compliance with the system. An international standard-setting system will always be impossible to put into practice without robust national policies. Indeed, we want to create a world that focuses on the fundamental rights and principles of work that are fair and that are beneficial for companies, workers and society. This will create stability, cohesion, safety. Thank you.

Mr Leboucher Freire De Andrade Fernando Elísio

Government (Cabo Verde)

Good afternoon, President. Today it is an undeniable fact that the care economy is essential for humanity and for its survival. All citizens at some point in their lives will need care due to their physical vulnerability or psychological vulnerability, lack of autonomy and dependence. Namely, when they are children or when they are old. This means that care workers, when they are in the informal economy, have to carry too heavy a burden, and many times they are forced to abandon their work and social lives that have great repercussions on their physical, mental and emotional health. This is a social and economic problem that has been recognized by the Government of Cabo Verde. We have implemented public social policies in order to improve the systems of care and policies that also focus on strategies that focus on people who receive the care and also the carers in order to provide them with more dignified and decent working conditions and a better quality of life. The Government has implemented the National Care Plan. It is an instrument that is fundamental to ensure that there are cross-cutting policies in terms of social protection, with the objective to ensure that the person receiving the care and the person giving the care all enjoy high quality and safety. This is something that the Government has implemented with the support of its partners that have helped finance several types of vocational training for carers, for people in situations of need. There is also a diploma that has been established that allows young

people to become professionals in terms of caring for children. The Government has also developed capacity-building actions and continual training for people who manage creches, nurseries and other types of pre-school institutions. Moreover, we are lengthening the parental leave for women from 60 to 90 days, and there is now a parental leave period for men too so that both parents may help care for their children. Moreover, there is healthcare benefit for people when their children have to go to hospital, until they are 12 years old. Many people also in old age require care. The Government has therefore contracted over a hundred carers to provide care at home for these old people. The aim also in 2023 was to approve the status of the elderly person, the objective being to protect their rights and protect their care system in order to guarantee their integration and effective participation in society. Moreover, we also ensure that children may be registered in public and private schools for free and there are special rules that apply to people with health problems. There are new qualification systems and so on that are implemented in care centres for young people and children that are disabled. We recognize the complexity and the high demands that are placed on carers, particularly in the informal sector. Cabo Verde is focusing therefore on creating a statute for the informal carer so that they may also enjoy rights, guarantees and the necessary support so that they may perform their activities. There will also be psychological support that will be provided so that their emotional and psychological health be taken care of. Moreover, this statute will focus on the situation of people who have to stay at home and ensure their mental and physical well-being. We also aim to create the conditions so that people may perform care activities for pay, that things will become more flexible in terms of timetables. And this will be the case for informal carers who care for somebody at home as well. As you can see, the Government of Cabo Verde has worked tirelessly in order to implement many reforms in order to improve its social security system to strengthen the care system, to improve the well-being of people in situations of dependence and also provide legal protection for carers. This is fundamental for all citizens, institutions and the social partners. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Stephen Mc Clashie

Government (Trinidad and Tobago)

Mr President, I am pleased to bring warm greetings from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and reiterate the commitment of my country to the promotion of social justice. I wish to firstly commend the Director-General for his report on a renewed social contract. Not only was the report comprehensive and thorough, it will undoubtedly help to spark a conversation and initiate action around reshaping the social contract. In the words of Aristotle, "For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all." Mr President, while the social contract is necessary for a harmonious society, we must appreciate the impact of changing patterns in the world of work on the social contract. These patterns give rise to new expectations and they call for responsive and meaningful action. We, as constituents, must therefore assume responsibility and embrace avenues which promote adaptation and innovation and harness hidden opportunities as we seek to renew the contract. The report emphasizes that it is not possible to achieve sustainable development without decent work. Decent work represents the most effective instrument for improving the living conditions of workers and for reaping the benefits of material and social progress. While the ILO and its constituents will continue to work together to create solutions, which will in turn facilitate the upholding of our unyielding

vow to social justice and decent work, this surely cannot be pursued in silos. Collaboration among multilateral partners will help us to address the more complex challenges mentioned in the report, including climate change, income insecurities, inequalities, underemployment and unemployment, and the slow progress of the Sustainable Development Agenda. In promoting effective governance and in fulfilling our obligations to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Labour continues to work towards a human-centred approach to labour rights. Allow me to share a few ongoing initiatives of my ministry in this regard. With a view towards the prevention and elimination of child labour, this Government continues to engage with private and public stakeholders in the development of light and hazardous work lists. The ministry has also launched its first Child Labour Ambassador Programme, which aims to empower children to become key drivers in the fight against child labour. The ministry has also launched a campaign across all media channels geared towards sensitizing workers and employers of the new national minimum wage increase, which became effective in January of 2024. Under the auspices of the Occupational Safety and Health Agency, public stakeholder consultations were held in March 2024 on the creation of a draft policy for protective personal equipment regulations. Additionally, the Conciliation, Advisory and Advocacy division of the ministry regularly conducts conciliation proceedings between employers and unions in rights disputes and provides information and advice to union workers and employers on the principles and practice of good industrial relations. Finally, work is also underway to amend labour legislation. Importantly, proposals for amendment of legislation regarding our Industrial Relations Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, retrenchment and severance benefits and the recruiting of workers are before the Cabinet for consideration. In closing, I also wish to reaffirm the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the principles of the ILO and to a renewed social contract. I thank you.

Mr Tiago Oliveira

Worker (Portugal)

On behalf of the CGTP, we are proud to be here on the 50th anniversary of the revolution of the 25th of April 1974 in Portugal. This revolution is a reference in the fight of workers and of the Portuguese people to overcome fascism and follow a path towards progress and social justice. 50 years have passed since this revolution. Indeed, we achieved peace and freedom. The African countries gained their independence. There was a fairer distribution of wealth. Salaries had improved. There was a reduction in working hours, the right to paid holidays, labour stability, the prohibition of unfair dismissals, the creation of free public services and the ratification of many Conventions of the ILO. However, despite these advances, the policies of successive governments, by having to follow conditions imposed by the European Union, have suffered. The country has suffered reversals with the introduction of worse standards for workers. There has been an attack against wages, timetables, an increase of precarious work, an attack against collective agreements and public services. In 2019 we had to admit to the fact that there was no progress that could continue if there was no better improvement to the conditions of life and an increase of wages for workers. It is fundamental to increase wages in Portugal. Between 2001 and 2022, profits grew by 31.1% and wages only increased by 7.1%. Purchasing power at the end of the 2023 in our country was lower than in 2021. Two in three workers have a wage that is lower than €1,000 a month, and thousands now belong to the group of the working poor. One in every ten people, i.e. workers, lives in poverty in Portugal. There are 1.9 million workers that live in conditions

of completely insecure work. 45% of workers have to work shifts, Saturdays, Sundays and on bank holidays. It is necessary to move forward with collective bargaining and respect the workers' rights as well as the right to strike. We will not accept the violation of this right. We are speaking here about values that are linked to progress, and the country is constantly focusing more on capital and the advance of neoliberal policies. This is called exploitation, and we know that it is used as a war against workers and democratic rights. The Report of the Director-General identifies the need for better social justice, and this is clear in the face of this screaming inequality. Today, like in the past, we need to look and have more ambitious objectives that put an end to exploitation and promote greater social justice. This is why we want to construct a world that is more fair, more just. There are many people, for example, also that make a profit thanks to wars at the expense of thousands of deaths in the world. As the Director-General has stated, there is a clear violation of international law when it comes the actions of Israel against the Palestinian people. We cannot live without putting an end to this genocide. We want a future of peace and values for the worker. Thank you.

Ms Taabeta Amuera Teakai

Government (Kiribati)

Mr President, ministers, ladies and gentlemen, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I greet you all. Kam na bane ni Mauri. I congratulate you, Mr President, on your election to steer this year's 112th ILC, for your able leadership. I also recognize and acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude, the hard work of the ILO under the strong leadership of the Director-General. I congratulate you, Director-General, and your hardworking team on the successful launch of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, and I look forward to the inaugural forum later this week. Mr President, over the last year the ILO has masterfully negotiated multiple crises in the world of work caused by war, natural disasters and climate change. I take this moment to remember those who have been affected by wars and riots and I also pray for a speedy restoration of peace and stability and a release of the hostages, particularly the Palestinian Gaza crisis. Kiribati, like other small countries, also faces unique challenges due to our geographic isolation, limited natural resources and the existential threat of climate change which impact our labour market and the well-being of our people. Access to international climate financing to mitigate and adapt climate change risks remains elusive to Kiribati. The role of labour mobility cannot be summed up just as adaptation. To achieve the promise of adaptation in the Kiribati context, we need investment in capacity-building, with constant reflection of lessons learned in the future work of the ILO. Secondly, and most importantly, are the forgotten impacts of climate change on our migrant workers who have increasingly faced hazards they are not prepared for, whether it be tropical cyclones and storm surges in New Zealand, bushfires in Australia and other parts of the world. In the just transition, it is our migrant workers who are vulnerable, so we must implement safeguards to ensure the same access to assistance to migrant workers globally. Mr President, Kiribati is making progress in providing decent work for its people. Employment opportunities have increased in the domestic, public and private sectors, which have been complemented by overseas worker schemes. This growth has not been enough to lower the unemployment rate, which remains high in Kiribati. To achieve our national goals and development aspirations in our Kiribati Vision KV20 we depend on labour mobility. Kiribati is heavily engaged with New Zealand and Australia through seasonal work. Currently, 464 women and 1,588 men from Kiribati are employed in these countries, sending back vital remittances for their families. Our seafaring and fishery industries

are our source of pride and are gaining recognition. We have also deployed two ladies to work as lounge attendants at the Narita International Airport, in Japan. They provided vital remittances for their households to invest in SMEs, education for children and to adapt to the growing impacts of climate change while at the same time contributing to the billions of dollars and addressing labour shortages in these labour-receiving countries' economies. Kiribati is committed to securing fair employment and improving living and working conditions for our seafarers and fishers by seeking new partnerships and adhering to international labour standards and striving to fulfil Convention 185 and the principles of Convention 188. Mr Chairman, I am delighted to share that we have successfully initiated the deployment of our world-class trained seafarers with Industrial Holding Bulgaria Shipping, and six seafarers have now been mobilized, and we eagerly anticipate further deployments in the coming weeks. The revival of our seafaring industry is not just a matter of economic recovery but a testament to the resilience and determination of the I-Kiribati people. I am also proud to announce that last year, through a cooperation between the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources and the Ministry of Education, our President, His Excellency Taneti Maamau, signed the grant agreement in Washington DC to begin the implementation of a USD\$29.1 million project with the US Millenium Challenge Corporation that will see funding injected in our efforts to expand decent work in international labour mobility, including through the establishment of our Overseas Worker Resource Centre and exchange opportunities through summer camps in Fiji and the US for our senior secondary school students. Under my portfolio, Kiribati youth are being trained at the Kiribati Institute of Technology and the Marine Training Centre to provide not only the skills necessary for employment overseas but also to fill domestic needs and spawn development for Kiribati. Mr President, I thank you for your support to give Big Ocean States like Kiribati, that spreads across nearly three million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean, a platform to share both our achievements and challenges in providing decent work where, I want to stress, the inclusion of Small Island Developing States and least developed countries needs to be valued. Kiribati continues to advocate the protection and improved working conditions of migrant workers, such as in this year's ILC committee on decent work in the care economy. I also hope to build and strengthen relationships with other labour-sending countries, such as the Philippines and our Pacific family or Small Island Developing States and to learn from each other's experiences. I urge the ILO to take precise actions at the regional and sub-regional office, and I also call for collaborative engagements within the ILO family and to strengthen social dialogue at all levels, while upholding the ILO's core mandate and principles for advancing human-centred economies and decent work for all. Mr Chairman, I thank you, and I wish to conclude by sharing the Kiribati blessings of 'Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa' meaning good health, peace and prosperity to us all. Kam bati n rabwa.

Ms Rosa Isabel Santos Fernández

Employer (Spain)

President, Vice-Presidents, Director-General, delegates, it is an honour for me to address you at this conference, representing the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations. First of all, I would like to thank the Director for the report that has been presented to us on a renewal of the social contract so that progress and social justice may become a reality. In our understanding, we share the feeling that we need a new configuration for the social contract. But this will only be possible if sustainability for

companies and social progress go hand in hand. It must be taken into account that things are changing very fast and that the world is changing. The environmental and the digital trends are also in constant change, and this is also taking place against a highly complex geopolitical context. Of course we wish to improve living standards for everybody across the globe, and in this context companies continue being a transformative element in society. Sustainable companies will push forward societies in which people will benefit from more sustainable lifestyles. In fact, companies continue being the driver for the economy, and they create 90% of jobs. They are the major contributor of social protection systems. It is necessary to benefit from the expertise gained in companies and take into account the real economy. Social dialogue with democratic institutions will provide legitimacy to systems in place. The social contract must be renewed, but this will require the collaboration of public and private entities as well as public policies that remove the informal economy that focus on continual training as tools to guarantee the principle of equality and equal opportunities. Moreover, active and passive policies must be strengthened so that we can create jobs. In Spain, the labour reform that was adopted in December 2021 and that was the product of tripartite dialogue has led to some changes, as has been stated by a former speaker. Today there are over 21 million people affiliated with social security, and one out of two people in Spain have an open-ended contract. Moreover, women and young people are on the labour market more than ever before and there are internal flexibility mechanisms that allow collective bargaining to take place and the creation of a more resilient, more stable, more inclusive, safer and more diverse labour market. We still have a long way to go, and this will be reflected in a new social contract. As has been stated by the Director-General, this social contract has to be based on negotiations with the social partners. We believe that collective bargaining must act as a leading light. It is adaptable and can adapt to each sector. This will be the main tool for the Government to establish good labour relations. For example, in Spain we have the bipartite agreement for employment and collective bargaining that was signed in 2023. And now we can see that this agreement is pushing forward modernization and the increase of wages in a highly complex economy with a lot of inflation. It is necessary to not allow governments to be tempted to satisfy only political interests that are short-sighted and that could cause trouble in terms of the development of productive corporations. Moreover, excessive regulation means that there will be a lack of predictability, and the increase in expenses can also cause problems for SMEs in Spain. Please allow me also to state that in 2025, at the global summit organized by the United Nations, Spain will focus on defending the position of companies as a value-creating element in society and that should participate in social dialogue. Thank you very much.

Ms Hanitra Fitiavana Razakaboana

Government (Madagascar)

President of the 112th International Labour Conference, Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, delegates of governments, employers and workers, first of all I am addressing you in the name of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Madagascar, Andry Rajoelina, and the Government. I am very honoured and ecstatic to be here today and to take the floor before this august assembly. This conference reflects the institution of dialogue, and I would like to commend the initiative on moving towards the social contract which represents guidelines and imperatives for a world of work that is constantly evolving and will help us move towards sustainable social peace as well as achieving social justice at all costs, and this requires concrete actions. Madagascar

encourages the entire process of renewing the social contract between all partners in the interest of progress and combatting inequality. For this new social contract, our country has priorities that are the pillars of development through its general policy, which includes the valuation of human capital, industrial development, good governance and the rule of law. We consider decent work to very important in its cross-sectionality in order to help us eliminate any vulnerability and consolidate our economic and social progress and ensure inclusive development for all. The figures in the Malagasy world of work continue to refer to the Decent Work Country Programme, including two priorities, the following: promotion of employment and the extension of comprehensive protection. Ladies and gentlemen, since 2019 Madagascar has ratified ten Conventions and one Protocol, which have been fully integrated into our positive national law, and related actions have been undertaken. Moreover, operations in over 100 formal units have been undertaken, and in the informal economy as well, throughout a year by the labour inspection services in the framework of strategic planning. Madagascar is one of the first African countries to implement this planning and a process which aims to raise awareness and train employers as well as workers in the culture of prevention and OSH. In Madagascar over 90% of jobs are informal. This has led to the implementation since December 2023 of a road map to expand social security to non-salaried workers and workers who are in the informal and rural economies. This will lead to an adapted legislation and the implementation of social welfare systems as well as healthcare for this group of the population. The new labour code, which is currently at the adoption stage in parliament is the aspiration for a tripartite consensus-based approach with all interested parties. And this would take into account the fundamental principles and rights and the constant evolution in the world of work. Considering labour migration, the importance of Madagascar opening to the world and having a strong and involved diaspora means that the Ministry for Labour continues to promote work abroad while ensuring better protection for Malagasy émigré workers before, during and after their migration cycle. We are continuing to monitor the respect of ethical and fair recruitment, and we are combatting abusive practices and all forms of exploitation when it comes to recruitment of migrant workers. Proof of the importance of social dialogue and to show the respect of the sacrosanct principle of tripartism, all questions related to work and employment are negotiated and consulted between the interested parties. Through effective social dialogue, the National Labour Council has approved a rise in the minimum wage for 2024 in the non-agricultural sector and the agricultural sector as well. In order to ensure the respect of workers' rights in the private sector and in order to ensure social peace, field visits are carried out by inspectors throughout the island. The respective social dialogue is of paramount importance and consultation structures and functional decision structures engage in this work in a tripartite manner between interested parties and partners. And this is provided for in legislation on the structure of trade unions and representation criteria. In the framework of the Alliance 8.7, in which Madagascar is a pioneering country, awareness-raising and related activities are being undertaken in order to combat child labour, forced labour and human trafficking and modern slavery. In employment, the Minister for Labour has also implemented a national campaign to support the creation of decent work and provide guidance, integration and reintegration services for the youth and those without employment, including women and persons with disabilities. Ladies and gentlemen, in order to move towards stronger political commitments, Madagascar commends the initiative of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Our country is committed to bring together our priorities, economic and environmental, in order to achieve our common goal, which is the Global Coalition. To conclude, I would like to express our gratitude to the International Labour Organization

for their unwavering support to the Malagasy Government throughout the entire process of the implementation of our national labour programmes. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Yogendra Kumar Kunwar

Worker (Nepal)

Respected Chair, distinguished delegates, sisters and brothers, it is my privilege to address this magnificent 112th Session of the ILC as the President of the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre and Nepal Trade Union Congress, NTUC. Mr Chair, we are representing here the voices of the millions of workers who tirelessly contribute to our nation's prosperity. Our presence here underscores the significance of international solidarity in advancing workers' rights and shaping a fairer and more equitable world. Nepal faces a myriad of challenges in ensuring decent work and social justice for all. However, the spirit of our workers remains unwavering, fuelled by the belief in a future where dignity in labour is a reality. We appreciate the ILO Director-General's comprehensive report on a renewed social contract to create a just society with the principles of universal human rights and capabilities, equal access to opportunities, fair distribution and just transitions. We call for the full implementation of international labour standards, including those outlined by the ILO to build a just society where every worker is afforded fair treatment and a safe working environment. We continue to strive to ensure that labour laws are upheld, that workers are not subjected to discrimination and that their fundamental rights are protected. We recognize that the fight for workers' rights is a global endeavour that requires solidarity and collaboration across borders. Despite promulgation of progressive constitution and labour legislations that mandate citizens' right to decent work and social security, many challenges persist in their implementation. Nepal's labour market is vulnerable with a large percentage of unorganized sector. Workers' participation in social security programmes might be the most effective strategy in formalizing the economy. However, we are concerned about the slow progress in it. Mr Chair, we strongly believe that capital and labour should go hand in hand. However, the labour issue is overshadowed and our empathy is eroding. In light of the world's tremendous technological advancement, we must consider the benefits that we stand to gain from this. When we aim for the welfare state with social justice, we are worried with the gaps and environmental degradation created by the current economic growth. The democratic and trade union spaces are being narrowed by neoliberal and populist deviations. In contrary to the ILO principle of strengthening the social dialogue, our representation in various tripartite mechanisms has been weakened by the Government. We are disheartened that the Nepal Government has cut the participation rights of advisors from trade unions and employer organizations in this conference, which is against ILO provisions. I request the ILO to support amplifying the voices of Nepalese workers. The unreliable CBA procedure is another concern for us which has impeded the institutionalization process of the labour movement in Nepal. Nepal has joined the ILO's call to participate in the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Through this coalition, we hope to collaborate in addressing structural inequality and tackling the underlying causes of social injustice. Nepal recently joined the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, which supports decent jobs and social protection. As Nepal moves towards graduation from least developed country status in 2026 we have taken it as a good opportunity to push for the ratification of key ILO Conventions, including Convention 87. We admire the ILO report emphasizing decent work and the care economy. However, the community health workers in Nepal

are still treated as voluntary and denied decent work, so we call on this conference to recognize and regularize their contributions. We are pleased to announce our dedication to working together to implement the Decent Work Country Programme. Let us stand united in our commitment towards renewing the social contract, upholding the rights and dignity of workers and creating a just society. Thank you so much.

Mr Vilay Vongkhaseum

Worker (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

Excellency President of the International Labour Conference, Excellency Director-General of the International Labour Organization, ladies and gentlemen. Today I have the honour of speaking on behalf of Lao workers. My name is Vilay, Vice-President of Lao Federation of Trade Unions. First of all, I would like to express my congratulations to the speech of the Director-General at the opening, and Lao workers fully support the Report of the Director-General. Distinguished delegates, the Lao trade unions represent workers across the country and would like to express our greetings to all trade union members and workers around the world. Today we live in times of hardship, with geopolitical instability, with wars continuing in some parts of the world. Social cohesion is under pressure. Inflation and cost of living increased drastically, having a significant impact to the workers. Lao trade unions play a very important role in the country to defend and protect the interest of workers. There are nine core action plans and 51 projects with various key priorities in place. The Lao trade unions promote social justice, social protection, safety and health as fundamental workers' rights, decent work for all and fair wages. Ladies and gentlemen, Lao trade unions, as the voice of workers in the country, work closely with government and employer organizations and other sectors to promote health and safety as fundamental principles and rights at work. We are also working in close collaboration with social partners in ensuring better working conditions and welfare of workers in the country. We promote gender equality through legislation and national policies. Furthermore, Lao trade unions also educate and enhance the knowledge of their members on various laws and regulations such as the Lao labour law and social security law, et cetera. Labour protection is at the core of social justice and decent work and it is critical in order to prevent the crisis. Lao trade unions promote a right-based approach and set their awareness programme into three key pillars such as one, social protection, two, industrial relations, three, trade union development. Mr Chair, Lao trade unions thank the ILO office for its support to Lao workers. The Decent Work Country Programme for Lao People's Democratic Republic from 2022 to 2026 supports the country to make several achievements and contribute to long-term impacts in advancing decent work in the country. Mr President, on this occasion, on behalf of Lao workers, I would like to once again express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the ILO office for its continued support and cooperation to Lao trade unions for many years. And also I would like to take this opportunity to thank all friends and the international partners for their assistance, technical expertise and solidarity to Lao workers. Finally, I would like to conclude my speech by pledging that Lao workers will continue to be actively active in any of the ILO activities. Mr Chair, wishing you all the success, and thank you.

Mr Zechariah Luhanga

Government (Zambia)

President of the Conference and distinguished delegates. Allow me, President, before I deliver my statement to convey Zambia's deepest condolences on the passing on of Malawi's Vice-President and other officials. May their souls rest in eternal peace. It is my singular honour and privilege to address the Conference on the seminal themes ably articulated in the reports of the Director-General of the ILO and the Chairperson of the Governing Body. From the onset, I wish to join the previous speakers in congratulating you and your vice-presidents on your election to spearhead the deliberations of the Conference. The two reports have outlined key elements that relate to alleviation of most of the challenges faced by the majority of our people. Social contracts, as rightly put by your office, determine what is to be provided within societies on a collective basis without leaving anyone behind. The Zambian Government has placed the over 19.6 million citizens at the heart of our planning to ensure an equitable way of distributing resources to benefit all. Poverty and inequalities have continued to rise in many parts of the world. In Zambia, this has been exacerbated by the consequences of COVID-19, natural disasters due to climate change and a debt burden that my country has made progress in resolving. It is clear that there are many needs that require our attention in order to attain social justice, such as access to healthcare, education, food, housing, water and sanitation. This requires strong and coherent policies, fiscal discipline in all areas. The pervading challenges of labour markets can potentially overwhelm our collective resolve and commitment towards the universal goal of social justice, but we are determined as a country to remain resilient. Mr President, as part of our home-grown solutions, Zambia has embarked on a number of radical changes that include a massive increase in the Constituency Development Fund, CDF, for each of our 156 constituencies intended at, among others, catalysing development at the local levels to increase opportunities for the youth and women to engage in various economic activities. The allocation for each constituency was raised 16-fold, resulting in approximately USD\$1.3 million available for each constituency to invest in local development projects. The fund also supports skills training in order to ensure the employability of the youth. Further, we have introduced a free education policy to allow the vulnerable citizens of our country to access education for the benefit of the country. As a result of this policy, Mr President, over two million children have since returned to school. Mr President, Zambia has created a ministry in charge of small and medium enterprises to encourage and support investments for them to grow and thrive as well as to address the dichotomy in the sizes of enterprises, ultimately aiding the transition of small economic units from informality to formality. The Government has taken special interest in the informal economy that accounts for 73.2% of the labour force and has put in place mechanisms to facilitate enhanced productivity and sustainability of micro, small and medium enterprises so that they can create decent employment. The Citizens Economic Empowerment Fund has also been reengineered as a vehicle to promote entrepreneurship activities for job and wealth creation. Debt management or sustainability is a key focus area for Zambia as she seeks to create the much needed fiscal space to undertake even more robust economic recovery, stabilization and steady growth in an environmentally sustainable way. Mr President, to strengthen social dialogue, and in recognition of the critical role of the private sector in our development agenda, Zambia launched the Public Private Dialogue Forum which aims at strengthening private sector engagement and facilitating collaboration among relevant stakeholders to address critical sector-specific constraints. In conclusion, in this

last decade of action towards realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is incumbent upon us all to ensure that no one is left behind. We must all resound the ILO's enduring principle that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice. I thank you.

Mr Alexey Vovchenko

Government (Russian Federation)

Distinguished President, distinguished colleagues, we would like to express our gratitude for the organization of this session of the International Labour Conference. As the Director-General of the ILO noted quite correctly in his report, social justice remains an imperative and a prerequisite for ensuring universal and sustainable peace. The Russian Federation fully agrees with the idea of the need to achieve social justice through ensuring decent work and providing social protection to citizens. Over the last year we were able to implement a number of changes that we have been preparing for a number of years. This would have been impossible without teamwork. We discussed difficult decisions together with our social partners in the framework of the Russian tripartite commission as well as at meetings of the public council. One of the main priorities in the Russian Federation in order to achieve social justice is supporting families with children. As of last year, we have introduced unified benefits. Now, through one application, a family can receive assistance from pregnancy to the child's 17th birthday. Comprehensive support for families with children has enabled us to minimize the risks of poverty, including when a family welcomes another child. In general, targeted measures to support citizens in the context of a favourable situation on the labour market have enabled us to reduce poverty to 8.5% as of last year. The implementation of streamlined targeted aid would have been impossible without improving our information systems. Today the social fund receives the vast majority of information on the level of need of citizens without requiring millions of requests or applications from citizens. Currently, 42 measures of social benefits have been converted to this simple format. As of the end of the year federal benefits will be converted to the social treasury format. As of next year there will be unified requirements for the provision of benefits. Regardless of the payment, whether it is federal or regional, it must be accessible through one electronic application or proactively. What is important is that it should be easy and convenient for citizens to receive aid. In addition to streamlining our procedures, digital systems will also help evaluate the effectiveness of decisions that have already been taken. Today we are establishing a unified register of persons in need which will combine data from state information systems and enable us to form a picture, a portrait of a family. For families whose income is below two minimum wages per person, we have a fuller picture. That includes the number of children, whether they receive subsidies, their employment status and whether they receive benefits from support measures. At the same time, parents will be able to keep receiving benefits for childcare until the child is a year and a half, even if they go back to work early. The next issue that I would like to mention is the labour market and labour relations. The level of unemployment as of last year hit a record low, and that was 3.2%. Today unemployment is at 2.6%. That is even lower. Total employment has risen to 73.6 million people. On the 'Work in Russia' portal, job seekers have access to over two million vacancies and vacant job positions. In order to achieve the national goal related to economic growth while maintaining a low level of unemployment and reducing structural disparities on the labour market, of course we need a comprehensive approach. We are also paying particular attention to working

with graduates. We are establishing a routing mechanism that would aim graduates towards specific employers and direct them towards specific employers. This is particularly relevant when it comes to students who are preparing for professions that are in demand on the labour market. We are working together with educational institutions in this cooperation. In order to address the challenges of the contemporary labour market, we are continuing to develop state employment services. The largest scale mechanism is the mechanism that provides for free retraining for job seekers. People who are already working today can receive training and prepare for other professions. Today we are continuing to work to further expand the safeguards for citizens that are employed. The rise of the minimum wage will be even faster than the rise of the subsistence minimum. What is important is not just remuneration of work but safety of work as well. Last year we began to digitize the special evaluation of labour conditions. As of the 1st of March last year we have had a register of persons who have been trained in OSH. Over 12 million people have completed such training sessions. In conclusion, we would like to note that achieving social justice is impossible without international cooperation, which of course will help our countries to find the best possible solutions to overcome challenges in the social and labour world. Thank you very much for your attention.

Ms Mirtha Arias Noguera

Worker (Paraguay)

Good afternoon to all. We wish to salute the President and the other members of the ILO as well as the distinguished representatives of this august assembly on behalf of the delegation of workers of Paraguay. As was mentioned by the Director-General, on the one hand there is macroeconomic growth, but on the other hand, as was stated in the Declaration of Philadelphia, poverty in any place always represents a danger for the prosperity of all and work is not a commodity. Indeed, in this situation, the subject matters addressed at this conference are crucially important for the trade union movement in the world. We would now like to present you with a brief analysis of the reality in Paraguay. Our country is divided into two distinct realities. On the one hand, there are people who only look at macroeconomic figures. There is low inflation, monetary stability, tax balance. Paraguay has now become a regional example for growth, attracting capital due to low labour costs, the absence of trade unions and low taxes. Despite being one of the countries in the region with the greatest growth levels, over the past years those impressive macroeconomic figures do not reflect the real situation of most of the population. People are living in a different reality. Poverty is growing. If we look at other indicators such as quality of life, access to education or to public healthcare and wealth distribution, we can see that the figures are very negative. The model for growth in Paraguay benefits only a privileged few and excludes most people. It excludes especially young people, women and indigenous peoples. The good figures in Paraguay are based on cheap labour and low taxes, which means that the state does not have the necessary resources to provide high-quality healthcare or education. These indicators should benefit the people too, but that is not what is happening. The situation of workers is of high concern. The model for growth works without trade unions or with weak trade unions, and that is because the labour laws are not respected because the institutions are weak and cannot effectively implement them. Most workers live with precarious wages and they face a loss of purchasing power in which the minimum wage is now considered a ceiling and not a floor. Informality continues being a reality, especially in some sectors such as trade and domestic work,

and the minimum wage is usually also given to women. Politically speaking, we can see that there is a deterioration in terms of democracy. The Parliament is a good reflection of this situation. Political debates are devoid of content and political parties are totally disoriented and only serve the real powers. The judicial powers are silent and remain blind before the progress made by delinquent groups that have infiltrated into the state, while labour judges are finding it increasingly difficult to deal with workers' situations. Despite the fact that progress has been made for the popular and workers' populations, we still hope that social policies will benefit more people. Democracy is also affected by the quality of information that the citizens receive. The press nowadays limits itself to defending the interests of their friends instead of providing objective information. As far as freedom of association is concerned, the private sector is finding it increasingly difficult to see their rights respected, and the creation of new trade unions is practically impossible. Another important aspect to note is that collective negotiation with the companies or institutions is not successful and we are very far from having decent work. The tripartite commission on equal opportunities, as well as the one on social security, face huge challenges. The objective of the Government now is to reform the law on social security as well as on civil servants. This, indeed, would be important for all workers. We still hope, however, that we will become a country where there is greater social justice. We would like to thank the authorities of the ILO for the important role that they play in this context. We would like to thank the President and also the ILO for everything that it does in terms of technical support for all our activities. Thank you also to all representatives here present for your attention.

Mr Cooper W. Kruah

Government (Liberia)

Your Excellency Mr Gilbert Houngbo, Director-General of the ILO, Minister Alexei Buzu, President of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference of the ILO, distinguished Vice-Presidents, fellow Ministers of Labour from around the world, global employers' and workers' representatives, diplomats and esteemed delegates. On behalf of the tripartite delegation from the Republic of Liberia, comprising government, employers' and workers' representatives, I express our gratitude to the ILO and the people of Geneva, Switzerland, for their warm hospitality since our arrival. We congratulate you, President Buzu, on your election to preside over the 112th Session of the ILC. Your Excellency, less than five months ago, President Joseph Nyumah Boakai was inaugurated in Liberia following democratic elections held in the last quarter of 2023. Despite being a new administration, our government is committed to revitalizing all aspects of national development, a challenging task given our past struggles with war, misrule, limited accountability and slow growth, especially in foreign direct investment, which has significantly impacted our labour sector. Under the National Development Agenda, acronym ARREST which means Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation and Tourism, we are focused on leveraging opportunities to improve these sectors and more. We are particularly committed to revitalizing the Liberian labour sector. As Minister of Labour, I am dedicated to enforcing our labour laws, exemplified by the Decent Work Act of 2015 for private sector workers and the Civil Service Standing Order for public service workers, though the latter is not directly regulated by us. Our administration ensures the application of labour standards across companies, concessions and business entities in Liberia. This includes guaranteeing decent and equal work for equal pay, continually improving wage levels, ensuring workplace health and safety, and securing appropriate employment benefits and social

welfare for all employees. We will also strive to foster peaceful and agreeable bargaining agreements between employers and workers, facilitate timely social dialogue to resolve labour issues and maintain peaceful coexistence through cooperation, collaboration and mutual benefits. Mr President, we pledge our unwavering support to the ILO in its mission to advance social and economic justice by setting labour standards, promoting human and labour rights, providing more opportunities for decent work for men and women, expanding social protection, and enhancing tripartism and social dialogue. Liberia fully supports the ILO's founding mission that social justice is essential for universal and lasting peace and prosperity. Our government will continue to enforce proper labour standards and develop policies that promote decent work, the care economy and social justice for all our citizens and residents. On behalf of the Liberian tripartite delegation, we earnestly request the ILO for technical assistance in capacity-building, expert services, support technicians and other forms to enhance our labour administration and tripartite capacity. We also aim to ensure our workforce is equipped to embrace the digital transformation era, including AI. In conclusion, it is essential that these international organizations take potent actions to end global suffering and ensure security and prosperity for all. May I conclude by echoing the ILO motto: if you desire peace, cultivate justice. Thank you for permitting us to be a part of this programme.

Ms Paula ILVESKIVI

Worker (Finland)

Mr President, Mr Director-General, delegates, the Finnish trade unions thank you for the opportunity to present our position on the themes outlined in Director-General Gilbert Houngbo's report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. The Director-General emphasizes the importance of the social contract, and it is easy to agree with this view as a genuine social contract should play a crucial role in promoting stability and justice. We fully agree with and support the aim of the report: to combat the injustice, inequalities and insecurities we face today by focusing on the very foundation of societies with justice, upon which we can build the opportunities and institutions for decent work. Unfortunately, the development of workers' rights around the world has continued in taking a wrong turn. Rights have declined, and this trend increasingly affects long-established industrialized democracies. Today, a dramatic example of this development is my country, Finland. For decades, the Finnish welfare society has been built up through tripartite cooperation, by negotiations and agreements between employers, employees and the Government. Over the past year we have witnessed how the functioning Nordic model of consensus, agreements and negotiations, with the trust inherent in it, can be destroyed in a matter of months. In Finland, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's right-wing government, which includes the most extreme right, has completely disregarded international human rights, including the fundamental principles guaranteed by the fundamental Conventions of the ILO, in implementing and preparing so-called reforms to Finnish labour law and workers' social security and protection. When quite recently pushing through legislation restricting the right to industrial action, the Government dismissed an intervention by the ILO. The Government also outrightly rejected the trade unions' request to further negotiations, which would have been warranted under Convention No. 144. In fact, the Finnish Government's actions fulfil the long-term goals of employers and represent significant reductions in the workers' job security and social protection. Furthermore, the Government has already implemented restrictions on the workers' right to strike in a manner that undermines the trade unions' ability to defend workers' rights. And furthermore, fundamental restrictions to the

collective bargaining and agreement systems are also being prepared at the moment. Workers' rights are not merely abstract concepts. They are essential for ensuring fair treatment, decent working conditions and the overall well-being of individuals and their families. Without strong protection, workers are left vulnerable to exploitation and injustice. It is crucial that we uphold the principles that have been established through years of struggle and negotiation. The ILO is needed more than ever, and the commitment of governments and social partners to its commonly agreed principles must be strengthened. It is crucial that all stakeholders have a shared ambition and capacity to defend and promote workers' rights and well-being. We must stand firm against any attempts to dismantle these rights and we must remember the values that underpin our societies: fairness, solidarity and respect for all individuals. These values should guide our actions and policies, ensuring that the progress we have made is not undone. To conclude, the Finnish trade unions point out the importance of tripartite cooperation and call on all stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to these principles and work together to build a better future for all workers. We need to be more ambitious in building trust and functioning tripartite cooperation at the national level and at the global level to be able to reach the goal of decent work for all. Furthermore, we emphasize that fundamental principles and rights at work, guaranteed by ILO Conventions, Recommendations and the other instruments as universal human rights, are to be respected and enforced without any undue limitations. By promoting and protecting together human rights in the world of work, we also promote equality and justice and a new genuine social contract. Thank you.

Mr Percy Oyola Paloma

Worker (Colombia)

On behalf of the workers of Colombia, I wish to thank the Director-General for the report which calls us to renew a social contract in order to respond to the interesting thoughts in relation with the convoluted period of history that we are undergoing, and this now is also a threat to global governance. There are some problems that remain, such as fascism and neoliberalism that threaten the very existence of humanity and that seem to be drowning us in the frenzy of individualism. Solidarity seems to be losing ground and the problems that affect most of humanity, especially the poorest countries, are being forgotten. War, social polarization are not only threats, they are a sad reality which takes us away from our dreams to construct a different world. The protests and social fights are the only instrument that populations can use in order to demand change, social reforms and a new social contract that will allow us to be included in decision-making for decisions that affect us. That is the current debate that Colombia has been participating in since 2019. In this context, it is vital to respond to the invitation of the Director-General to think about the need for a new social contract. We understand that this is an urgent need which will allow us to strengthen democratic values, the respect for social justice and the improvement thereof. This will be able to lead us towards peace. A renewed social contract cannot only be words about how to exercise power. No, it needs to be accompanied by action that promotes the inclusion of all in society and it needs to be based on the fundamental aspects that the members of society live every day. The way of constructing an inclusive society that is based on solidarity is one that will require the eradication of poverty and the creation of decent work. These must be the two elements that guide us along our way. The persistence to achieve peace and the democratic principles are fundamental now in order to prevent social confrontations which will be unavoidable unless consensus is reached amongst

all. Children should not have to suffer from hunger, and they should have access to rights such as education and health. They must be sure that they can benefit from a fair society that is inclusive, and that is what the President of the Governing Body has also said. Men and women who work and produce wealth should have access to the benefits that allow them to have a decent life in which decent work is crucial. Now we must respond to this call. We must become aware of our responsibilities everywhere. History has placed us here, and we must pave the way towards social dialogue and ensure that it happens and that we may live in harmony. We must leave behind our individual considerations and stop greed. We must follow the paths that will lead us towards better democracy, inclusiveness, equity and more solidarity. And we must also focus on the fundamental values that have been defended by the ILO for over 100 years now. Thank you very much.

Mr Andy Ellul

Government (Malta)

Distinguished guests, it is an honour to be addressing the International Labour Conference once again. As a government, we are also proud to have informed the International Labour Organization that we will be participating in the ILO's Global Coalition for Social Justice. Most of the problems that we face today are of a global nature, and therefore the way forward is to tackle these issues on a global level rather than individually. When it comes to the International Labour Conference, I cannot but point out that this year's agenda contains various important topics, many of which we have been actively addressing in Malta over the past months. Chief among these is the discussion on the strategic objective of fundamental principles and rights at work. The world of work is constantly evolving, and workers' rights must evolve with it. Legislation must be updated continuously to ensure that these rights are both safeguarded and strengthened. Recently, the Maltese Government launched new legislation concerning the right of equal pay for work of equal value. This concept is not new. However, with the rise of outsourcing agencies, temping agencies and contractors, we encountered a scenario where employees performing the same job were paid differently since on paper they were employed by different employers. We already had legislation that employed equal pay in this regard, but this legislation was only to be applied in limited circumstances, making it the exception rather than the norm. To address this, the Government of Malta employed the tripartite model, consulting employers and trade unions to remedy the situation once and for all. I am pleased to report that both employer and workers' representatives have agreed with the Government's proposed legislation, and as a result, starting from January 2025, employees of outsourcing and temping agencies in Malta will be entitled to the same basic working and employment conditions as their counterparts employed directly by user undertakings. In other words, if a temporary agency worker's contract or collective agreement offers less favourable conditions than those enjoyed by comparable direct employees, the more favourable conditions will apply, resulting in a salary increase for the agency's workers. This reform follows another significant change: the licensing of employment agencies, which was introduced in November 2023. This reform requires temping and outsourcing agencies to obtain a new licence, have a competent person with specific qualifications or experience and also the issuance of a bank guarantee. Agencies without this licence will not be able to bring foreigners into Malta, and those who violate employment laws risk having their licence revoked. Should an agency be disbanded due to such issues, the bank guarantee will be forfeited and distributed among the agency's workers,

ensuring that employees do not bear the consequences of their employer's legal infractions. These are just two of the major reforms we have introduced in recent months, with more on the way. Decent work and strong rights for all employees are at the heart of the ILO's agenda, a priority shared by the Government of Malta, our trade unions and employers, as evidenced by our recent actions. In this ever-changing world, we cannot afford to be complacent. We must continue striving to address the emerging issues. Given that many of these challenges are global, what better instrument to tackle them head-on than the ILO? Together, collectively, we have the power to create a future where every worker, regardless of their circumstances, enjoys fair treatment and equal opportunities. Let us continue to uphold the values of the ILO and work collaboratively to build a world where dignity, respect and justice in the workplace are not just aspirations but realities for all. Thank you and wish you all a pleasant day ahead.

Ms Ewa Staworzynska

Employer (United States of America)

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, more than 100 years after the establishment of the ILO our joint commitment to social justice is as important as ever before. While countries around the world still face socio-economic challenges such as inequalities, lack of access of jobs and insufficient economic growth and development, it is important to recognize that progress has been made, including on global poverty rates, on forced labour and on child labour, and we have many reasons to be optimistic about the future. In order to ensure further progress and reach our joint commitment to a world of work free of decent work deficits and achieve SDG 8, allow us to share three reflections. First, new technologies, including artificial intelligence, have a potential to increase efficiencies, decrease tedious tasks, reduce OSH incidents and allow workers and businesses to spend more time on tasks where humans have a competitive advantage. Innovations driven by the private sector can generate job opportunities. New technologies have the potential to leapfrog development, including in the labour market, and we are encouraged by the opportunities ahead of us, if leveraged correctly and effectively. We call on governments to embrace technology and work with the private sector to optimize the positive impact on the world of work. Second, the DG's report states that "the global social contract increasingly requires that all businesses follow sustainable, environmental, social and governance practices". It is indeed true that there has been a recent increase in sustainability and due diligence legislation focused on companies. Allow me to underscore that American companies are well versed in conducting due diligence. These processes often include third parties and selected stakeholders, but it may not always be appropriate or relevant to engage trade unions in this regard. This depends on national requirements, national contacts as well as respect for privacy laws and competition laws. Further, we are not convinced on the need for a new standard pertaining to ESG and numerous other topics, as presented in the DG's report. In addition, while businesses certainly play a key role in global sustainability, it is important to underscore the foundational responsibility of governments. US employers believe that the ILO can have a transformational impact on decent work and on human rights if increased focus is put on capacity-development activities for Member States and the effective implementation of existing labour standards. As noted in the report, Member States need to be held accountable to the commitments that they have made. The ILO can help Member States put this accountability into practice through strengthening national institutions to implement and effectively apply ratified standards. Third, a top priority for US employers is to

ensure a conducive business environment at the country level. This starts by implementing policies that genuinely tackle root causes of today's most pressing challenges, namely informality, lack of good governance and a lack of rule of law. In addition to addressing these structural issues and fostering healthy democracies, Member States should promote entrepreneurship, reduce excessive bureaucracy and encourage investment. A conducive environment for businesses not only leads to job creation and innovation but it also fosters economic resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic was an excellent example of the importance of such resilience. The strength of our economies depends on the strength of our business environments. It may be a good opportunity for the Global Coalition for Social Justice to uplift best practices in this regard and share success stories from Member States. Before I conclude, allow me also to call on the ILO to ensure a strong role of social partners in the preparations of the Second World Summit for Social Development and during the negotiations of the political declaration as well. As mentioned at the outset, the ILO has over a century of experience of bringing together the voice of employers and of workers, and we hope the summit will be an opportunity to amplify this approach to social policies. US employers stand ready to do our part to ensure a successful outcome. I thank you.

Mr Teresa Rodrigues Dias

Government (Angola / on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries)

Your Excellency President, members of the bureau, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, we have a declaration from the CPLP from Ministers of Labour. On the occasion of the International Labour Conference, the Ministers of Labour and of Social Affairs of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the CPLP, meeting on the 11th of June of 2024 [vgr INAUDIBLE 183:29] the current declaration. Reaffirming the principles and the objectives of the CPLP set out in its constitutional declaration in June 1996. Setting out the commitment to strengthen the ties of solidarity and cooperation that join them and aiming for a wider dissemination of the Portuguese language and the benefit of their peoples. Welcoming the 2024-2030 strategic plan which will be a strategic orientation for the efforts of the cooperation carried out in labour and social affairs areas by the community by the end of the decade. Underlying the strategic objectives of the Constitution of the ILO of 1919 as amended by the amendments in 1944 and 2010 and in line with the principles of the Philadelphia Declaration and the Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work and recognizing the need to promote the forces of the social contract based on tripartite social dialogue, bearing in mind the strengthening of the Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work of the ILO, as amended, which added a fifth objective of safe [vgr INAUDIBLE 185:04] at work and aiming to support the objectives of sustainable development. And eighth for a sustainable, inclusive development and decent jobs for all. Calls for recognition of the climate summit, which established a work programme calling for the first time for a just transition and a move to decent work and quality jobs in accordance with the priorities defined at a national level, in particular through dialogue [? 185:44], social protection and recognition of fundamental rights at work. Welcoming the convoking [? 185:50] by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the Second World Summit for Social Development to be held in 2025. Also reaffirming the significance of supervision of the standards of the ILO being based on the best standards of transparency, objectivity, transparency and respect for the tripartite nature of the Organization. Reiterating also the principles and commitments expressed in the final declaration of the 15th meeting

of the community's Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs held in [vgr INAUDIBLE 186:27] in 2023 and the declaration of the first extraordinary meeting of Ministers for Social Affairs in April of 2024. Also welcoming the dialogue entered into between Angola and the ILO with a view to opening an office of the Office in the country. They decided, firstly, to declare their support for the [vgr INAUDIBLE 186:56] carried out by Angola and to promote the opening of an office in Angola for African countries of Portuguese language in Luanda. Reaffirm the strategic plan of the CPLP to cooperate on social affairs and work. Reiterate their commitment to the plan to fight against child labour 2021-2025 and also on [vgr INAUDIBLE 187:27]. Continuing to work to put into place the multilateral Convention on cooperation on social insurance. Continue our work for social justice and initiative aiming to promote social justice and decent work with a view to achieving our objectives as set out and confirming our commitment to cooperation between Portuguese-speaking countries to support the use of Portuguese in the work of the ILO, including in the most significant meetings. Thank you very much for listening.

Mr Dol Prasad Aryal

Government (Nepal)

Mr President, Excellencies, respected delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is my profound honour to address the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference today. I bring with me the greetings and best wishes of Nepali people for the success of the Conference. At this conference, we are discussing a range of issues including the protection of workers against the effects of climate change and biological hazards at the workplace. Representing a nation that is at the forefront of the climate change impacts, I call on the global leaders to realize the urgency of reducing climate change impacts on people and the planet. I sincerely hope and believe that together we will recognize the gravity of this issue and reach a consensus on effective mitigating measures. As Nepal approaches six decades of affiliation with the ILO, I take this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to promoting social justice. I thank the Member States of the ILO for recognizing Nepal's efforts and electing us to the Governing Body. As a nation, we resonate deeply with the call for a renewed social contract as a pathway to social justice. We understand the imperative of better integrating socio-economic policies that recognize the essence of diverse work relationships. Mr President, to complement this, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security has launched the flagship Shramadhan Project which encapsulates the essence of providing solutions to every labour-related problem. This project aspires to provide a comprehensive one-stop solution for the labour journey of every Nepali citizen. Another cornerstone of our efforts is the formalization of informal economic units and workers. Likewise, a tripartite consensus has been reached on the plan to ratify nine ILO Conventions in Nepal. We are currently focusing on ratifying Convention No. 87 on freedom of association, Convention No. 81 on labour inspection, and the 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention. Mr President, Nepal recognizes the importance of translating ratifications into the progressive implementation of international labour standards. We acknowledge the recommendation to seek technical assistance from the International Labour Office, as expressed in the Committee of Experts' report on the application of Conventions and Recommendations. Additionally, we are collaborating closely with the ILO, other UN agencies and the European Union on Convention No. 111 through the 'Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal' programme. Mr President, Nepal has decided to join the Global Coalition for Social Justice. The Right Honourable President of Nepal, Mr Ram Chandra Paudel, is scheduled to address the inaugural forum of the Global Coalition for

Social Justice here in Geneva on 13 June 2024. Before I conclude, I warmly invite all concerned stakeholders to the Shramadhan Ministerial Conclave which Nepal plans to host by the end of 2024. I eagerly anticipate welcoming many of you to our beautiful country to discuss our progress and collaboratively create a road map toward achieving lasting peace through social justice. I believe that we can have very significant discussions on various labour issues including the impact of climate change when we meet in Nepal. Thank you for your kind attention. Namaste.

Mr Elsadiq Kodi Gabreldar Ali

Worker (Sudan)

In the name of God, the Merciful. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my welcome and bless all of you. First of all I would like to thank the ILO for its role, really primordial, when it comes to dealing with the questions of work and issues which impact workers. And I would like to thank the ILO for this extremely important conference which is, of course, dealing with questions which impact workers in every member country. And we welcome the Director-General's and the President of the Governing Body's report titled 'Towards a renewed social contract', and we insist upon the importance of achieving social justice in line with the Declaration of Philadelphia. It is important to guarantee fundamental rights at work as well as occupational safety and health. It is also important to ensure that tripartite dialogue continues between the tripartite constituents: the workers, the governments and the employers. And I am here today before you to speak to you about the suffering of the Sudanese people. They are famed for their generosity, for their happiness and their love for peace. These are a people who have suffered injustices and cruelty by rebel militia and armed groups. These militia have massacred civilians. They have raped women and they have used citizens as human shields. They have transformed hospitals and houses in battlefields and trenches. They have terrorized children, humiliated and threatened men. The Sudanese people have suffered unknown cruelty at the hands of these armed groups. The office of the Sudanese workers' union was destroyed. This was systematic, in fact. Systematic destruction by the rebel forces. In the same vein, they have destroyed the practical aspects of working and daily life. More than 850 factories have been destroyed and the workers have been displaced, notably into the private sector. More than 22,000 shop owners lost their capital. Now, these statistics simply are from the province of Khartoum, in fact. For the other provinces in the country these are also under the heel of those militia. We have seen price rises, resource scarcity after the war, so it is important in our view to ensure that an ILO committee can go to Sudan and understand the situation being experienced by workers in the country. Ladies and gentlemen, we are not here today to defend the Sudanese state. We are here before you as observers and as a representative of one of the constituents. The Sudanese Government, prior to and during the war, committed to fully respecting international Conventions and workers' rights in line with Convention 95. Now the item on the agenda, ladies and gentlemen, for protection against biological hazards. These dangers are increasing on a daily basis thanks to wars and climate change. This is why we must raise awareness amongst the population and teach them about biological hazards, encourage them to remain vigilant. When it comes to the spread of epidemics and other public health problems, we would also underscore the role here of some academic institutions such as universities carrying out biological research. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that the recommendations and conclusions stemming from this conference will bear in mind the humanitarian situation, a real disaster currently in Sudan. We hope that you will be able

to bring significant support to Sudanese workers, and we also hope that you will stand with the Sudanese state so that it can enjoy its sovereignty once again and protect the Sudanese people against the attempts to impose demographic change and forced displacement. Thank you very much, President.

Mr Apostolos Xyrafis

International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions

Your Excellency, Mr July Moyo, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, these days we reflected on the shared achievements and contemplated the challenges that lie ahead in our quest for social justice, economic stability and growth. On behalf of AICESIS, the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, I extend my sincere appreciation to the ILO for its commitment to promoting decent work and social justice globally. I am proud to acknowledge that since November 2023 AICESIS has been under the esteemed presidency of Mr John Jacobs, President of the Economic and Social Council of Curaçao. I am also pleased to recognize the presence of a delegation from the ESC of Curaçao here today. Founded in 1999, AICESIS, the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, is a unique network of economic and social councils from over 70 countries. Our organization serves as a platform for dialogue, consultation and cooperation among social partners, governments and civil societies. Our mission is to foster an inclusive and sustainable development by enhancing the role of the economic and social councils as social dialogue consultative bodies at the national and international level when it is about policymaking processes. The purpose of AICESIS aligns with the objectives of the ILO. Both organizations share a deep-rooted commitment to advancing labour rights, promoting social dialogue and ensuring shared economic growth. AICESIS with the ILO are linked with a cooperation agreement since 2012. This agreement has facilitated a number of joint initiatives around the globe from capacity-building programmes to policy advocacy campaigns aiming at enhancing the capacity of national economic and social councils in shaping recommendations on labour, social and development policies. I am pleased to announce that this vital partnership that reinforces soft [? 203:47] policy multilateralism is up to be renewed later this year, reaffirming our mutual commitment to working together towards common goals. AICESIS immediately reacted to the call of the ILO initiative for social justice and became a proud member of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. It is a testament to our insistence to the principles of equity, fairness and inclusive development. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me insist on the following: the importance of institutionalized social dialogue as a cornerstone for democratic participation, facilitating good governance, social cohesion and economic resilience. In times of rapid technological advancements, demographic shifts and environmental challenges, the need for a robust social dialogue mechanism is more present than ever. I argue that economic and social councils, these social dialogue bodies play a critical role in mediating interest, fostering consensus and ensuring that the voices of all stakeholders are heard in the policymaking process. In this continuous endeavour and exercise of building common ground, empirical evidence has shown this positive impact of social dialogue on economic and social performances. However, social dialogue is a difficult sport. The journey towards inclusive and sustainable development is fraught with challenges: persistent inequalities, labour market informalities, gender disparities and the changing nature of work, demographic imbalances, demand innovative solutions. And our strong will to move together, in this sense you may count on us with our humble forces. We are dedicated to contribute in addressing these challenges

through advocacy, knowledge sharing and technical assistance with our members from around the world. All in all, honourable President, esteemed minister, July Moyo, allow me to say that only together we have the power build a more just, more equitable and prosperous world. I thank you very much.

Mr Charalambos Kyritsis

World Federation of Trade Unions

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, as we are giving our speeches, the genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza by the murderous Israeli state continues unabated, with the support or tolerance of the United States, European Union and their allies. We, on behalf of 110 million members all over the world, we demand immediate ceasefire, justice and freedom for Palestine through the creation of an independent Palestinian State on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The struggle for peace for us has specific content. It opposes imperialistic wars and supports the right of every people to choose their own path without interventions, sanctions, blockades and economic wars. We are living in a period where the crisis of capitalism is generalized and deepening. Social inequalities, exploitation and poverty are dramatically widening. The high cost of living is brutally undermining the living standards of workers and pensioners. Individual contracts, privatizations, outsourcing, teleworking and service leasing are just some of the methods being used to deregulate labour and intensify exploitation. The right to organize and engage in collective bargaining, as well as the sacred right to strike, is under attack. Workers and pensioners do not passively accept this reality. They resist neoliberal capitalist and anti-worker attacks. They demand the satisfaction of their contemporary needs. They realize that only through struggles can their lives change. Unfortunately, the harsh daily reality of workers is far from the pleasant slogans that abound in ILO Declarations. This year, a new grandiose terminology has been introduced in the Director-General's report, another slogan in luxurious packaging: the new social contract. What the workers need are measures, rights, not slogans, protection of trade union freedoms and ensuring permanent and stable employment regulated by collective agreements to meet their contemporary needs. Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, this year, as we all know, is an election year for the ILO. But are these elections truly democratic? Do they ensure even minimal representativeness and pluralism? No. Absolutely no. It is clear that the representation of workers is systematically monopolized, and the opinions of hundreds of millions of workers represented by the WFTU and other international organizations are marginalized and ignored. Of course, this monopolization of the workers' representation is not maintained by chance. It suits the ruling circles. It is convenient for them to have workers represented by unions that have long abandoned class struggle and do not challenge their omnipotence. It suits them also to maintain the practice of double standards, targeting countries like Cuba, Belarus, Syria and many others for not aligning with their geopolitical plans, while they coddle Israel and obscure their own anti-worker practices. The WFTU will not stop fighting and demanding a genuinely representative and pluralistic ILO with democratic and participatory functioning, as dictated by its role and the reasons for its creation. Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, representatives of workers, the weapon of the workers all over the world is solidarity and internationalism. The World Federation of Trade Unions will continue to fight for a world without wars and imperialistic interventions, without exploitation and discrimination, where work will be permanent and stable, regulated and safe. Thank you very much.

Mr Kirill Buketov

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations

The IUF is a global union federation representing millions of workers in the food, agriculture and hospitality sectors. We welcome the Director-General's report, 'Towards a renewed social contract'. It opens with the statement that social justice remains an imperative and an essential condition for universal and lasting peace, and we believe that Myanmar should be one of the countries of ILO focus in this regard. It is where people are striving and fighting for justice and peace under a military dictatorship. Since the coup in February 2021, the IUF, along with the global trade union federations and the ITUC, have supported the workers in Myanmar by campaigning for the restoration of democracy and recognition of the National Unity Government, NUG, including its participation in the ILC. Unfortunately, the NUG is still not recognized within the UN system and the delegation is not accredited at this conference. The IUF is therefore proud to deliver this speech on behalf of the NUG. The National Unity Government was born from the will of the people, through elected Members of Parliament and representatives of diverse ethnic groups. It embodies this very aspiration. It is the authentic voice of Myanmar's workers, employers and civil society which yearn for democracy that enshrines their fundamental rights, including the right to speak freely, assemble peacefully and work with dignity. The military junta remains a tyrant, clinging to power through fear. Daily atrocities include violations of fundamental labour and human rights, torture and the destruction of homes, villages, hospitals and religious buildings through bombings. Union leaders face arrest warrants, unjust imprisonment on fabricated charges and restrictions on foreign travel. Recent actions, such as the forced conscription law and ban on male citizens working abroad, clearly demonstrate the suppression of basic labour rights and freedom of work. The military junta is collecting data on young people, harassing them about their movements and conducting forced recruitment raids in homes and villages. The junta's crackdown is not limited to young people and employers. Financial services entrepreneurs, bankers and even the President of the Oil Industry Association have been arrested on accusations of manipulating the foreign exchange rate and inflating prices. Four foreign palm oil entrepreneurs also faced arrest. This climate of fear extends to workplaces, where the true number of labour rights violations is likely much higher than the 212 local and 357 foreign cases documented by the National Unity Government's Ministry of Labour since the 2021 coup. These figures highlight the junta's disregard for the ILO's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar which called to end all violations by October 1, 2023. Despite the immense challenges, the NUG and its Ministry of Labour remains unwavering in its commitment to upholding labour rights. But only by dismantling this oppressive regime can the NUG truly protect the rights of its citizens and build a future the people of Myanmar deserve. The findings of the ILO's Commission of Inquiry and its recommendations need urgent action. The people of Myanmar cannot wait. The violence against them continues to escalate. The recent UN resolution extending the Special Rapporteur's mandate and the international call to action highlight the urgency of a unified response. The IUF calls on all ILO members, governments, employers, trade unions, to recognize the gravity of the situation and support immediate action at this very conference. Just like in the year 2000, invoking article 33 will send a powerful message of support to the people of Myanmar. The time for decisive action is now and we would like to urge the ILO and its Member States to deepen collaboration with the NUG; support the democratic movement and the people of Myanmar in their fight for

freedom; recognize the National Unity Government without further delay and ensure the NUG is accredited for the 113th Session of the ILC; hold the junta accountable; demand an end to forced conscription, the human rights abuses and the suppression of democracy; use all ILO mechanisms, particularly article 33 of the ILO Constitution, to ensure compliance with international labour standards. The NUG stands ready to collaborate with the ILO and its Member States in building a federal, democratic Myanmar that respects and upholds the dignity of all its citizens. The IUF and global unions support this call. Thank you.

Mr Bachir Hakem

Trade Union International of Pensioners and Retired Persons

President, Director, ladies and gentlemen, dear brothers and sisters. I will introduce myself to you. As the secretary of the Trade Union International of Pensioners and Retired Persons of the World Federation of Trade Unions, the only international union organization of pensioners and retired people in the world, I will start my brief remarks by strongly condemning the genocide and the crimes of war and against humanity perpetrated by the Zionist entity. And I would point out that in the opening speech of this 112th International Labour Conference this genocide was unacceptably referred to as a conflict. The members of the Trade Union International of Pensioners and Retired Persons, who fight for peace in the world, express their solidarity towards all the peoples of the world with a view to ending this genocide and condemning the authors of these barbarous acts and terrorist acts, as also those, especially the United States and the European Union and the United Kingdom, who continue to arm the Zionist entity. At the moment more than 30% of voters at a world level are pensioners and retired people. Despite that reality, our words are often ignored and our preoccupations neglected. Our organization continues to develop, as is demonstrated by our recent third congress which took place in Athens in Greece from the 14th to the 18th of April of this year. This growth has happened despite the attacks against our union by certain consulates which denied visas to more than 35% of the participants in that congress. At the moment we can see a reduction in union rights as a result of new reforms placed by pro-capitalist governments in contravention of the Conventions that they have signed with the ILO, reforms against which the unions of the ITUC are not fighting. We are here at this International Labour Conference with the objective of reminding all the Member States of their obligations and of denouncing these violations by them and by employers. We call on the Government of Peru, in particular its Minister for Labour and Promotion of Employment, to respect Convention 102 of the ILO and to oblige the employers and the Government to make their contribution to the national pensions office and to provide for a generous increase in pensions. At the moment, pensioners and retired people are faced with serious difficulties as a result of a loss of purchasing power and an increase in prices of all products, in particular the price of medicines which vary from one country to another. Thus, our union carried out a survey in all of the countries of the world. Our confederation carried out this survey in all the countries of the world to look at which medicines were most used and to compare their prices across the world and to denounce the practice of the pharmaceutical multinationals. The same medicine can cost ten times more in one country than another. Unfortunately, the right to organize and the right to strike is often not respected, and the pensioners see their rights also denied because they have different needs from those of employers. The right to organize in particular is often denied in many countries. Our presence is crucial to assure the freedom of retired people to organize unions, as

also unemployed people and students to organize around the world, and we call on the ILO to help us to defend that law. The Trade Union International of Pensioners of the WFTU associates itself to the call for a life in dignity for all retired people in the world, in particular union rights and freedoms, the right of pensioners and of retired people, as all workers, to create their own unions to defend themselves; the regrouping, consolidation of public pension funds rather than their privatization; the reinstatement of 60 years as the pensionable age; retirement pensions equal to the best salary earned; an end to discrimination against women; totally free health treatment and medicines; the denunciation of the multinational pharmaceutical companies. These demands across the whole of the world demonstrate the significance of the international recognition of unions of retired people. These demands are going to be at the centre of the ninth World Day for the struggle for the rights of retired people which our organization has convoked for the 1st of October, as each year. Long live the fight of retired people for a life in dignity. Long live the World Federation of Trade Unions. Long live the Palestinian people. And in my country we say [foreign 225:26]. Oppressed or oppressor, we are with the Palestinian people.

Mr Michel Celi Vegas

Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives, on behalf of the Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America, an international organization with a consultative status at ECOSOC, UNCTAD and WIPO, I greet you and I congratulate the President of this assembly. Now, the Director-General's report, 'Towards a renewed social contract', considers the circumstances, with the assistance of the ILO, of how we can move towards more just societies and better opportunities for decent work. And this conference is the best opportunity for us to propose alternatives in 2025, which will be the year for social development under the auspices of the UN. That social contract involves enormous collective responsibility, both at institutional level and in government policy, as stated in the Philadelphia Declaration which states that all human beings, regardless of their race, creed or origin have the right to develop their material wealth as well as their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity. Ladies and gentlemen, what does that mean? Well, it means adopting policies, it means adopting institutions, it means ensuring that labour is not a commodity, and it means maintaining tripartism and social dialogue. But what would that social contract involve? Firstly, respect for human rights, ensuring that there is no child labour, forced labour, and that we end the illegal income from groups in power. This needs to disappear for us to reduce poverty. Secondly, governance must be efficient and inclusive, as stated in the ILO's declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work from 1998 and its revised version in 2022. That was the beginning of the renewed social contract built upon tripartite social dialogue in the ILO. Thirdly, that social contract should incorporate an environmental element and the fair transition, as agreed at the Paris conference on climate change in 2023. We should adopt ways to transition work and to ensure that we can create decent jobs. Fourthly, that social contract should ensure that we better share the fruits of progress. Indeed, the benefits of productivity should be objectives and we should build upon that equal redistribution between the production factors. Fifthly, that social contract should guarantee adequate social protection for workers, preserving dignity which all people enjoy, as stated in the ILO Centenary Declaration. Sixth, that social contract must promote democracy both in workers' and employers' organizations to bolster the adoption of democratic measures

to protect workers, promoting decent work and establishing a safe working environment. Let us remember that every year nearly three million workers die from diseases and workplace accidents, which represents a more than 5% increase compared with 2015. Seventh, that social contract needs to ensure that there is access to social services with a social security system which can overcome any challenges through a worker's life. And then, finally, it should bear in mind rules for a transforming world and transforming worlds of work. Representatives, that new social contract should overcome the challenges of technology, forced migration and conflicts, climate change, artificial intelligence, inter alia, and the regulations established in international conventions, national laws, social contracts. And these principles which were forged over many years through tripartism and through the ILO must continue. What is lacking now is the political will to overcome the problems linked to globalization. In an interdependent society with fragile institutions and fragmented political classes, the intervention of NGOs can be a catalyst to ensure that those acquired rights that workers enjoy can be preserved and can be driven forward within that new construction of the social contract. Thank you very much.

Mr Arezki Mezhoud

Organization of African Trade Union Unity

Mr President, members of the bureau, ladies and gentlemen, on this honourable occasion I have the pleasure of greeting all the distinguished participants and those who are following the work of this session at a distance. I must also congratulate the members who have been elected to lead the work of this session, the President of the Conference and his vice-presidents. I would also like to congratulate on the election to the Governing Body for the following mandate, and I wish them every success. This session is being held in a difficult, sensitive and complicated situation. The world has come out of a health crisis which had a great effect on the world economy and had a lot of painful effects, and the world is now faced with other challenges which have to be addressed. I can find many relevant points in your report, Mr Director-General, and they are a reason for me to congratulate you on the work that you have done, the laudable efforts that you have done to strengthen the role of this organization which you are leading with effectiveness and far-sightedness. You pointed to the factor which is the origin of all of the troubles of the human community. That is the question of social justice, which remains a moral aspiration of all of those who are faced with the consequence of a lack of it on a day-by-day basis, and it is a requirement for a world of peace and prosperity for everyone. Against that background, the Organization of African Trade Union Unity has joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice. This is because it is a platform which will no doubt contribute to the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of the 2063 development agenda of the African Union. Our continent at the moment is faced with huge challenges which are getting in the way of the development and the transformation of Africa. Conflicts, insecurity, climate change, governance deficits, the transformation of the nature of employment, political instability and geopolitical tensions are factors which get in the way of the voices of inclusive and just development. The persistence of this situation will only create more poverty, more social inequality, more of a deficit of decent work and more despair, which will lead young Africans to go into the unknown at the peril of their lives with the hope of getting a better life somewhere else. In an unequal, unbalanced world based on hegemony and domination of the strongest, the situation becomes even more complicated for developing countries and shows their vulnerability. That is why we need

a multi-polar world which is based on mutual respect where cooperation will be a win-win situation only based on peace and respect. Nothing is inevitable. Change is possible. With a global vision defined by the principle players in society and in an environment of democracy and respect for rights, with non-interference, the respect for the sovereignty of peoples and of their states, the path towards Africa, the Africa of which we dream, is going to be possible. At the heart of the problem is economic development based on human beings, and the guarantee of rights remains the only way of assuring social emancipation for African workers and the eradication of all the phenomena that condemn them to poverty and social disadvantage. With its tripartite nature, the ILO can have an important part to play in the realization of a world as set out in its constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia. The rise of extremisms, transformation of employment, the liberal offensive against acquired fundamental rights, the proliferation of areas of tension in Africa and in the Middle East is a serious concern for the future given their impact on peace and the situation of workers who often pay the very highest price. Finally, I cannot conclude without renewing our statement of the solidarity of African workers with the people of Gaza, the workers and the Palestinian people attacked by a genocide plan. We call for the immediate ceasefire and the stop of the massacres. They join their voices to all of those across the world who support the Palestinian people in their fight for an independent, sovereign State. Our support also goes to our brothers and sisters in Sudan, in Libya and all those affected by conflicts and insecurity in the African continent. I wish every success to our conference. Thank you to everyone.

Mr Fabian Jose Caballero Vergara

Latin American Union of Municipal Workers

The Latin American Union of Municipal Workers, ULATMun, celebrates 30 years now, promoting regional cooperation of municipal workers, working together for common goals and considering how we can help the union movement at the municipal level in each of our countries. For years we have said that labour rights and municipal services are completely compatible issues and that together they can guarantee universal access for all citizens to all state services and ensure that those services meet the needs of municipalities and local authorities. It is our view that our union movement can contribute to fairer societies that are more democratic and integrated and avoiding privatization or the tendering out of local services. Now, we see when we look across Latin America and the Caribbean it is the case for everyone that the union movements do not enjoy the place that they deserve when it comes to overcoming social problems. It is certain that the municipal structures in our societies do not have the strategic importance when it comes to the direct services which they give to our peoples. They should be first-level institutions for local development. They have a direct link to the population and they are always left to one side in state structures without effective financing or a proper strategy. More generally, they lack economic resources, infrastructure and the ability to absorb and resolve population demands. They are under pressure from the inability of the neoliberal economic system to resolve poverty and marginalization as well as underdevelopment in our societies, and this is made worse by immigration and population concentration in large cities. Faced with this situation, municipals and municipal workers do not enjoy decent work or decent conditions. This problem also impacts union organizations from the point of view of them trying to find improvements and solutions. Often there is no legal body to promote, guarantee or even establish the right to collective bargaining or strikes at the municipal level, as in

Chile, which only makes it more difficult for municipal workers to acquire labour rights when they are faced with inflation, political crises or economic ones, in Argentina, for example. And those political situations push the costs onto workers. The corruption of those that lead municipalities, wealth concentration, poverty, the lack of services and rights, the lack of organizational legal political certainty, these are realities which are striking municipal authorities and creating enormous social inequality in our countries. When we come to social security, in Chile for example, the municipalities currently owe \$500 million in social contributions. They have not paid social credits from compensation offices to the tune of \$3 million. Both cases are questions of embezzlement by our municipalities. And this is made worse only by provisional reform from the current Chilean Government which does not consider legislative changes to solve those practices. Now it is clear that any economic and social struggle, and any struggle of the workers more generally and at the municipal level more specifically, would benefit all of our population. But there are important asymmetries in municipal structures, models and financing, economic and labour rights and democratic and political guarantees. We need to deal with this with solidarity and in a singular manner with our own plans. We need to widen the unions' struggle to localize national budgets to ensure that the municipality is the first-level structure and they are financed in a strategic manner to overcome the political leaks that there are at our local level. And in the same line, we need to spread the idea that municipals can indeed govern democracy and our workers can build new municipalities and new structures. We need independent financing from central governments and we need to give power to communities. What we need is a new model of labour relations which guarantees, promotes and protects municipal workers' rights using the ILO Conventions as a foundation. And this is how we will present our vision and proposal to maintain and protect all of the rights that we should enjoy and thank them for the contribution that those workers give to our peoples. Latin America and the Caribbean, of course it is different in every country on the continent, but there are similarities for workers at the municipal level. We have a continental common project. We need entrepreneurs, governments and parties to be involved. But right now they do not bear in mind the interests of workers. They simply push us to one side. We have a continental integration project which stems from our own hopes and aspirations and it fights privatization and wealth concentration. Ladies and gentlemen, there will be no better society without a better state, and there can be no better state, ladies and gentlemen, without better municipalities. Thank you very much.

Mr July Moyo

Government Vice-President (Zimbabwe)

Thank you very much. That concludes our list of speakers for this sitting. I thank you all for your contributions to this afternoon's proceedings. The sitting is now closed.

► Wednesday, 12 June 2024

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Distinguished delegates, good morning. It is my great pleasure to declare open the 14th sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. Both our morning and afternoon sittings today will be devoted to the general discussion on the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. We will conduct our proceeding by following the list of speakers displayed in the room. At this stage I would like to remind you that today, over the lunchtime, the Conference will commemorate the World Day Against Child Labour. The event will take place from 1.30 to 2.45 pm in Room 20. This year's event will be held under the slogan 'Let's act on our commitments: End Child Labour!'. Today's celebration will mark 25 years since the adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention from 1999, No. 182 as well as provide an opportunity for the tripartite constituents to discuss advances and challenges in relation to the elimination of child labour. I encourage you all to attend, please. Before we begin our proceedings, I would like to remind you that, according to the arrangements approved at our opening sittings with regards to modalities for the special sitting on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories, the appendix to the Director-General's report on this topic was discussed at a special sitting on 6th of June. I therefore encourage you to please focus your interventions on Reports 1(A), 1(B) and 1(C). Thank you. Likewise, I would like to recall the principles governing this discussion which the Conference President referred to yesterday afternoon. Firstly, on the use of parliamentary language, I wish to call on all those who will speak in the plenary to do so with both the openness and dignity that are appropriate to this highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters. Freedom of expression is a vital feature of the International Labour Organization. To exercise this freedom in a spirit of mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates respect the accepted procedure, use parliamentary language, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising any questions foreign to these matters. The respect of this principle is necessary if we want our work to be effective and successful. Secondly, on the plenary starting times, there is a firm agreement on the part of the officers to begin sittings strictly on time. Only in this manner will we manage to complete the debates within the time scheduled. I am counting on you to make this possible. Thirdly, I must refer to the length of the plenary speeches. As you may already know, the duration of speeches is limited by the standing orders of the Conference to five minutes. Five minutes. This time limit will be strictly applied. It is therefore strongly recommended that delegates reduce courtesies to a minimum. Timekeeping is a collective responsibility. For the sake of transparency, a countdown clock will be on display on the screen for all interventions, so please follow it. I would like also to address points of order and rights of reply. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order or to exercise the right to reply in the plenary do not need to interrupt the proceedings. Instead, they should simply raise their flag. A member of the staff will then approach them in the room and attend to their request. In the case of a right of reply, I ask that you clearly inform that member of the staff the intervention in respect to which the right of reply is sought. Please be reminded that the right of reply should refer only to the matter in question. It should not exceed two minutes and it should be delivered in respectful parliamentary language. It is not the practice of our organization to allow the right to reply to a reply.

Lastly, I would ask you all to please keep the noise to a minimum. If you need to take a phone call, please take it outside. Let us show courtesy to all the speakers today. Without further ado, let us begin with our speakers list for this sitting, and the first speaker is Mr Laguesma, Secretary of Labour and Employment of the Philippines. Please.

Mr Bienvenido Laguesma

Government (Philippines)

[German audio only]

Mr Jesús Gallego García

Worker (Spain)

[German audio until 12:54] ... affecting democracy itself, whose institutions are distorted or emptied of content as they are captured by the interests of business of the minority in society. At the same time, the worst kind of retrograded and politics lacking in solidarity is advancing giant steps across the world. In Spain, for example, in the region of Castile and León, the regional government, a coalition of the right and the ultra-right is continually attacking the mechanism of social dialogue that cost decades to develop, not respecting agreements on social dialogue, and is getting rid of mechanisms for extrajudicial arbitration and is worsening its participation in institutions, setting out obstacles to fundamental constitutional rights, a situation that is defined by the ILO as a grave violation of social dialogue and by the Director-General as worrying and serious. Faced with this model at an international level, we have many examples of how social dialogue is improving the situation, creating riches and enforcing democracy. But even in this house, in the ILO, powerful business sectors and government sectors align with them and try to impose their interests at the cost of common good, social dialogue and true negotiation and real democracy. For more than a decade now we have seen an increase in the difficulty in making progress in standards and in the monitoring of standards. Unfortunately, there are business sectors and governments that make it more and more difficult for the soul of the ILO to function year on year. We can see that even with the objection to fundamental rights, including the right to strike which has been established for decades as part of the inalienable rights of workers. The ILO, however, continues to demonstrate the importance of its work. Fundamental parts of its agenda, such as the fight against violence and harassment, the transition, the recognition of labour, care or work in platforms, are part of the discussions on a new social contract. We will not allow this agenda to be emptied of content for those who want to protect the privileges of a minority. Given that, given the main threat that we see in the world is the advance of antidemocratic and antisocial forces, it is fundamentally important to defend the ILO as a bulwark of the social contract, structured on the base of dialogue and tripartism. Ladies and gentlemen, the guarantee of a world without war is an essential precondition for any social dialogue, and social justice is a guarantee for a world in peace. War, any war, is paid for essentially by the working class. I would like particularly to mention the genocide which is being perpetrated in Palestine, whose people are a victim of a brutal, indiscriminate and illegal repression on the part of the ultra-conservative government of Israel. This response is a planned and systematic violation of human rights and has to be investigated and judged in the appropriate forum. The workers of Spain call for an immediate ceasefire and permanent ceasefire in this and in all other conflicts in the world. Strengthening the

true tripartite dialogue in the ILO and other multilateral ambits is a fundamental task to construct a new social contract based on the pillars of peace, democracy, social justice, non-discrimination and environmental sustainability, which have to become a reality. Thank you.

Ms Simona Bucura-Oprescu

Government (Romania)

It is an honour to take the floor before this 112th Session of the ILO Conference. Mr President, I congratulate you on this very important post and wish you all the best for your mandate. I would like to express my best wishes to the Director-General and his whole team of the ILO and congratulate them for having prepared a very full report and organizing this conference. The social contract introduces a democracy. It is a recognition of the mutual responsibilities within that. I hope that, on the basis of our common values regarding human rights, the fundamental rights of state of law, we will find a common path towards a solid social contract. In an era of globalization and rapid technological transformation, the requirement to ensure social justice and decent work for all workers in all countries means that they extend beyond national frontiers, and the International Labour Organization and its standards stand as the basis of a global social contract. The ILO and its decision-making process underlines the need for global governance which is able to defend and promote international respect and agreement for regulations which are extremely important, including the international labour standards. To face the challenges we currently face, including war and other violence which is a challenge to the protection of human rights, also the protection of biodiversity and the challenges that we face due to climate change, these accentuate the pressures on governments which are already enormous and make it difficult for governments to find the right balance between social inclusion, economic prosperity and sustainability at an environmental level. In order to help take up these challenges, a new social contract needs to be based on the principle of sustainable development, and the Government of Romania commits to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to services for all citizens to ensure ecological and digital transition through our policies, ensuring a sustainable economy and creating new jobs ensuring economic prosperity, raising the standard of living and also raising social inclusion. We also need to create a working environment which is secure, inclusive, which excludes harassment and discrimination, which ensures inclusion and diversity, giving equality of opportunity and clear policies and practices to avoid discrimination and harassment. This is not an easy commitment, but the social partners play a key role here, especially the local competent authorities. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my support to the initiative of Spain proposing that the objectives of the 2025 Summit should include the adoption of an international charter on the rights of labour, including the basis established on the protection of the rights of workers already and taking into account the changing challenges of the digital and environmental transition. And not only to continue international cooperation and respecting existing international labour standards but also to share good practices and public policies which have proven to be effective in facing these unprecedented changes, particularly the digital changes in the world of work. And thank you very much to all colleagues and to you, Mr President.

Mr Sour Heng

Government (Cambodia)

Excellency President, Excellency Director-General of the ILO and Secretary-General of the Conference, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. First and foremost, on behalf of the Cambodian delegation, I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency President on your appointment. I also would like to take this opportunity to convey our profound gratitude to the ILO for its significant contribution to the socio-economic development of all Member States, including Cambodia's. The innovative programmes and initiatives of the ILO aimed at achieving the Decent Work Agenda have been instrumental in our progress. Your Excellency President, as highlighted in the report of the ILO Director-General, 'Towards a renewed social contract', we are currently facing significant pressures due to various transformative factors such as climate change, technological advancements and socio-economic inequality. Addressing these challenges requires our concerted efforts to establish a renewed social contract. Therefore, my delegation highly commends this insightful report, which advocates for a comprehensive approach to social justice, encompassing the fight against poverty, reduction of social exclusion and assurance of productive employment while promoting a heightened awareness of social responsibilities. Cambodia has strongly promoted the social contract. We are proud to be one of the 15 pathfinder countries in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Cambodia has successfully implemented the Rectangular Strategy over five phases, achieving peace, prosperity and social stability. Building on this success, the new government is now implementing the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase 1, focusing on resilient economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction, governance enhancement, public institution, quality and sustainable socio-economic development and climate resilience. In line with this strategy, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training has developed the Strategic Development Plan for Labour, Social Security and Vocational Training for 2024-2028, aiming to boost skills and enhance the productivity of the workforce through a flexible training pathway; increase coverage of social security to the self-employed and their dependents, aiming to achieve universal health coverage; ensure the compliance of labour standards, working conditions, freedom of association and workers' rights; enhance the labour dispute conciliation mechanism and efficiency; improve the well-being of workers; protect the rights of migrant workers and provide active labour market policies. On gender and human capital development, the Government offers a cash allowance programme to support pregnant workers and will soon establish community baby care centres and kindergartens close to the factories and worker residential areas. The Government also launched the 1.5 million TVET training programme for youth from the poor and at-risk households and the workers who want to upskill and reskill themselves so they can remain relevant to the labour market and maintain their employability. To promote the culture of compliance and corporate social responsibility, the One Enterprise, One Harmonious Community award has also been launched and the winner will be awarded on International Labour Day, starting from next year. Your Excellency President, Cambodia's key achievements highlight its strong commitment to social justice and decent work, crucial for establishing a sustainable social contract. This dedication is evident through tripartite mechanisms, social dialogue and continuous efforts to address challenges, ensuring equal access to education, employment and healthcare. Collaboration with international communities and stakeholders, especially the ILO, has been vital in implementing programmes like the Decent Work Country Programme, Better Factories Cambodia and

Decent Employment for Youth which are significantly promoting decent work for all. In conclusion, Cambodia reaffirms our commitment to collaborate with social partners and the ILO in reinforcing the principles of tripartism, social dialogue and a human-centred approach to achieve our shared goal and vision of renewing the social contract, as articulated in the Director-General's report. Thank you for your attention.

Mr David Joyce

Worker (Ireland)

Mr President, distinguished delegates, on behalf of the workers of Ireland, I very much welcome this year's DG report on renewing the social contract. As the report notes, in the face of rising geopolitical instability, waning trust in governance and deepening social inequalities, the concept of the social contract has never been more critical and needs to be renewed to ensure social justice and solidarity. A social contract represents the collective responsibilities and agreements between individuals, institutions and ensuring mutual benefits and societal stability, aligning with the principles of freedom, dignity, economic security and equality. Following the recent European elections, the European Trade Union Confederation has stated that social contracts are under immense pressure and it is clear that business as usual cannot continue. Europe needs to urgently resolve the economic and social insecurity that lies behind growing anger and fear in our society. The EU must urgently press forward on a European project of hope that delivers security and safety to workers and double down on an EU that fights poverty and creates quality jobs. We strongly support the ILO tools for such renewal, reaffirming tripartism, social dialogue and collective bargaining as key drivers for negotiating the terms of social and environmental just transition towards lasting peace and a sustainable planet, and economic and social policies that promote decent work and social justice. The upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development next year also presents a significant opportunity to discuss and implement a renewed social contract on a global scale. In Ireland we have many challenges in terms of renewing our social contract. Recent modest labour market reforms have led to Government approving a business support package that seeks to undo multi-year commitments to improve wage floors and income protection. This cannot be justified in a booming economy, and if pursued, will leave the lowest-paid, sick, migrant and retired workers paying the price for government bowing to business lobbyists. Hundreds of thousands of workers continue to have their right to collective bargaining denied. The EU's adequate minimum wage directive will require Ireland to promote collective bargaining and facilitate the right to exercise collective bargaining. We are one of only two EU countries that does not protect employee representatives from being discriminated against for their trade union activity, and there are multiple workplaces across our island where trade union representatives are banned from organizing. We want to see the directive effectively transposed as a priority to ensure all workers can enjoy full rights and legal protections and to remove any barriers that exist around joining a trade union. As the President of Ireland recently stated, history tells us that the best outcomes for workers, their defence and their prospects, continue to be best achieved by being a trade union member, and we agree that every worker is better in a trade union. Finally, to a place where any semblance of a social contract has been completely discarded. The Director-General's report to the upcoming Governing Body confirms that Myanmar has not made any demonstrable progress on the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations concerning ILO Conventions 87 on freedom of association and 29 on forced labour. He has introduced a range of ILO measures,

including article 33, to secure Myanmar's compliance within one year. It is time for article 33 to be applied in this case and we urge all sides of this house to support such a measure at the 2025 ILC. We reiterate our demand that the military authorities immediately release all imprisoned trade unionists and return the country to democracy and urge all Irish business to divest from any business links in Myanmar. Thank you.

Mr Kamel Maddouri

Government (Tunisia)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. President of the ILC, Director-General of the ILO, ladies and gentlemen, I would like at the outset to express to you the privilege I feel to participate in the ILC that represents a forum of dialogue and deliberation between the three parties around common concerns in the world of work. Ladies and gentlemen, the ILO Director-General has confirmed, through his report under the title 'Towards a renewed social contract', the importance of the challenges that are facing the field of work as well as the new technological innovations, the democratic transformations, the transitions and so on. In addition also to the digital transition as well as the future opportunities and in order also to gather all these issues to cover and put an end to poverty. Ladies and gentlemen, this requires a new social contract where all the efforts of the three parties are being consolidated, with the governments, the employers as well as the workers, in order to renew the social contract, to determine the new needs of decent work and in order to guarantee the equality of opportunities as well as the reinforcement of the culture of social dialogue. Ladies and gentlemen, the Director-General of the Organization has shown that social justice is an ongoing process and it is not an objective in itself. It is actually around the human being and it should be also around the main pillars in order to guarantee a new social contract. It is the main pillar for all the social and national policies in order to guarantee equal opportunities to put an end to the social disparities. Ladies and gentlemen, social justice is a global human value that helps mankind put an end to poverty, exploitation and discrimination. This was amongst the pillars of the Tunisian revolution in our country in order to have it as a priority, not only in terms of practice but also in terms of legislation. This is why His Excellency the President of the Republic called for a legislative revolution in order to achieve this lofty goal. And in this framework we would like to insist on social justice that is consecrating all the main pillars of social justice and in order to have this coalition prevail. Ladies and gentlemen, Tunisia wants to [vgr INAUDIBLE 37:08] this social justice and social protection system and in order to have a multidimensional process in that field whereby which we have an economic integration for all the categories as well as for labour and the professional relations and with the follow-up of His Excellency the President of the Republic, as was mentioned and stipulated in the Tunisian Constitution. We are working now in guaranteeing decent work for workers as well as decent labour and to put an end to informal work through putting legislations and in order to confront such ways of work in order to consecrate decent work for all. Ladies and gentlemen, I will not forget to seize this opportunity to remind you of our brothers in Palestine who are suffering from all types of persecution as well as violation of their dignity and their human rights, and it is very important to support the rights of the Palestinian people in self-determination and in order to have an independent State with the capital being Jerusalem. I would like also to call, during this occasion, to enable Palestine to become a full-fledged member of the ILO. I thank you and may the peace of God be upon you.

Mr Mohd Effendy Abdul Ghani

Worker (Malaysia)

Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim, assalamu alaikum, and very good morning, brothers and sisters. On behalf of the MTUC, CUEPACS and all workers in Malaysia, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Malaysian Government for its significant step in aligning with the international labour standards. Malaysia has recently deposited the ratification of Convention 155, occupational safety and health, on June 11, 2024. This ratification reflects the Government of Malaysia's commitment to upholding comprehensive occupational safety and health regulations in line with global best practices, thus enhancing the protection of workers' rights and well-being. This commitment ensures the safety of workers and ensures proper laws regarding safety at the workplace are maintained. The amendment to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which took place on 1 June 2024, highlights the importance of workplace safety in Malaysia. The amendment was made to bring domestic law in line with the labour standards set by the ILO. It emphasizes the shared responsibilities of both employees and employers in upholding workplace safety and health standards, showing a proactive approach to protecting the well-being of workers. Brothers and sisters, the workers' main agenda is to strengthen the trade unions to ensure that our voices are heard by the Government. It is important to provide training and other resources to equip members and future leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to negotiate with the Government and employers. The Ministry of Human Resources of Malaysia has implemented the trade union affairs programme to support and strengthen the labour union movement by providing financial assistance and educational platforms for continuous learning to enhance the leadership skills of the union members. We appreciate the Government for providing the grant to the trade unions every year. We are also looking to empower the workers and trade unions through the amendment of the Trade Union Act. This act had been approved in the Parliament of Malaysia and has recently undergone significant amendments. The revision emphasizes the fundamental labour rights, particularly the freedom of association and collective bargaining. This signals a commitment to fostering a more equitable and empowered labour environment in Malaysia. Brothers and sisters, the impact of the pandemic is still evident as we continue to struggle with reducing the unemployment rate, increasing salaries and equipping workers with digital knowledge. To address the issue of wages, the Malaysian Government initiated the pilot project of the Progressive Wages Policy in June 2024, providing financial aid assistance to employers to reduce the gap between the lower and higher income employees. This policy will complement the Minimum Wages Order and Productivity-Linked Wage System in Malaysia. Brothers and sisters, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia have led to restructuring of the Employees Provident Fund. The aim is to enhance members' retirement income security while also addressing their current lifecycle needs. This initiative will restructure members' accounts from two to three, introducing a flexible account designed to meet members' short-term financial needs. We believe that investing in social protection is crucial for enhancing workers' employment capacity and ensuring a resilient and equitable workforce for the future generations. We recommend that the Government of Malaysia considers implementing a comprehensive 24/7 safety net for workers, including the introduction of a social protection for non-fault accidents programme to cover workers within 24 hours. This safety net would provide essential support to the workers during times of income shortfalls resulting from non-occupational accidents that occur outside of their working hours even if they are unrelated to their job. Many

low-income workers in Malaysia cannot afford life or medical insurance. Almost 46% of Malaysians lack private health insurance due to high premium costs which are often only accessible to those with a higher income. A social protection scheme can support the 47% of workers earning salaries below the national poverty line. Brothers and sisters, we are grateful to our colleagues from the public sector and extend our heartfelt thanks to the Government for finally revising their salaries after 13 years. We understand that the new salary structure for the public sector will be implemented by December 2024. Last but not least, MTUC, we would like also to take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to the ILO, ACTRAV and ITUC for assistance to the workers, not only providing guidance but also in terms of training, reskilling and upskilling. The commitment and effort from the ILO are highly appreciated. Thank you very much.

Mr Chandra Prasad Dhakal

Employer (Nepal)

Respected Session Chair, Excellencies, representatives from government and non-government organizations, friends from the private sector, distinguished delegates, good morning. It is an honour to address you all at this significant gathering. The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the FNCCI, is the largest private sector umbrella organization in Nepal, representing around 600,000 businesses. We are also the only employers' organization in Nepal placing significant responsibility on us to lead by example. The Director-General's report emphasizes advancing social justice and decent work for employees. FNCCI has been a champion in both areas. The private sector of Nepal diligently follows all the ILO regulations and Conventions that our government has signed. Moreover, we have independently undertaken numerous initiatives to uphold employee dignity. Dignity, in our view, goes beyond the proper conduct. It involves enhancing our employees' capacity for personal and professional development, providing them with better opportunities. Nepali businesses enjoy a strong employer-employee relationship, and we have not faced significant labour issues in recent years. Social justice means equal economic, political and social opportunities and rights for everyone. We are committed to inclusivity and gender equality. This platform allows me to highlight the investment opportunities in Nepal and how they can enhance social justice through rapid economic growth. Nepal began its liberalization process in 1990 and is now implementing the new-generation economic reforms. FNCCI has been at the forefront of this push, including the formation of a commission announced in the budget for the next fiscal year. As the warm-up to the reform agenda, the Government has amended the eight laws related to investment to facilitate FDI. The Cabinet has approved the bilateral investment agreement framework, and we are ready to sign the agreement with interested countries. The budget also promises to sign Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements, DTAA, with potential countries. Nepal, situated between India and China, offers duty-free market access to India, which will continue even after our graduation from the least developed country category. This facility will be available in the EU market until 2029 and we are negotiating similar access with China and other markets. This positioning allows for production in Nepal, with export potential worldwide. Nepal holds immense potential in hydropower production, with huge markets in India and Bangladesh. We have an agreement with India to buy 10,000 megawatts of electricity and are in the process of signing an agreement with Bangladesh. Tourism is another vital sector. Our beautiful hill stations and Himalayas are popular destinations, and the multiplier effect in tourism is substantial, providing livelihood opportunities for the rural population. Additionally, our youth population is a

valuable asset for investors, especially in the booming ICT sector which offers decent work opportunities for the youth on a large scale. Therefore, I emphasize the need for investments. It will help fulfil the agenda of social justice by creating decent employment opportunities. Lastly, I thank the ILO for inviting me to this event. I assure everyone that the private sector of Nepal will continue to be a trusted partner of the ILO. Let us join hands to create a more sustainable world. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Ms Dariia MARCHAK

Government (Ukraine)

Mr President, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Your Excellency Minister Alexei Buzu of the Republic of Moldova, on your election as President of the International Labour Conference. We are confident that under your skilful leadership the Conference will be a success. Mr President, we are also discussing fundamental principles and rights at turbulent times, placing them at heightened risk but also renewing their importance. The ILO's priorities and future actions must match these challenges. In this regard, we recall the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as our common beacon. We welcome our joint achievements since 2017, namely the universal ratification of Convention 182, the decision to include the rights to a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work and to designate Conventions 155 and 187 as fundamental Conventions. We also celebrate the launch of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We welcome this year's discussions on biological hazards and the care economy and look forward to the discussions on platform work and informality in the coming years. Continued efforts are needed to strengthen social partners' capacities to play their part for workers in urban as well as rural areas. This in turn calls for the reinforcement of social dialogue among tripartite constituents at all levels and in all sectors. Mr President, like many other countries, Ukraine is currently facing changes in the labour market and in the quality of life of its people. We understand that we have critical demographic challenges, and there is already a significant labour market deficit despite a relatively high unemployment rate. This is primarily caused by the mismatch between the skills and competencies of workers and the needs of employers, and we are working intensively at improving the system for identifying vulnerable categories to ensure the provision of necessary social services, appropriate retraining, skills upgrading, and the reintegration of these people into the labour market. We also work at ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable individuals in society and activating them in the labour market to enable them to lead independent, active lives. Unfortunately, these problems are at a very critical stage due to the ongoing Russian aggression. This aggression has a very devastating impact on the quality of life of all Ukrainians, from the daily blackout of electricity for more than ten hours per day to the fact that a quarter of Ukrainians, according to World Bank estimates, are currently living below the poverty line as a result of Russia's war and almost five million Ukrainians are refugees in Ukraine and also five million refugees have fled abroad. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has also caused lower global growth and high inflation, with extremely negative impacts on the labour domain and business environment in many regions of the world. We would like to underline that it is Russia who is the main contributor and engine of cascading crises in the world, threatening the integrity of the rules-based international order. By launching a full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine and then by refusing to end it, Russia deprives Ukraine, as a developing country, as well as many other developing and least developed countries, of means to implement social and development strategies

and achieve each and every Sustainable Development Goal. In just two days, on 15/16 June, the global peace summit on Ukraine will take place here in Switzerland to provide the world leaders of peace-loving countries, both developed and developing ones, with the platform to discuss the path to peace in Ukraine based on the Peace Formula of President Zelenskyy. The summit will serve as a first step of a high-level political engagement towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine consistent with the UN Charter and international law. Mr President, it is critically important for us to have international pressure on the aggressor State to end its war. Any social contract is only possible under conditions where a person can live a safe life not in a situation where all attention is focused on daily survival. Since March 2022 Russia has not implemented any of six decisions of the ILO Governing Body with regard to its armed aggressions against Ukraine. This constant pattern of denial and non-compliance requires further consideration by the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference itself as a recurrent discussion agenda item. Thank you, Mr President.

Mr José Medina Mora Icaza

Employer (Mexico)

A world with economic development, with care for the environment and with social justice is possible. Greetings to the President of the 112th International Labour Conference, to the Director-General of the ILO. Having analysed the DG's report, on behalf of the employers of Mexico we would like to bring the thoughts that we have with regard to the need for a new model for countries, a new model for inclusive development, because economic development is necessary but it is not sufficient for social development. So social development means high-quality education, health for all, a healthy workplace and accommodation, but also dignity for all. So our minimum wage had been linked to certain prices rather than to inflation, and it meant that the minimum wage had fallen in real terms. And we were able to increase in real terms the minimum wage 100% from 2016 to today, achieving family well-being so that with two minimum wages in a family of four, it is possible to afford accommodation and food. But when we are talking about sustainable development, it means moving from a linear model of consumption and a hopeful trickle-down effect but actually to creating employment and creating well-being. This inclusive development model is absolutely key because it defends freedoms and human rights in a way that is ethical with integrity, with democracy. And this is a pillar that I am talking about, and we, as enterprises, as governments can use it to confront the great challenges that we are faced with in education. There has been poor education in Mexico because many people had to leave education over three generations past in order to join the job market. But if companies and organizations actually help our workers to finish their formal education, then we are also helping ourselves and the country. Through the health fund, health for all can also lead to a decrease in illnesses which have been draining the health service in Mexico, which are diabetes and heart disease. The hope is that the minimum wage can actually achieve a third level in supporting families to move forward and progress, and we want to work together on this. Social dialogue is absolutely vital for Mexicans. 66% of Mexicans are currently in informality, so we as employers, when we ensure that they are on our payrolls and paying taxes, we help them to move into formal work, the formal economy. Obviously informality is very vulnerable. These are people who have lost almost everything, but an inclusive health-for-all approach means that we are working for not only Mexico but for Latin America as a whole. This inclusive development model

is also linked to social dialogue, workers, employers and governments, all together, because when we work together we have justice for all.

Ms Lilian Tshan

Government (Germany)

President, Director-General, ministers, representatives of the employers and workers, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. The increasing inequality in the world is one of the greatest challenges of our time. It endangers sustainable development, creates social unrest, undermines social progress and threatens political and economic stability and undermines human rights. What the United Nations recognized in that quote cannot leave us indifferent, and that is why I would like to thank the Director-General for his report to year's International Labour Conference. It moves the discussion in the right direction, thinking also of the World Social Summit. It shows us the great job that we are faced with in the International Labour Organization as a part of the United Nations family. Every year millions of people have to leave their homelands because they have been expelled, because hunger, war, crushing poverty and discrimination force them to seek other places to survive or to find a better life. Forced labour and child labour have increased across the world. Serious violations of basic human rights, occupational accidents and diseases worldwide cost nearly three million people their lives, and there are millions of people who still have no access to social protection. Everywhere in the world there are people being faced with obstacles in the freedom to organize, and we in the ILO know best how important social dialogue is and how important it is to be able to organize to protect your interests. People are faced with discrimination in society and at work because of their sex, their nationality, their skin colour or their religion. And I would like at this point, personally but also as a representative of my country, to express our deep concern about the fact that the protection of people against discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity is being called into question. We have to work clearly against that development. Discrimination is a very important driver of inequality and stands against decent work and social justice. Renewing the social contract, that is what you call for in your report, Director-General Hounbo, and you mention the basic pillars that have to underlie what we do together: universally recognized human rights, humanity, democracy, social progress, development and climate justice. There we are just talking essentially about the claim to apply of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We all once agreed on these human rights and they all apply across traditions and cultural differences, and these universal human rights are reflected in the fundamental principles and rights at work. Peace in the world can only be constructed on the basis of social justice. And that basic insight of the ILO Constitution makes it our job to deal with injustice in the world and get rid of it. The World Social Summit 2025 will give us a great opportunity to clearly express our shared values and to agree on shared work. We all have a responsibility. In Germany, despite crises and disruptions, we have been able, despite economic uncertainty, to achieve the highest employment rate that we have ever seen. We can see clearly that cooperation and social partnership is good for everyone. Where workers and employers negotiate as equals, companies are more productive, more innovative and more successful, and wages are clearly higher. Workers profit from them, their families and their children. That strengthens social protection and the common good. But we as a state also have a responsibility. We have to adapt our social protection systems to make sure that people, through upskilling, will move out of social dependency and into work. Globally, we are all living in times of

fundamental transformation. That is why the Federal Government is depending on good partnership in international cooperation. Director-General Hounbo, for the Federal Government of Germany it is a responsibility and an honour at the same time to be a partner in your initiative of a Global Coalition for Social Justice. We have great hopes for this initiative. Germany is making its contribution to this Global Accelerator. We want to join our forces and with strong leadership achieve greater consistency and effectiveness in what we are doing, and I am very much looking forward to what we do together in the future. Thank you very much for listening.

Mr Kassahun Follo Amenu

Worker (Ethiopia)

Mr President, distinguished delegates, Mr Chairperson, please allow me to join previous speakers to congratulate you for being elected as the chairperson of this year's International Labour Conference. It is a great honour to deliver a speech at this annual International Labour Conference on behalf of the Ethiopian trade union movement and myself. Mr President, permit me to congratulate Mr Gilbert Hounbo, the ILO Director-General, for his high-quality leadership and for steering the ILO amidst multiple challenges and the complicated dynamics taking place in the world of work. The Global Coalition for Social Justice, initiated under his leadership, is a benchmark testimony in this regard. We congratulate him for this far-reaching vision. In this connection, I want to commend that the agendas set forth for this conference are pertinent and properly reflect the existing crucial issues and daunting challenges the global labour market governance is facing. I am confident that social partners shall critically and thoughtfully discuss, reach consensus over effective ways of addressing the prevailing challenges and will come out with significant breakthrough resolutions. Mr President, the Ethiopian trade union movement are facing multiple challenges and uncertainties stemming from everchanging labour markets driven by globalization, technological advancement, imbalance of value chains, climate change, demographic shift, worsening geopolitical tensions and devastations of armed conflicts. Concerning internal conflicts, recently an enabling environment was created to find peaceful solutions to Ethiopia's problems through national dialogue. For this dialogue, representatives of key political partners and civil society organizations are invited to discuss and develop agendas for dialogue and reconciliation as the primary way to ensure lasting and comprehensive peace, stability and development in Ethiopia. In this regard, our voice for peace has been consistent and we are actively participating to positively contribute to the national dialogue. The other challenge we are facing is fixing the minimum wage and the ever-skyrocketing inflation and the crisis of the cost of living. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions is demanding the establishment of a minimum wage board that fixes a well-designed and balanced minimum wage level and asked for reduction of income taxes as a matter of urgency so that tax justice shall be rendered to Ethiopian workers and their families and are waiting for the response of our government. On this backdrop, the Ethiopian workers and their organizations, in cooperation with the Government and employers' associations, are coping with the challenges and are navigating uncertainties. To this end, we are fostering social dialogue in order to enhance tripartite and bipartite cooperation, consultation, negotiation and information exchange between social partners. Finally, once again, I would like to reaffirm my organization's commitment to the pursuit of the doctrine of social justice and the renewed social contract initiated in this conference. We will continue an advocacy campaign for the ratification and the application of ILO Conventions and the extension

of social protection coverage for all. Mr President, distinguished delegates, I thank you for your attention.

Mr Vasyl Andreyev

Worker (Ukraine)

Dear Mr President, of the Conference, dear delegates, first of all allow me to congratulate President Alexei Buzu from Moldova, together with the vice-presidents, on their elections on these positions, and thanks for the successful work of the Conference. The ILO is committed in promoting social justice, labour and human rights, which are critical for long-lasting peace. Ukraine is currently in fire from the aggression of the Russian occupation forces. General-Secretary of the ITUC, Dr Triangle, rightly stated that there is no justification either in long history or in modern times for the Russian invasion, violence and war crimes in Ukraine. Therefore, the first issue, we are united by, the entire world needs to focus on is the termination of aggression from Russia and the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the sovereign territory of Ukraine, supporting the peace plan of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Targeted destruction to the energy sector with long-range missiles deprives families not only from electricity and water supply but it also stops production. It also destroys jobs. It destroys social protection. Following the occupying armed forces, the so-called 'phanta-unions' are coming. In 2023 the International Labour Organization issued a brief on state corporation ROSATOM from Russia that, after the seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant power station, forced workers to stay at the occupied areas, not allow them to exit and for them to work at the plant. And the FNPR creates its own organization there and forces workers to join those so-called unions under military coercion. We see the strong gesture for support in Ukraine in the opening, and operational activities start, in the ILO office in Ukraine. The Director-General in his report 'Towards a renewed social contract' noted the lack of proper trust in national and international government institutions creates a challenge to ensure general prosperity, sustainable peace, social justice and the environment. We fully agree. Therefore it is necessary to increase trust in the operational activities of the ILO and move the office from Moscow to anywhere else. The increase of trust in the ILO is visible during the ILO Governing Body election that showed Russian candidates have no support through the secret ballot, and only two votes separated them from defeat in the elections. In parallel with the International Labour Conference, the third Ukraine Recovery Conference, URC, is taking place in Berlin. We express our gratitude to the German Government as well as to the ILO who moved to the position of the Ukrainian trade unions right now involved in the discussion during the URC. For the successful implementation of the cyclopean-sized rebuilding programme after war, Ukraine needs to improve working conditions and comply with international labour standards, which is especially important in terms of an ambitious reform plan as a candidate EU Member State. Huge investments in reskilling and upskilling of the workers are needed to cover demand for workers in this process, training not only for the youth in the vocational training system but also for all workers, especially those who are fleeing from the war zones. Registered jobs and employment under decent conditions should be a focus of every donor, every financial institution who delivers resources to the reconstruction. There are the first signs of optimism regarding legislation amendments of law in labour. The new law on collective agreements gives us responsibility and opportunities to the negotiating parties. It is necessary to finish also development of a new consensus labour code, legislation on social dialogue and collective labour disputes in Ukraine. The restoration of social

insurance, after the social fund was dissolved in 2022, will help preserve and restore health and injured workers. Even under martial law, Ukraine right now ratified ILO Chemicals Convention 170. We need to do even more in the field of occupational health and safety to adopt the new OSH law with the inclusion of guarantees of workers, their trade unions, the introduction of a risk-oriented approach, incentives and sanctions against the employers. Dear Mr President, dear delegates, concluding my speech, I want to thank you once again for the joint work during the 112th ILC. I am confident that a new social contract will be concluded very soon after achieving sustainable peace in Ukraine and all over the world. Glory to Ukraine.

Mr Luiz Marinho

Government (Brazil)

Good morning. I would like to greet my friend, Director-General Gilbert Hounbo, President of the 112th International Labour Conference. I would like to greet the [vgr INAUDIBLE 78:50] of the Workers' and the Employers' groups, the leader of the Brazilian delegation, Ambassador [vgr INAUDIBLE 79:00], ladies and gentlemen. I would like to start by bringing greetings from President Lula to all the participants in this important conference. This year we are celebrating 80 years of the Philadelphia Declaration, and I would like to start by recalling its fundamental principle which states that work is not a commodity. The worker is a subject of rights and a basic pillar of society. I would like to thank my friend, Mr Hounbo, for the report 'Towards a renewed social contract' with guidelines for the actual world of work. In the report, the Director-General describes elements of a renewed social contract and mentions, among other factors, the environmental dimension. In Brazil, sustainability and a fair transition are priorities. They are also priorities for our president. So I have to mention the floods in Rio Grande do Sul in the south of our country which have destroyed entire cities and have left 650,000 people without homes. 75 people have died and there are still 38 people missing. We cannot escape from climate change. There is no way to escape from the consequences of years of destruction by global systems. The Lula Government is doing all it can to minimize the impact in economic terms and it has already released more than 60 billion reais of aid for Rio Grande do Sul. Last week the Minister for Labour released 1.2 billion reais to pay minimum wages to more than 430,000 workers in the areas affected, and there are guarantees of jobs as a result of that for four months. Apart from that, and in accordance with the report of Mr Hounbo, the new social contract has to be based on human rights and the fair distribution of welfare and the fruits of progress. This reminds me that in Brazil we have promoted the policy of maintaining the real value of the minimum wage, and indeed increasing it above inflation every year. And in the first four months of this year, we were able to create 950,000 new formalized jobs. In December of last year, President Lula signed legislation on the taxation of exclusive funds, and so for the first time this year we have had the best tax revenue since the 1980s. However, we have to do more. Globally, we have to address the great fortunes, otherwise we will not be able to do away with poverty and hunger in the world. There is no lack of riches in the world. What is missing is a fair distribution of wealth. Our president understands that wherever in the world there is poverty, there will be no justice. In parliament there is legislation coming up this year which will propose to protect fair pay with a fair working day for drivers based on the interplay of rights and of independence. It is essential, Director-General, that standards respond to a world of work in transformation. Apart from that, we have signed various agreements, including one to protect decent work in coffee and in wine growing. This is

a fundamental right to a healthy working environment that is addressed there. In this new social contract, that will be a significant part. We are also maintaining and strengthening programmes for people who have been rescued from slave labour and for those who have been rescued from precarious, poisonous or dangerous situations. The Government of President Lula continues to work alongside this house and has promoted equal wages legislation for men and women. But there will never be equality without a good policy for the care economy. Care is a universal need, a real public good with social and economic value. And without a proper care economy we will not be able to renew the social contract. We also need to address sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Black, indigenous and immigrant workers' rights have to be guaranteed to guarantee their social and economic autonomy. We need to promote all professionals in care, including domestic workers, as also to accept the shared responsibility of the Government, society, enterprises and states in the provision of care work. The Report of the Director-General talks about the necessity of democracy in work. We need to strengthen the institutions of social dialogue, organizations of workers, employers and others in civil society. Collective bargaining is a powerful tool for the development of social justice. We are searching together for a world in which the economy will service society and not the other way round, as Professor [vgr INAUDIBLE 85:36] said in this plenary. So we join Mr Houngho in the presidency of the Global Coalition, seeking a renewed social contract. In this mission, we support the advance of a global charter for labour rights promoted by various South American countries with a contribution to the ILO for the next year, and we hope that everyone will join in with this. To wind up, a last statement. Brazil would like to see Palestine as a full member of the ILO. Thank you very much for listening and an embrace for everyone.

Mr Prapan Pussayapaiboon

Employer (Thailand)

Honourable Minister Gilbert F. Houngho, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Employers' Confederation of Thailand, I would like to congratulate you, Mr President, and the International Labour Organization, for your longstanding leadership and for organizing conferences like this to promote the quality of life for human labour. At the same time, it has also provided opportunities for employers and business owners, another integral component in production, services and quality of life improvement, to participate. The current global situation has seen tremendous changes, whether in technology, conflict and war. [vgr INAUDIBLE 88:13] of geopolitics, climate change, population growth and ageing all impact the life and well-being of all. It has also intensified the business cycle and adaptation to remain competitive, a key factor that directly affects the livelihood of the workforce. The ILO has done good work. It has been addressing, elevating and improving life and the quality of life for workers, especially in the diverse and complex Asia-Pacific region. The ILO has also rightly believed in and focused on an important operational strategy in the tripartite framework. The Employers' Confederation of Thailand has supported working together with workers and the government to strive for a better quality of life under the framework of various Conventions. This has achieved a certain degree of success for a better livelihood for workers [vgr INAUDIBLE 89:28] in business and sustainable development in the interest of all. This, however, is only possible if the tripartite framework is allowed to function without political interference. A populist [? 89:44] approach with the purpose of getting votes could disrupt the delicate balance of and jeopardize the tripartite system that has

served the balanced interests of all. Over the past year everyone has faced and experienced the severe global impact of COVID-19 on the livelihoods of humanity. This is a veritable [? 90:12] danger from biological hazards in the working environment, hazards that may not be visible to the naked human eye. Sometimes the danger may not manifest immediately, and in some cases it can spread rapidly. Therefore, at this conference, beyond exchanging ideas and good practice for the lives and quality of the labour force, I would like to urge all members to seriously recognize their shared responsibility for actions that may impact this humanity. Finally, Mr President, allow me to bring up the wisdom of His Majesty the late King Rama IX's Sufficiency Economy philosophy, bestowed over 30 years ago. In summary, it refers to development based on moderation, reason and prudence as well as using knowledge, circumspection and virtues in planning, decision-making and actions for the sustainable utmost benefit of the global community. Let our conference work benefit from this wisdom. Thank you very much. Khob khun khab.

Mr Mario Arizti

Government (Uruguay)

Greetings to the Director-General of the ILO, the President of this conference. Ladies and gentlemen, Uruguay has been a member of the ILO since its beginnings in 1919 and has ratified a great number of ILO Conventions. But even before the foundation of the ILO we were in the vanguard for approving important laws for the protection of workers. All of this was fruits of the actions of various different political parties with a shared will for social protection. It is clear that in joining the ILO this facilitated our move towards tripartism and social dialogue. Despite recent unfortunate occurrences, such as the COVID pandemic, our country has achieved great things with regard to employment. We have actually regained all of the jobs lost in the pandemic, and over the last five years prior to the pandemic. We now have an increase of 76,000 persons in work, nett, in 2023 over 2019. In the first quarter of this year the rate of unemployment was 8.7%. The rates of work and employment are at 2015/16 levels. The adversities we refer to do not mean that the Government has not been able to implement its employment programme focused on youth, people with disability, the over 45s. It also has not stopped us working on professional training of workers, putting an emphasis on finishing secondary education, digital literacy and IT. With the support of the ILO, we have constructed a labour market information system which brings together data from different bodies and is available for academia, social actors and for all citizens. We have reduced informality from about 25% in 2015-2019 to a current 21.3%. It is clear once again that the challenges that could be supposed for employment of the introduction of new technologies, particularly AI, require action not only by the state but also by workers' organizations and employers' associations to design educational processes of greater productivity. As happened around the world, real wage and purchasing power dropped because of the pandemic. But today, in real terms, we have regained pre-pandemic levels and improvements in certain sectors over 2019. Monetary policy enabled us to close 2023 with inflation at 5.1%, the lowest in 18 years. And data from this year, end of May, it is currently at 4.1%. From the first year of this government, we have been working together in dialogue with the ILO to approve new provisions and amend existing provisions regarding labour relations and occupational safety and health. As the Director-General told us in his report, demographic and technological changes can bring opportunities but only if we have the necessary human resources to take advantage of them. Uruguay is taking up this challenge despite our

demographic challenges: falling birth rates and increased life expectancy. For this reason, in the first year of this government, we started working on a pension system reform. And in order to do this, we had a long and fruitful work, starting with an institutionalized social dialogue and creation of a committee of experts on social security. This committee has members from academia and the various different political parties as well as workers and employers. The executive negotiated in various different bodies with political parties on a draft law which, following amendments in parliament, was approved. We can confirm with satisfaction that it was a result of broad social dialogue. The ILO and the special committee of the Senate, in December 2022, expressed this consolidated project is a mixed system, a multi-pillar system in which we have a public contribution, a collective fund and private savings. It is in line with the understanding of Recommendation 202 and Conventions 102 and 128. It is particularly strengthening the non-contributory pillar of public funds to those who need them most. It is absolutely definitive that this is a fair reform of a comprehensive joint pension system made up of various different subsystems, a reform which ensures sustainability of the system and a reform which creates rights such as compatibility between retirement and work, partial retirement and also the creation of a solidarity supplement for those with the lowest pensions. This pension reform enabled us to dedicate resources to necessary public policy to support children and youth. Finally, the governments need to continue designing public policy which enable us to increase productivity and competitiveness of our economies, generating greater development opportunities through improved levels of education of the population and the appropriate use of new technologies. Thank you.

Mr Gedeão Silveira Pereira

Employer (Brazil)

Good morning, everyone. On behalf of the President of the Brazilian Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock, I would like to offer my compliments to the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, who I congratulate for the work that he has been doing in this organization. I would also like to greet the President of this conference and the Minister of Labour of Brazil, Mr Marinho, the employers', workers', government representatives and other participants in this conference. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour to be here representing all of the Brazilian employers at this 112th International Labour Conference. Brazil, like many nations, is faced with significant challenges in its labour market. At the moment we have an unemployment rate that reflects the complexities of our economy and transformations taking place worldwide. Over the last year we have seen a slight improvement. The unemployment rate reached 14.7% in 2020 because of the pandemic. Since then it has fallen to 7.8% in 2023. This drop is the result of a set of factors such as the resumption of economic activity, the creation of new jobs and the implementation of public policies in support of employment. However, there is still a lot that needs to be done to improve the quality of work in Brazil. Informality is still a serious problem with almost 40% of working people in that situation. Apart from that, productivity needs to be improved. Brazil is currently in 60th place in the world ranking of worker productivity, according to the World Competitiveness Yearbook. Labour supply is diverse and abundant, but the qualification of these workers and their entry into the work marketplace requires robust policies which are adapted to regional and sectoral needs because Brazil is a country the size of a continent. At the heart of our strategies for professional qualification is the 'S System'. That is a network of autonomous social services funded by contributions from the

sectors of production and which has a crucial part in professional education and support for workers. It is run by employers' confederations in every sector of the economy, and it is a significant player in the promotion of social and vocational development in Brazil, offering everything from basic education to specialized technical training. The National Rural Learning Service, SENAR, is an S System entity that supports the agricultural sector, offers technical training, health education, agricultural management and cutting-edge technology for our workers and farmers. And this training contributes to the qualification and upskilling of the workforce, the generation of income and the improvement of quality of life in rural areas. And the best thing of all, it is 100% free. Strengthening the S System and expanding access to professional training, with a focus on new technologies and market demands is a guarantee of employability. Finally, we need to recognize and increase the status of the rural population as an agent of transformation and development. Brazilian farmers are faced daily with countless obstacles and challenges, and their dedication and hard work deserve our deepest respect and gratitude. The farming sector is one of the biggest generators of employment in Brazil, employing 27% of all Brazilian workers. From farm to the table, 28 million Brazilians find work and livelihoods in the various links of the agricultural and livestock production value-added chains. Investment in agriculture is not just an investment in food security but also in the creation of decent jobs and the reduction of social inequality in our country. Brazil these days is a world agricultural power. As president of the agricultural federation of Rio Grande do Sul, a state that is currently going through such difficult times because of the floods that happened in May which left thousands of people homeless and jobless, I would like to emphasize the importance of joint action by the Government, private initiative and civil society in the reconstruction process. May this conference be an ambit for dialogue and tripartite cooperation where we can share our experience and find innovative solutions to promote the sustainable development of labour in Brazil and in the world. By investing in agribusinesses and the rural sector we are investing in food security and in the future of all the economic sectors that are present here at this conference, and that is what the Brazilian Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock, the CAN, works towards. Thank you very much.

Ms Miriam Catalina Roquel Chávez

Government (Guatemala)

Good afternoon to everyone. I have the pleasure of speaking to the plenary of the 112th International Labour Conference to refer to the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. We are talking about a social contract. It is the responsibility of all because it means a tacit agreement between individuals and the state, and this means that the human beings can live together with others within a framework of rights and responsibilities under the law in order to guarantee conditions of freedom and equality. Throughout the years, our country has been trying to develop our societies, establishing the necessary norms and standards for individuals to be able to achieve their own objectives. And despite this, there are changes in our environment which require a renewal of the social contract, and therefore the social contract cannot be static because of poverty, inequality, the pandemic. These are some of the issues which require a response that is a community response, and solidarity, working together with our own functions and the commitments, our obligations towards others and from all sectors necessary in order to achieve a better society. In order to achieve this objective, we cannot just rely on the authorities to find solutions. As citizens, we need to play an active role and also demand transparency, responsibility and justice from those

organizations or representatives from offices working for the state, social security, decent work, good education, proper nutrition. This is, of course, a great challenge, the challenge of renewing the social contract. I believe firmly that, in order to achieve this, we need to work through social dialogue which is open and honest in order to improve our institutions and adapt them to the realities of the new world. This is key for all governments and administrations, including the constitutional President of Guatemala. As Minister of Labour myself, I am ready to dialogue in social dialogue the construction of a fairer and more inclusive society. Through the implementation of this dialogue, we have been able to achieve commitments to overcome conflicts and to achieve a road map for collective bargaining, the promotion of decent work, sustainable development, among other keys. The international community has taken up with enthusiasm the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract' in our communities, and through the aid of the ILO's resources achieving this. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is being implemented through collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced labour, working for elimination of discrimination in employment and work, and a safe and secure working environment. National and local practices are now aimed at a level that is accepted at an international level. We would like to thank the Director-General of the ILO for his work towards more sustainable and fairer societies through the respect of all labour rights. Thank you very much.

Mr Enver Husejin

Government (North Macedonia)

Allow me to start by expressing my appreciation for the opportunity to attend this conference as a representative of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. It is a great honour to address you today at this conference where we stand not only as policymakers, employers and workers but also as people united by a common vision: to create a world where dignity, respect and fairness define working conditions. In times of digitalization and rapid technological changes, the labour market is facing transformations that bring new opportunities as well as new challenges. Digital technologies and automation not only change the nature of jobs but also impact the structure of the economy and the way we work and communicate. These changes cause changes in all aspects of labour, and especially social dialogue, a process that is essential for realizing the rights of workers and maintaining the stability of the labour market. Inevitably, automation and artificial intelligence enable increased productivity and new types of jobs. These changes, in return, result in the disappearance of certain traditional jobs and are a source of uncertainty for many workers. Jobs in manufacturing, administrative services and many other sectors are evolving or vanishing, while new jobs are emerging in the fields of information technology, e-commerce and other digital industries. In this new reality, social dialogue must become more inclusive and dynamic. Traditional forms of social dialogue may not suffice to address new challenges. Therefore, it is necessary to develop new forms of dialogue that include various stakeholders, including the new forms of work emerging from digitalization. Social dialogue should expand to include not only workers and employers but also technology companies, freelancers, platform workers and all those involved in the digital economy. One of the key components of this new social dialogue is inclusiveness. We must ensure that all workers, including those in non-standard forms of employment, have a voice in decision-making processes. This means involving freelancers, platform workers and all those working in the new digital economies. It is also essential to ensure that workers

have access to training and skills development needed to adapt to new technologies and jobs. Continuous education and professional development programmes should be a priority for all parties involved in social dialogue. Moreover, digital technologies should be utilized to improve social dialogue. Online platforms for communication and collaboration can facilitate the inclusion of workers from different locations and industries. These platforms can provide quick and efficient access to information and resources, which is crucial for successful dialogue. Digital technologies can be used to conduct surveys and research that reveal the needs and opinions of workers, allowing social partners to tailor their policies and activities. Social dialogue must also be proactive and forward-looking. This means that we need to anticipate and understand how technologies will impact the labour market and prepare for these changes. This includes continuous education and training for workers as well as developing policies that ensure social protection for all workers. Social partners must work together to develop strategies to address the potential negative effects of digitalization, such as job losses and increased insecurity. Social dialogue is not without its challenges. In a world of rapid change where globalization, technology and changing working models create new uncertainties, our commitment to dialogue must be stronger than ever. Governments play a key role in fostering good relations between social partners. It is our duty to create and maintain legal and institutional frameworks that promote and protect social dialogue. We must uphold the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, recognizing them as fundamental principles for a just and equal society. Finally, let us remember that social dialogue does not mean just negotiation for working conditions. It is the basis for building communities, fostering trust and creating a world where everyone has a stake in collective success. So let us listen with empathy, speak honestly and act with integrity. Let us ensure that social dialogue remains a vibrant and indispensable part of our societies, leading us to a future where every worker is respected, every voice is heard and every dream is possible. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Guido Doménico Ricci Muadi

Employer (Guatemala)

Mr President, I would like to thank the Director-General for the presentation of his report 'Towards a renewed social contract' because it makes it possible for us to contribute to the discussion of issues which are fundamental for the future of our organizations and societies. The first thing that needs to be renewed is our efforts to strengthen and deepen democratic values and respect for fundamental rights of human beings, life and liberty as a starting point, and which are currently threatened by new kinds of totalitarianism and dictatorships. I can see worrying developments in my region where we can see sad examples of old and new kinds of authoritarianism, some of which have been destroying democratic systems from within democracy itself. That is, they come to power through the ballot box and then concentrate all of the different powers, and as a corollary of that, violate the fundamental rights of citizens, in particular of the organizations that have the freedoms of unions. The excuse that democracy has not resolved many of the problems of our societies is just an excuse. In no way does it justify the destruction of its fundamental foundations. It was stated by a great statesman of the 20th century, democracy is the worst system of government except for all the others. That is the way things are and we have to fight to correct the problems at their origins, problems which are arbitrarily attributed to the democratic system. And we need to strengthen the only kind of government which recommends fundamental rights and the

principle of alternation in power. In this room I have heard employers and workers emphasizing the fact that our organizations have a fundamental part to play in the strengthening of democracies, and I absolutely agree with that. We have each of us to work in our sphere of influence to construct economic models which are efficient and inclusive. Doing that together through social dialogue and in harmony with the circumstances of each country in which decent work and entrepreneurship have a central part to play and which will lead to an improvement in the life of the majority of our populations. Given the experience of our organizations in supporting the ILO, we can make valuable contributions, and I would like to mention three aspects to which we have to give priority. Firstly, we have to go for the preparation of individual people for the world of work. That is through formal education from primary school right through to technical and vocational education. And we have to provide for further training during the whole life of the workers to keep them up to date with a changing world in which new technologies offer significant opportunities for those who are open to a changing world. Secondly, the kind of work that we aspire to, namely a kind of work where the fundamental rights of workers and proper wages are provided. That can only be provided by companies with the necessary levels of productivity to compete in the changing world that I mentioned. And they are important challenges for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that are the greatest generators of employment. And they need, at the least, a favourable context in which they can prosper. They need that in labour affairs, tax affairs, and they need an administrative system that is free of pressure and of corruption, just to cite the most obvious factors. Finally, we, as employers and workers, need to contribute to robust, functional and sustainable systems of social protection which will guarantee health services to people throughout their working lives and also proper conditions for retirement. That, and wages coming from productive employment, are the best guarantee of social balance. And it is absolutely true, Mr President, commitment to and respect for fundamental rights and the democratic system, as a shared basis of the work of employers and workers and a commitment to the creation of more and better jobs in a changing and competitive world, have to be the basis of a renewed social contract without losing sight of the principles and values that we have agreed on in the past and which are at the centre of the work of the ILO and other organizations in the United Nations system. Thank you.

Mr Younes Sekkouri

Government (Morocco)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Mr Chair, ladies and gentlemen, I would like first of all to congratulate Mr Chair for the election and extend my congratulations and thanks to Mr DG for the leadership in the International Labour Organization and the choice of this important theme that is the renewal of the social contract in all our countries. I think that before sharing the Moroccan experience regarding the social contract, because we have been doing a lot since two years, there is a paradigm shift in terms of social contracts and in terms of the social state in general where we need to solve a complex equation where we have to bridge the gap between the different forms of expression. Because the quality of representations that we have within the world of unions and representatives of governments and representatives of corporations does not, unfortunately, cover the whole spectrum of what a society wants to say in a timely manner. So social dialogue itself need to be renewed in order to fit strategically to the renewal of the social contract. As far as Morocco is concerned, we have been working very hard since 2022 to redesign social dialogue in Morocco, and I

can say that we were quite successful doing that. First of all we institutionalized social dialogue, but it was not enough because we needed to infuse concrete and short-term results for our population in order for the people to believe in social dialogue. This is how we achieved, a couple of weeks ago, a historic agreement where we raised the wages for 4.2 million people, be it in the private sector or the public sector, and we completely revamped the revenue tax model in order to help the middle class get more from social dialogue. It costs us \$3 billion, which is important for the Moroccan budget, but we assume this choice and we assume as a government this decision. Two, under the leadership of His Majesty Mohammed VI, we launched a historic programme for 12 million people where we provide direct aid for the vulnerable populations, those who do not necessarily have rights and correct revenue. And this programme started a couple of months ago and we made it possible because, prior to launching the programme, the Government designed a register, a unified social register, which is an IT-based tool that delivers targeted aid for a population in order to be efficient. Three, we launched, under His Majesty's leadership, two years ago a big programme to generalize social protection, and we moved from one or two million people to 22 million people in 18 months, with two regimes: one that is based on contributions and the other one based on solidarity. These three components that we added to the compensation policy where the Government tries to stabilize prices for the necessary goods and services cost the Government nearly \$10 billion. So the question for the social contract is not necessarily the mechanisms, the institutional path, but also how do you fund your social contract? This is why I pledge personally, and we pledge in the Government of Morocco, new ways to fund social contracts and the social state through partnerships, because there are strategic projects that need to be funded in parallel to the expenditures for social needs. I would like to end my words by saying that if we have a large delegation representing Morocco, with the three union representatives and the representatives of corporations in addition to government, there is a trust that we infused in the social dialogue. Because it was not just about discussing and sharing information and wishes but it was also about making hard decisions, budgetary decisions that benefit the population. And this is how we can made the experiment of a new social contract be a successful one. Ladies and gentlemen, thanks for your attention. May the peace of God be upon you. I thank you.

Mr Kris De Meester

Employer (Belgium)

Esteemed delegates, dear colleagues, the call for a new social contract must go hand in hand with addressing effective labour market governance and focusing on implementation and measurable impacts. Contracts are the foundational elements not just of every business but of human collaboration and society. Contracts enable people, businesses and society to come together and collaborate towards their specific desires and needs. So what is a contract really? A contract is created when there is an offer, consideration and acceptance between two or more parties. In our case, when the Report of the Director-General overlooks the essential role of the private sector and the necessity to create an environment conducive for business growth and job creation, when it misses the positive impact of technology, the importance of skills and productivity agenda, and when it misses sound macroeconomic policies, when the report falls short of properly addressing informality, when the report does not discuss the negative impacts of protectionism on social welfare, jobs and opportunities, in short when it does not respond to the needs of the business community, there is no real offer,

there is no consideration, no mutual acceptance and therefore no contract, not even a germ planted that could lead to a contract. Also, introducing a new standard is not the solution to promote social justice, to address inequalities and foster sustainable development. Limited application of already ratified standards clearly demonstrates that this is a dead-end street. Instead, practical solutions and implementation strategies are much more needed. We employers call for a constructive and future-oriented approach, addressing social and macroeconomic policies that would benefit the whole society rather than consuming a bunch of resources on deep theoretical reflections on a new social contract. Here is a short list of takeaways for free, so please take note. One, invest in skills development from early childhood to adulthood. Two, increase productivity. Three, step up efforts and tackle inefficiencies in transitioning to formal economies. Four, create a conducive environment for sustainable enterprises. Five, reform the social protection system to provide work incentives. In this year's Conference we engaged in a standard-setting discussion on biological hazards and we are working towards conclusions on important topics such as the care economy and fundamental principles and rights at work. Now let me tell you it will be of little avail to workers that the Conventions are made by a tripartite constituency of their own choice if those Conventions are so voluminous that they cannot be read or so incoherent that they cannot be understood. Incoherence is a common hazard for people that dwell in ivory towers or are driven by ideology alone. The Latin root is co-haerere. That means stick together. So once again, build on tripartism. This means that the governance, the policies and the actions respect the role of employers' organizations. It requires a genuine partnership. Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is progress. But working together is success. Tripartism is not just a pure [vgr INAUDIBLE 133:46] approach. It is not a mere ILO branding exercise. My whole professional life was and is focused on efforts to improve health and safety and well-being at work. My motivation is intrinsic. I have a deep and personal concern for the health and safety and well-being of workers, and so has our employer group. If the employers argue for simple and to-the-point provisions, if we ask for consistency and coherence, then we are not against workers' safety or better protection against biological hazards. On the contrary, we want to achieve results in the field. This should not be a window-dressing exercise, not paper-based safety, not a false sense of security. Yet, what is the committee doing? The exact opposite. We are about to create a standard, a Convention that is full of hurdles and barriers for the willing and that is full of good excuses and arguments for those Member States that do not want to adhere to ILO Conventions, a thousand reasons for not ratifying. May I remind this house that not that long ago, on the important right to social security we had to take a step back because the Convention was aiming too high and had low ratification rates. We had to lower the bar and construct social protection floors with minimum social security provisions to allow Member States to gradually improve and extend social protection. In the biohazard discussion we are adding layers to fundamental Conventions on health and safety that already have a high standard and are already difficult to achieve for many countries. So please let us take one step back. Less is more. You can always do more than you commit yourself to in writing but never less. Do not commit to something if you are not certain that most of us will be able to fulfil the requirement. Incoherence, inconsistency and overload are the notes of the symphony of destruction. Nothing is forever. In a world that is changing [vgr INAUDIBLE 135:58] rapid, an ILO not delivering on its core businesses, then this is it, this is a countdown to extinction. Make the turn now while you still can. Thank you.

Mr Tuur Elzinga

Worker (Netherlands)

Social justice remains an imperative and an essential condition for universal and lasting peace. Director-General Gilbert Houngbo rightly reminded us so in his report this year. This ILO message is just as relevant now as it was 100 years ago. One sees too many indicators of increasing polarization in the world and within societies. The differences between rich and poor have never been so visible. Inequality is reaching record levels, and in some countries has even returned to Victorian proportions. An increasing number of citizens lose faith in the achievements of democracy. They perceive that the system is only serving the interests of an elite. They feel forgotten and abandoned. Also in my own country, the Netherlands, I see the same developments. Beside the climate crisis, we experience large failures in public services, personnel shortages in care and education and increasing socio-economic disparities. At the same time, we face huge challenges, such as the energy transition, digital transformation and the need to shift to a more circular economy. In these developments, the Dutch Government's social policy played and plays a crucial role. Labour protection has been gradually dismantled through deregulation and flexibility of labour markets and the lack of enforcement of remaining rules, such as on bogus self-employment. Market forces intensify competition, reducing space for decent labour conditions. Abuse of migrant workers is standard practice. Social security and training opportunities were curtailed, leading to more poverty and making job loss a bigger problem, weakening workers' negotiation positions. And amidst this all, society is confronted with alarming polarization and inequality. Where citizens feel marginalized and sometimes even criminalized by the Government, they respond to this with distrust towards public institutions. For a social contract to work, the first crucial question is how do we rebuild this trust? Political parties thrive as they cater to this resentment and distrust. Unfortunately, a renewed social contract feels further away than ever with far-right and populist political parties winning support in the latest elections, as also occurred in my country, the Netherlands. To rebuild trust and for a new social contract to work, we must bridge and reduce differences, and we must invest in sustainable earning capacity, broad prosperity and people's well-being. As a leader of a free and independent union, I consider it my duty to speak here also on behalf of unrepresented workers' organizations. I refer to the banned independent trade unions from Belarus and Iran. For that matter, we are concerned that government-appointed workers' organizations from these countries participate here at the ILC. This lack of genuine representation is a sign of suppression of fundamental rights and freedom, depriving true worker representatives of the chance to voice their concerns directly at this conference. We strongly condemn their governments' continued brutal crackdown and repression of independent workers' union activists. And therefore, we support and call for the representation of free and independent workers' organizations from Iran and Belarus at this conference. Finally, I want to express our solidarity with the independent trade unions from Myanmar who suffer continuous violations of human and labour rights by the military regime. We support the call of our trade union colleagues from Myanmar to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of the ILO's Commission of Inquiry by adopting a resolution on the measures based on ILO article 33 since the military regime is showing no demonstration of meaningful understanding or follow-up of these recommendations. In solidarity, I thank you.

Mr Bogdan Iuliu Hossu

Worker (Romania)

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, vice-presidents, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the workers of Romania, allow me to congratulate you warmly on your election to President and Vice-President of this conference. Our current social contract is collapsing, and we all feel it, at the community level, the national level and even beyond the national level at the level of humanity in general. We need to find a way to retie those links which join us, to strengthen international solidarity and renew the social contract. We are talking about responsibility, adaptation, inclusion and greater harmony between social, economic and financial policies. Essentially, we need to invest in capacity-building and the support of people within economies because we are facing many transitions at the moment and we need to work towards what the future will be. We also need to create opportunities for people to be able to carry out productive lives and benefit equally from their contribution and the fruits of progress. Of course I am talking about protection from the risk of loss of earnings, protection from various different vulnerable situations and also in old age. The Romanian union movement supports and joins with the call on the International Labour Organization to construct a new social contract in order to guarantee social justice and decent work. Ladies and gentlemen, the Romanian Government, in collaboration with the social partners, ratified Convention 190 and modified part of our legislation. We need to adapt our legislation and the inspection powers in this area. In Romania the framework of social dialogue has been improved with changes made in December 2022, thanks to the report of a delegation of the ILO, summer 2022, supported by the European Commission and included in Romania's recovery and resilience plan. There is nonetheless a lot of lost ground to regain since a decade, when collective negotiations were completely blocked and where about half of the salaries, particularly in the private sector, were aligned with the legal minimum wage. Romania currently has a coverage of collective agreements below 30%. Social dialogue needs to be the compass for labour market policies. And the respect of constitutional rights, the rights of association and assembly, the right to negotiation, freedom of expression, these are the basis of democratic society. It is worrying that these rights are ignored by those very persons who are meant to guarantee them. The threats made by certain members of the Government to workers exercising their constitutional right to express their grievances demonstrates an attitude diametrically opposed to the support that a government of a European State ought to provide to social dialogue. It is important to note that Romania has made significant economic progress over the last decade. Nevertheless, this progress has not been shared out equitably between workers and capital. The social taxes have been entirely placed on the workers, which has meant very low net incomes. Public social services infrastructure is weak, which has led to high labour migration and a brain drain. It is clear that improved salaries are also necessary to maintain qualified and educated workers. We need to invest in the creation of high-quality jobs and in active policies for the labour market for recycling, improvement of skills, in social system protections which are adequate for the transition to a green digital economy. Social convergence of employment and skills, poverty reduction, is absolutely the minimum aim we must achieve. Quality job creation needs to be at the heart of our new social contract, a new social contract which reorganizes the role of the economy and finance as a contributor to the well-being of citizens to a sustainable way of life, way of work, production and sustainable consumption. It is not possible unless the Government and the employers engage genuinely in working with workers' representatives to achieve a common

objective, which is increased trust and greater harmony, than those that currently exist. Thank you.

Mr Ricardo Mewes

Employer (Chile)

Alexei Buzu, President of the 112th International Labour Conference, ladies and gentlemen, delegates. For the Confederation of Production and Commerce in Chile, it is an honour to be involved in this International Labour Conference once more, the highest level of global social dialogue and tripartism. We would like to take this opportunity to send a warm greeting to the representatives of our government, headed by the Minister for Labour, Ms Jeannette Jara, and also to the delegation of workers of Chile, led by the President of the single workers' federation, Mr David Acuña. In Chile, after several years of a difficult economic situation and low growth, we have managed to stabilize the economy, and in the last few months we have seen signs of recuperation which we hope we will consolidate over time. For this, it is essential to reactivate investment, which is still at a low level and which is what makes it possible to create more and better jobs, improving opportunities for prosperity of all Chileans. In employment and in labour formality, we have a great challenge facing us because we have still managed to reinstate all of the jobs that were lost during the COVID-19 pandemic and we still have a rate of informality which is above 28%, which affects disproportionately women, young people and migrants. At the same time, our labour productivity has been stagnant for many years, which means our companies and our country is not as competitive as it should be. In a world immersed in a digital transformation where more and more artificial intelligence is used, it is essential that we improve people's labour skills. And to be employable, they have to follow enterprises in renewing and reinventing themselves to face up to the new requirements of the times we live in. As far as the search for training for and mediation of work, we recognize the work that is being done in the Ministry for Labour to coordinate the different public bodies that address these matters and also the creation of public-private structures for tripartite dialogue. But it is absolutely essential that we move from analysis to action, implementing proposals which will address the labour emergency that many unemployed people are living through today. Faced with these complex challenges, we think that the labour agenda of the Ministry for Labour should be focused on them bringing together the interests of all of the tripartite players in order to advance towards solutions which will improve quality of life and opportunities for individual people. On the contrary, working on a labour agenda which could be an object of political utility, dividing different parties will only postpone the necessary solution of the pending issues which have to be addressed urgently and which are a key for the country to make a leap ahead in the creation of new formal, high-quality jobs. In the immediate future, we have to, in an effective and balanced way, implement the reduction of the working day, as set out in Karin's Law, and Convention 190 of the ILO on violence and harassment and the new national policy on health and safety at work. These are all important issues in our country. As far as the reduction of the working day is concerned, we think it is absolutely essential that the directorate for labour accepts the reconsideration that we are proposing from the different sectors of the productive economy. This is a legislation that was the product of an agreement in social dialogue and it has to be implemented in accordance with the spirit in which it was approved. As far as Karin's Law and Convention 190 are concerned, it is necessary that the authorities, along with the insurers and the Institute for Labour Security create a minimum framework which workers will be acquainted with to

promote prevention which will be possible to implement and monitor. These are standards which will promote a positive cultural change, but we have to advance in a gradual way through different stages. Finally, as far as the new policy for security and health at work is concerned, it is important that this helps to improve labour in our country. As we have done over time, we have had a gradual and persistent reduction in accidents at work and we need to address to a greater extent the new kinds of pathology that have come out of new kinds of modern forms of employment. But we also have to be very cautious and maintain a clear separation between what is caused by work and what comes from general health issues. As far as the International Labour Conference is concerned, we have been actively involved in the Committee on Biological Hazards whose discussion is moving towards the adoption of a new ILO Convention. Here we have been able to see that in a great majority of countries there is no system for the prevention of accidents at work and of vocational diseases, such as we have in Chile. We have a very successful system which has had spectacular success, and we have to make sure that we do not put it at risk by overburdening it with new obligations which depart from its central objective. As far as we are concerned, we are and always will be open to social dialogue. We are absolutely available to find new ways in consensus of creating advances which will improve quality of life for workers, improve productivity and competitiveness of our companies and will improve the prosperity of society. Thank you very much.

Ms Karien van Gennip

Government (Netherlands)

Dear all, we are here with social partners, ministers, ambassadors, ILO officers, NGOs and many other guests, and I am happy to be here as well because the ILO is an important organization. And the ILO and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, we share the same goals: decent work and social justice for all. And we share the strong conviction we can realize these goals through international standards on labour and social security, based on a worldwide social dialogue between governments, employers and workers. And this is what makes the ILO an important organization: it helps us create a fairer world. And I want to thank Director-General Hounghbo, Gilbert, for your vision towards a new social contract. It raises important questions. How do we renew our social contract today? How do we deliver social justice as the basis for lasting peace? How do we bring about shared prosperity, equity and just transitions in digital and in climate? In short, what kind of society do we want to be? And let me provide you with three considerations. First, start with a human-centred approach. Labour rights are human rights. There will be no social contract without ensuring that all our citizens do well. We have to take the concerns of our citizens seriously, much more serious than we do today, regardless of age, level of training, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ethnic background. Every, single one of them. And any social contract should embody decent work, equity and social justice, the key values of the ILO. My second point translates the human-centred approach to our societies. Economic growth cannot be realized in a sustainable way without cohesive societies. So we must address the challenges of our time. Our labour markets should be inclusive and work for everyone, also for women, migrants, people with disabilities. Our labour market should also work for the outsiders, the less privileged, the new entrants. One tangible example, in the EU we agreed on a directive on platform work, together with all the European colleagues, and that directive improves the working conditions for platform workers. It protects vulnerable workers, and at the same time it allows for innovation in the platform economy. So it can be done.

We showed it in Europe, protecting vulnerable workers and allowing for innovation. And that is a social market economy. And my third point, we cannot do this alone. To create cohesive societies, we need international partnerships and cooperation, and this is why the ILO is an essential organization. Our tripartite structure can contribute to our fight for decent work and social justice. So, Chair, the importance of social dialogue cannot be underestimated. We need to live up to our shared task and strengthen the dialogue also in this house, together, and the Netherlands wants to play a proper role in building up and reinforcing that cooperation. The voluntary contributions from the Netherlands to the ILO serve to support the Organization in continuing its important work so that we can truly achieve the just societies we are all aiming for, everywhere. And of course the ILO cannot do this alone. I therefore applaud the cooperation between the international financial institutions, the ILO and other UN agencies and institutions on the labour and social dimension of development. An ILO-led Global Coalition for Social Justice is an excellent initiative to strengthen our cooperation, as is the Alliance 8.7 to eradicate child labour, forced labour and modern slavery. Friends of the ILO, being here together, we need cooperation and we need to make sure that people know and feel the importance of social justice and decent work. To leave no-one behind, that is our mission. Chair, you have the full support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Thank you very much.

Ms Domna-Maria Michailidou

Government (Greece)

Dear Chair and Vice-Chairs, Director-General, social partners, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour to participate and address this esteemed plenary session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to begin by expressing my deepest appreciation to the Director-General for a comprehensive report, a very comprehensive report. A report which places at its very core a key question, a question about the social contract in the workplace today, how it has changed, evolved and which are its elements to be prioritized, altered, enhanced or even rendered obsolete. Which are the key elements in today's social contract in the employment market? Diversity in the workplace, inclusion of the so-far outsiders, work-life balance, flexibility, flexicurity and remote work? The answer I gather is all of the above, and perhaps even more. To this end, the Global Coalition for Social Justice serves as a principal platform for political initiatives and pertinent reforms towards policy coherence, partnerships and multilateral cooperation. The Director-General's speech rightly captured the duality of our current global landscape. On the one hand, we are observing an encouraging economic recovery from the pandemic, with the IMF forecasting stable GDP growth and declining inflation rates. From the other side though, we face persistent geopolitical tensions, unresolved conflicts and the enduring challenge of ensuring social justice and equitable growth. At this point, allow me to underline that over the past years my country, Greece, has been in a unique position. Before the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, Greece weathered a turbulent decade of economic downturns. Despite the harsh chain of destructive events, Greece has shown unwavering resilience, and I will give you three quick examples. One, flexicurity. We have managed to reverse, to a very large extent in fact, the pool of the unemployed. From subsidizing largely unemployment benefits, we have swiftly refocused on active labour market policies, enlarging their scope, enlarging their funding so that more people can enter or re-enter the labour force, bolster incomes and experience upward mobility, predominantly by acquiring digital and green skills. Second example, work-life balance improvements. Conditions when not at work that induce, if not ensure, the return to work. Work-life

balance, and within it the application of the child guarantee in order to protect the most vulnerable kids and non-vulnerable kids. We engaged into a sum of reforms supporting vulnerable and non-vulnerable kids, such as the increase in the availability and financing of nurseries, the improvement of services provided within them, the quality of school meals and free after-school classes. Third and last example, regulatory improvements of conditions at work. A small but not insignificant example that my colleague from the Netherlands just mentioned, that we all managed collectively to achieve at an EU level, has to do with the legislation on collective bargaining rights pertaining to platform workers. I am referring to these policies exactly because I want to underline that there is no excuse not to safeguard and improve social cohesion in the face of social, economic and geopolitical hardships. We made it in Greece in the most difficult times. We can all together make it and make it even better. The Report of the ILO Director-General presents a sobering assessment of the global state of fundamental principles and rights at work. It is heartening to see progress, albeit with no tremendous speed, in areas such as combatting global unemployment and the deepening of the labour force skillset. However, significant challenges such as the discrimination, or at the very least underrepresentation of vulnerable population groups, the ones considered as outsiders, still remain. I am very pleased to announce at this occasion that Greece has recently joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice. The Greek Government is looking forward to engaging both at national and international levels in this very timely initiative. Through collective efforts, advocating social dialogue, we will realize our collective ambition to advance social justice and decent work for all. After all, a sincere and thorough discussion on the renewal of the social contract in the workplace is not a policy imperative, it is a moral imperative. Thank you very much.

Mr Ettore Balestrero

The Holy See

Mr Chair, despite the relatively stable economic growth globally, significant slowdowns in key economies highlight the persistent and profound impact of social inequalities. Millions of people emigrate in search of work, while others do so because they find themselves forced to flee their countries of origin driven by armed conflicts, violence, climate change, persecution and often poverty. As a direct consequence of the ageing populations of numerous countries worldwide, the number of older workers is consistently increasing. At the same time, low birth rates that have been registered over the past decades in several developed countries imply that the usual provisions for social security and services are at risk. On the other hand, in many of the least developed economies the population is young and growing, necessitating the creation of employment opportunities. Moreover, the growing impact of new technologies cannot be underestimated. It is the hope of my delegation and of The Holy See that all these challenges will encourage a greater attention to workers and a fruitful discussion on the care economy. As Pope Francis recalled to this same august assembly three years ago, if work is a relationship, then it must include the dimension of care because no relationship can survive without care. Here we are not just referring to the work of assistance. Care goes further. It must be a dimension of all work. Work that does not take care, that destroys creation, that endangers the survival of future generations, does not respect the dignity of workers and cannot be considered decent. On the contrary, work that cares, that contributes to the restoration of full human dignity, will help to ensure a sustainable future for future generations. In this context, the Holy See would like to express its appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the ILO for the

establishment and launch of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, inspired by the shared conviction that the world needs renewed commitment, a new social compact that can bind us together, older and younger generations, for the care of creation and for solidarity and mutual protection within the human community. Social justice, especially in the current context where the value of the person is seriously threatened by the widespread tendency to rely exclusively on the criteria of utility and ownership, is not always an expression accepted by liberal economies. Yet it is essential for our efforts to avoid passive acceptance of the negative and destructive occurrences in today's world in order to avoid being overcome by indifference and, most importantly, to maintain hope for the future. It is in this spirit that my delegation wishes to convey its support to the ILO for the development of the tripartite dialogue in view of the 2025 World Social Development Summit. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Luc Triangle

International Trade Union Confederation

Dear Mr President, Vice-Presidents, dear delegates, on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation, which organizes all the trade unions in nearly 170 countries, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Director-General of the ILO for his choice to focus his report to the Conference on the theme 'Towards a renewed social contract'. To achieve the objective of social justice for all, indeed we need to renew our social contract. During our last congress in 2022, trade unions worldwide endorsed six key pillars constituting clear labour demands for a new social contract. And they are, first, the creation of decent and climate-friendly jobs with a just transition. And this involves industrial transformation to achieve net-zero carbon emissions, along with investments in strategic economic sectors such as the care economy, the green economy and sustainable infrastructure, and formalizing informal work. Second, rights for all workers. Regardless of their employment arrangements or migration status, rights must be extended to all workers to fulfil the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration with its labour protection floor that includes rights, maximum working hours, living wages, and health and safety at work. Third, living wages. Statutory or negotiated living wages that guarantee dignity for all workers and their families, building on the recent agreement reached at the ILO. Fourth, universal social protection, including the creation of a social protection fund for the least wealthy countries. Five, equality. Guaranteed equal pay for work of equal value and ending all discrimination, whether based on gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, ethnicity, migration status, ideology, religion, social status or any other grounds, in the workplace or in society. And sixth, inclusion. A peaceful world, a rights-based development model and a truly inclusive multilateral system redressing existing imbalances of power and wealth through the use of tripartism and social dialogue as a key means of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Over the past few years trade unions have increasingly influenced the UN 2030 Agenda by calling for a new social contract with SDG 8 at its core, and we can see that influence. The workers' demands on universal social protection, decent work, labour protection floors with just transition and a renewed multilateralism based on solidarity are central in the UN Secretary-General's report 'Our Common Agenda'. We can also see it through the UN Commission for Social Development. Since 2022 it recognized the need for adequate labour protection to all workers, social dialogue, minimum living wages and investment in care and the fight against violence and harassment. Furthermore, the targets of the UN Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection and Just Transitions, launched by the UN Secretary-General in September

2021, match the trade union demands for a new social contract focused on decent jobs creation and universal social protection to ensure just digital and climate transitions. Distinguished delegates, the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025 is a key opportunity to frame these new social contract demands within the global governance agenda. We need to ensure that the role of social dialogue and tripartism, the spirit of the ILO, is recognized in the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development as it is already included in the resolutions of the 61st and 62nd UN Commission for Social Development. And we must ensure that social partners can meaningfully participate in the development and design of the summit itself. And secondly, the recognition of the key role of social dialogue to foster social development must be recognized in the summit's declaration and in its implementation. And it will be essential that financial resources are there to marry policy ambitions with financial commitments, including the mobilization of massive public investments to bridge the implementation gaps of the 1995 summit and to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, it is important that the summit builds on the outcome of the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development next year, 2025. And finally, last but not least, we must ensure that the summit highlights the nexus between social justice, peace and democracy. We must rebuild strong democratic institutions to ensure peaceful and inclusive societies that protect human dignity. As already outlined in the Centenary Declaration, building democracy should be included in our calls for a World Social Summit. In the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, ILO constituents agreed in 2019 that the experience of the past century has confirmed that the continuous and concerted action of governments and representatives of employers and workers is essential to the achievement of social justice, democracy and the promotion of universal and lasting peace. We, as the ITUC, we promote 'For Democracy' as our flagship campaign: democracy at the workplace, in the society and at global level. Thank you very much.

Mr Alexei Buzu

President (Republic of Moldova)

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, that brings us to the end of our list of speakers for this morning's plenary sitting. Before closing, I would like to remind you once again that today the Conference will commemorate the World Day Against Child Labour. The event will take place from 1.30 to 2.45 pm in Room 20. This year's event will be held under the slogan 'Let's act on our commitments: End Child Labour!'. Today's celebration will mark 25 years since the adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention as well as provide an opportunity for the tripartite constituents to discuss advances and challenges in relation to the elimination of child labour. I hope to see you all there. I thank you all for your contribution to this morning's debate. Our plenary sitting is now closed. Thank you.

Ms Béatrice Lestic

Worker Vice-President (France)

Ladies and gentlemen, delegates, welcome to this 15th sitting for the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. We shall now continue the general discussion on the reports of the Director-General and the Governing Body. Now, before beginning, I would like to remind you of the provisions that were approved at the opening session concerning the special session on the workers in the occupied Arab territories. The matter was examined at the special session that took place last Thursday. I would like to encourage you therefore to focus on Reports 1(A), 1(B) and 1(C) in your interventions. Thank you very much. I also would like to invite you to comply with the principles that underlie this discussion in terms of parliamentary language and respect your timings for your interventions, which must not go beyond five minutes. I would also like to state that you have the right to reply. It is not necessary to interrupt the debate for a motion of order or for a reply in the plenary session. All you must do is lift your flag and a member of staff will respond to your request. In the case of the right to reply, I would like you to clearly inform the staff member as to which statement you wish to respond to. Please be aware that the reply must only focus on the subject matter in question. It must be a maximum length of two minutes and must respect parliamentary language. Our organization does not authorize a right of reply to a right of reply. Now let us move on to the list of speakers as published in the daily programme. You can see it on the screen in the room. The first speaker will be Ms Ngoma, the Employers' delegate from Zambia. The floor is yours. Madam, the floor is yours.

Ms Sakala Mara Myra Ngoma

Employer (Zambia)

The Conference President, delegates, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to have been accorded this opportunity to make some remarks on the Director-General and Chairman's report presented to this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I would like to thank you for your report on the social contract which is a very important and a very intensive report touching on various key issues. The report entitled 'Towards a renewed social contract' has raised a number of issues concerning social contracts, among other issues, in regards to how social contracts connect individuals and communities, serving as a source of inspiration, and thriving societies. We agree with the DG on one of his statements, that work is central to the lives of individuals and communities. While this is a fact, the truth is that we have a situation where generating employment opportunities for young people is a major challenge facing most countries, rich or poor. Since the available jobs in a number of our countries are not adequate to meet the number of youths seeking to be employed, our young people are often at the back of the hiring queue, despite higher levels of formal qualifications they possess, than the earlier generations. Millions of young people work fewer hours than they wish, while others work long hours with little gain and without social protection in the informal sector. I am aware, though, that some countries have embarked on extending social protection coverage to the informal sector workers. We commend such countries, which also includes my country, Zambia, where, with technical and financial support from the ILO office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Zambia developed a strategic plan on extension of social protection coverage to the informal sector in December 2023. Currently, through a consultative

process and again with the support from the ILO field office in Lusaka, we are now working on developing an implementation plan of the extension of social protection to the informal sector. We therefore find the appeal for social contracts in the DG Chairman's report appropriate and timely. Social contracts must emphasize the importance of incorporating youth employment into comprehensive employment policies that stimulate broad-based, employment-intensive growth as the best means to create employment for the youth, especially in developing countries. This must be the way to progress. However, for the youth to be absorbed in employment where the opportunities arise, quality education and demand-driven, skill-development approaches must be encouraged. Industry must be brought on board to engage with authorities responsible for national skills development and training institutions. Finally, the collaboration must tap into processes of skills anticipation and creation of sector-based skills advisory councils, which must be supported to spearhead development of demand-driven, sector-based skills. Thank you very much.

Mr Chee Keong Sim

Government (Malaysia)

Madam Chair, the Director-General's report has indeed echoed many pronouncements of our time, that we live in an age of crises. Workers find themselves sieged on all fronts, from our economy to our environment, from our health to our rights. Those who imagine that this situation will be temporary and it will be reversed will indeed be disappointed because the post-normal is the new normal. As such, business as usual will not do anymore. In my home country, Malaysia, we have a lyrical way to express the French saying 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'. We say, "Pi mai pi mai tang tu," meaning 'going everywhere but going nowhere'. Therefore, the Director-General's call for a renewed social contract fully resonates with our times and our view on this matter. Considering the challenges in this age of crises, there is a critical need for a renewed social contract, one that delivers social justice for everyone. And everyone means everyone. The world needs a more humane growth model, one which develops the totality of a person, not diminishes the person's dignity. We need a new governance framework which empowers men and women, young and old, people with disabilities, of all races and religions, everyone, not one which further disenfranchises them. And when I say disenfranchise, we must not imagine it is the actions of some undemocratic dictator somewhere else. The current growth model nationalizes gains in the hands of a few superpowers while imposing the burden of regulations, responsibilities and even lopsided morality upon the rest of the world. This is the systematic disenfranchisement which the world has to dismantle if we want to renew our social contract. Nevertheless, we do not always have to reinvent the wheel. Sometimes we look back to our history, to the history of our great civilizations for lessons. Malaysia, under the leadership of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim launched the Madani Economic Framework last year. To put it simply, the word 'Madani', from the same root word as Madinah, the city of the Prophet, means civilization. It was in the governance of this city that the Prophet of Islam established a social contract based on common prosperity, justice and solidarity. Under the Madani Framework, Malaysia is pursuing new areas of growth in high-tech sectors, AI, energy transition, in the new green economy. Last year we recorded a historic high in the value of new investment approved into our country. But mere economic growth is not enough. Madani means the outcome of economic prosperity must include upholding human dignity, which is why, in this 112th International Labour Conference, I am proud to represent Malaysia to

ratify the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, C155. This coincided with the recent enforcement of an amended occupational safety and health legislation in Malaysia which, among others, included expansion of the coverage of this law from previously ten sectors to now all economic sectors in our country. Our aspiration is that, every worker after a workday will be able to return home safely to their loved ones. Human dignity is human dignity regardless of one's creed and colour. Everyone means everyone. Thus, last month Malaysia announced that we will be expanding the full spectrum of social security protection under our Employees Social Security Act, previously enjoyed only by Malaysian workers, now to all workers including migrant workers. Skills are intrinsic to a person's dignity and survival, especially that of a worker. As such, it is high time that lifelong, accessible skills training be recognized as a fundamental right. In the face of an ever-evolving job landscape of the 21st century, accessible skills training must be made available to support career advancement and transition. In less than two weeks from now, Malaysia will be hosting a National Training Week where more than 25,000 skills courses will be provided free to over 200,000 people. We hope the ILO will continue to prioritize lifelong learning and skills training as part of its effort to improve the lives of workers everywhere. Finally, as we ruminate here over global issues concerning labour, we must never forget our fellow workers and their families in Palestine. Malaysia reiterates our call for an immediate ceasefire. End the violence now. End the oppression now. End the occupation now. End the colonization now. Let peace prevail now. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Nouredine Tabboubi

Worker (Tunisia)

Ladies and gentlemen, the Report of the Director-General is called 'Towards a renewed social contract', and that expresses the desire today to revisit this idea of a social contract in light of the most recent changes in the world and the consequences at the national and global level. The social dialogue policies have recently made it possible for social contracts to be concluded to establish stability, productivity and create an environment for technological and industrial progress with an improvement of living standards, improving services for millions of people. And these policies have also ensured numerous rights for workers, including collective bargaining and freedom of association as well as the right to strike. However, despite all of this, the fruits have not been equally shared. Quite the opposite. Wealth has been used to serve industrialized nations, affluent countries, which has increased the gap between poor countries and industrialized countries at all levels. And I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that today we are moving increasingly far away from the realization of social justice and peace for all. This is a reality that is reflected today by violent conflicts and policies that reflect double standards at the global level. Today what we need are social contracts between the state and society on one hand and the social partners on the other to achieve justice and equality and ensure freedom with each country. What we also need is an international social contract that will distribute wealth fairly, a social contract that bridges the gaps between countries, the south and the north, reduces those disparities and eliminates poverty and curbs manifestations of racism and exploitation. Establishing fair agreements at national and international level requires open and honest dialogue without any pressure or constraints. In this regard, I welcome the positive interaction with the Committee of Experts and the report on the violations in Tunisia by the Government in recent years of freedom of association. We would like to thank all of the trade unions, all of the parties who have supported us, and we denounce

the policies that have been applied. We would also like to draw your attention to the arbitrary measures adopted by the Tunisian Government in recent years which have undermined freedom of association, social dialogue and collective bargaining as well as international labour rights. And these violations have targeted the independence of trade unions, social dialogue and been detrimental to workers' rights. There have been a series of arrests targeting trade unionists, and the collective agreements are not being respected. There is a refusal to engage in dialogue or negotiate with unions, but negotiations must resume with the Tunisian Government and the Tunisian General Labour Union. We need to halt the violations and prosecutions. We can no longer remain silent about the protection of Tunisia's stability and the legitimate rights of its people and its democracy, for trade union rights, and freedom of association in particular. We are seeing a genocide of the Palestinian people with a failure to respect peace, justice and security. We need to ensure that this policy of double standards stops. It thwarts United Nations principles, and the Palestinian people are suffering under the yoke of occupation. It is time to put an end to this and the destruction that we have seen. This could all have been avoided. Looking at the massacre in Gaza and the West Bank, we exhort the ILO to send a Commission of Inquiry to examine the impact on the Palestinian people and the social partners. We call for immediate cessation of the occupation, and we need to guarantee the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and establish their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you.

Mr Narek Mkrtchyan

Government (Armenia)

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour and greatest pleasure to represent the Republic of Armenia at this 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. At the outset, I would like to extend our gratitude to the ILO secretariat for organizing this large-scale and important conference. This year's conference offers yet another opportunity to exchange views on lessons learned and the existing gaps and challenges in implementing our collective commitment to promote labour rights, ensuring sustainable employment, decent work and fighting poverty. Dear participants, the Government of Armenia's labour policy aims to provide citizens with decent work, sustainable employment and professional skill development in line with the values and principles of the ILO. To achieve this, we have implemented different legislative reforms. Especially last year, the parliament adopted extensive amendments to the labour code of the Republic of Armenia, revising 122 out of 266 articles, which means that more than 40% of the articles were reviewed. The code has been aligned with the ratified ILO Conventions and articles of the European revised Social Charter. With these amendments, the regulations for hiring and dismissal have been revised, labour guarantees for working women have been expanded, the working relationships of employees at the retirement age have been updated, the procedure for granting annual leave has been revised, and the regulations regarding child labour, the role of social partnership and the institution of internships have been introduced. Special emphasis has been placed on establishing regulations related to violence or sexual harassment at work in this process. Provisions for social partnership, collective labour relations, trade unions and professional training have been introduced. Additionally, the law on voluntary work package has been adopted which establishes comprehensive and unified legislative regulation for voluntary work as well as the necessary conditions and mechanism for the establishment of the voluntary institute and spread of voluntary culture. For the first time, Armenia hosted an international

conference titled 'Promoting Social Justice: the future of work in the present era', initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia with the participation of ILO Director-General Gilbert Houngbo. The conference was symbolic in two ways. It was the first of its kind in Armenia with the ILO Director-General's participation and it occurred during the challenging period for Armenia. Our expectations were to raise awareness and have many representatives who would share their knowledge and skills gained. During the event, Armenia joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice aiming to address social justice issues and accelerate efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and the Decent Work Agenda. We strive to ensure that every policy we enact reflects our commitment to justice for all. In this context, I would like to inform you that the unemployment rate in 2022 was decreased by 5.6 percentage points in comparison with 2020. The employment rate for the same period was increased by 5 percentage points. The unemployment rate of women was decreased by 3.4 percentage points. The Armenian social protection system has faced challenges recently with the forcibly displaced population from Nagorno-Karabakh. However, more than 95% of the displaced population is covered by different kinds of social protection services. In the meantime, several activities in line with the commitment undertaken by Armenia are in the process. Particularly, the ratification process for ILO Convention 190 has begun and Armenia's employment strategy focused on social justice is under approval. New laws on trade union and employers' associations are being developed to enhance social partnership. In conclusion, I hope our collective effort will ensure achieving social justice and decent work for all, thus supporting a new kind of social contract. Thank you.

Mr Miguel Eduardo Torres

Worker (Brazil)

For us workers, only by means of our struggle will we be able to legislate and guarantee democracy. President, on behalf of the workers of Brazil, the trade union federations CUT, UGT, Nova Central, CSB and CTB wish to congratulate Gilbert Houngbo, the Director-General of the ILO, for his leadership and for the important report on a renewed social contract as well as for launching a debate on a Global Coalition for Social Justice. We wish to welcome the delegates, the guests and the authorities. We also wish to extend special greetings to the Minister of Labour, Luiz Marinho, as well as to the workers of Brazil and of the world. Director-General, we believe that the report on the renewed social contract and the initiative for the Global Coalition for Social Justice are very welcome. They are timely and reflect reality, in line with the fundamental objectives of the ILO. Despite scientific and technological progress, unemployment, abject poverty, lack of resources and inequalities continue to exist. They are playing an extremely negative role and they are affecting democracy, development, peace, especially in the poorest countries as well as developing countries. That is why workers continue to fight for the maintenance and extension of their rights and achievements, for social dialogue, for decent work and for strengthening democracy and social justice. We are deeply concerned by the geopolitical tensions and the armed conflict in the world nowadays. They represent a serious threat against world peace, and the victims are always workers and the innocent civil population. The United Nations and the international community must undertake all efforts possible in order to find a solution that is diplomatic to these proxy wars before they have unpredictable consequences on the nations of the world. Ladies and gentlemen, another problem is climate change, and this is a serious concern for workers and for the populations. Global warming, indeed, is affecting Brazil and most countries of the world. There have been many natural catastrophes over the past

years in several countries, and there is no doubt that climate change is becoming more and more serious and is the result of human activity. For example, in Brazil the state of Rio Grande do Sul is experiencing the worst climate tragedy of its history. The trade unions movement, the working class and the Brazilian people have implemented actions to demonstrate its true solidarity to the population of that state in these difficult moments. It is necessary that all strengthen our support and solidarity to the population of Rio Grande do Sul and to all the people that are affected by tragedies due to climate change. It is a prime opportunity for us to take on our roles and really meet the expectations and our responsibilities to prevent the worst and guarantee the future of future generations. We will be receiving, with open arms, all the delegates that have been invited to the upcoming COP30 in Brazil. We wish to express our support for the renewed social contract, and we are available to contribute to the debate and implement the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We do hope that the proposals will strengthen social dialogue, tripartism, collective bargaining, trade unionism and democracy. Brazil is making positive changes, albeit a little slowly. There have been attacks and persecutions against workers, and this has been done by a sector that is very conservative and the elites. They have prevented more significant progress. We also wish to thank the Government of President Lula for its efforts to improve the conditions of life of workers and the Brazilian population. Together, we have managed to increase the minimum wage, thus promoting a fairer distribution of wealth, reducing poverty and generating social inclusion. We have also managed to see wage equality between men and women become a reality when they work at the same workplace and do the same tasks. We wish to highlight the work of Minister Luiz Marinho who promotes social dialogue and collective bargaining. We have also seen positive action taken by labour courts, by CONALIS in order to fight anti-trade unionism in Brazilian corporations. We are working towards sustainable development and decent work for all. Workers call for peace, social justice and solidarity in the world. Long live democracy. Long live peace. Long live the working classes and long live the pact for social justice. Long live all the peoples of the world. One comment, yesterday in a Brazilian paper an article was written about a company that requires a response. This corporation called for the end of the Lula Government, but what we want is we want an end to slavery. We want an end to child labour. What we want is a better country for workers, and only our struggle will pave the way to democracy. Thank you.

Ms Marina Elvira Calderone

Government (Italy)

Dear Director-General, dear President, dear delegates, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to speak at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would first like to reiterate Italy's strong support, as a constituent member of the International Labour Organization, to this Conference. In its more than 100 years of history, the ILO has fully honoured its mandate by establishing itself as the leading forum at the global level for promoting social dialogue and for upholding and consistently implementing fundamental principles and rights in the world of work. The plenary session and the technical committees address issues that are also central to the work of the G7, of which Italy holds the presidency this year. I refer first of all to the impact of artificial intelligence on the world of work. It is crucial to explore the opportunities of artificial intelligence in a context of security, reliability, transparency and respect for the rights of all workers. International cooperation is essential and the role of social dialogue is paramount. In this context, we are working with our G7

partners, the ILO and the OECD on an action plan for a human-centred implementation of safe, secure and reliable artificial intelligence in the world of work. I am also thinking of the debate on the care economy. This is an important discussion that highlights aspects that are interconnected, including those relating to the protection and inclusion of women in the world of work, work-life balance, health and safety issues for workers and care recipients. These are issues that we have put at the centre of the G7 agenda, by which we are committed to promoting, together with our partners, the ILO and the OECD, the adoption of policy principles for a resilient world of work in an ageing society and an action plan to improve working conditions in the care sector. We are also closely following discussions on the prevention of biological hazards and the protection of fundamental principles and rights for decent work. Ongoing transitions require us to invest more and more in people and skills. This means stepping up our commitment to and investment in training systems that provide workers with adequate levels of skills in all sectors throughout their lives. Adapting training systems also means making them more inclusive, available, accessible and adaptable to everyone's needs. This is essential to achieve social and labour inclusion of people, starting with the most vulnerable groups for whom we must remove obstacles and barriers to their full realization in the world of work. I would like to thank Director-General Hounbou for the report dedicated to a renewed social contract as a fundamental tool to strengthen social cohesion, economic resilience and stability in the current context of profound changes and conflicts that challenge established structures. We are witnessing extraordinary transformations in the world of work. Digital and environmental transitions are reshaping traditional paradigms. Demographic change will have increasing impacts on our societies, economies and welfare systems. In the light of these demanding challenges, the Global Coalition for Social Justice, promoted by the Director-General, acquires a particular value. Italy strongly supports the coalition, in the conviction that it can contribute to enhancing, at all levels of government, the dialogue with social partners and with a multilateral network of stakeholders in order to steer everyone's effort in the direction of decent work and to achieve an increasingly equitable and inclusive world of work. These challenges require us all, governments, international organizations and social partners, to further strengthen the tripartite dialogue and international cooperation to combine, in a virtuous and sustainable manner, development and rights, innovation and inclusiveness, competitiveness and decent work, in all economic sectors and in all countries here represented. This is also an important task ahead of the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025. This is the commitment of the Italian Government. This is the commitment of our G7 presidency, embracing an inclusive approach, based on dialogue and openness to the global South. This is the purpose of our strong support for the Global Coalition for Social Justice and our collaboration with the Brazilian presidency of the G20, with whom we will have the pleasure of organizing a joint event here at the Palais des Nations tomorrow. Thank you for your attention, and I wish you all success in your work.

Mr Antonio Sayo

Employer (Philippines)

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates from business, labour and government sectors, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. It is my pleasure to speak here today, June 12th, which coincides with 126 years of Philippine independence. I take this moment to honour the sacrifices of our heroes by continuing to strive for a better, brighter future for all Filipinos. At the outset, allow us to associate ourselves with the report of the ILO

Director-General, who was in the Philippines late last year, which is comprehensive, substantive and relevant. That said, we find ourselves at the pivotal moment in history where the very foundation of our societal fabric is being re-examined and redefined. First and foremost, we acknowledge the importance of addressing the current state of global inequality, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the change drivers and megatrends that affect the world of work: technology, global warming, climate change, globalization and hyper-localization, geopolitical developments and demographic shifts. As representatives of the employer sector, we recognize our role in shaping the future of society. However, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines believes that there is a need for an all-of-government and all-of-society approach to address the crucial issues in transition towards a more sustainable workplace and society. In the recent Labour Day celebration, our President, Ferdinand Marcos Jr, called upon the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards to review current minimum wages as it has been one of the policy priorities of the Philippine Congress. The RTWPB of the National Capital Region has commenced the annual review as the anniversary of their last wage order approaches. Although we actively participate to the review, we also believe that wage adjustments will not completely solve the problems of the workers. Businesses, other than providing decent employment, also strive to create inclusive growth by investing in marginalized communities and fostering entrepreneurship at the grassroots level whilst helping the government achieve relevant Sustainable Development Goals at said levels. Providing decent employment is not a solitary task but a collective responsibility that requires collaboration across stakeholders and sectors, especially to address the root causes of unemployment and underemployment. Government must lead in this process by implementing policies and programmes that support job creation, attract investments and promote entrepreneurship. By investing in infrastructure development, education and skills training, the Government can unlock the full potential of our workforce and stimulate economic activity. Businessmen and employers must continue to believe in the primacy of people and provide the workers with lifelong training, upskilling and reskilling. We are instilling a culture of excellence, resilience, sustainability and concern in an environment where no one should be left behind. Over the recent years employers, as spearheaded by ECOP, have been in partnership with the Department of Labour and Employment, or DOLE, and various industry associations to generate decent jobs and push for an enabling environment for job generation. In support of the Government's thrust for job generation and upskilling of the Filipino workforce, Project J.O.B.S., or Job Opportunities Building Skills, focuses on the matching of job seekers to employers, either through physical job fairs or via online platforms. Industries involved in the project also discuss the challenges in the world of work along with the need to reskill and upskill the current workforce to cope with the requisite transitions. Additionally, through our partnership with our counterpart organization in Denmark, which enabled the establishment of the bipartite social dialogue mechanism which we call Leaders Forum, ECOP is currently implementing the second strategic partnership agreement that is aimed at facilitating a more systematic and constructive social dialogue in the Philippines and promoting just transitions to climate and environment-friendly production. It also seeks to promote and mainstream the UN Sustainable Development Goals and responsible business conduct as a means to achieve the green and just transition, taking into account occupational safety and health, diversity and inclusion and business resiliency. Under this project, a new tool called the SDG Value Scan was introduced as a guide for companies looking into integrating the SDGs in their value chains. The ECOP Occupational Safety and Health Academy has not only been actively conducting training on OSH but also pushes the promotion of and implementation of training programmes specifically catering to

MSMEs, COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures and promoting healthy communities, et cetera. The employers have also been heavily involved in discussions on diversity and inclusion in the workplace as well as in the recent developments and conversations on the care economy. In conclusion, the task before us is daunting but it is also filled with ample opportunities. ECOP adheres to its tagline 'Responsible Employer. Sustainable Business. Inclusive Workplace'. We recognize our role as partners in nation-building and remain committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to realize this shared vision. We are working on policies and initiatives with careful consideration of their impact on economic vitality, ensuring that they foster rather than hinder innovation and growth. By fostering a culture of responsible corporate behaviour and incentivizing positive contributions to society, we can chart a course towards a future where prosperity is shared by all. Thank you very much and a pleasant afternoon to you all.

Mr Marath Baruch Bolaños López

Government (Mexico)

I am pleased to greet the members of the bureau of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to greet the authorities of all the world and organizations of employers and workers who are taking part in this conference. I would also like to send you fraternal greetings from the President of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. It is an honour to be involved in the most important meeting of the world of work and to share Mexico's vision on the construction of a progressive and dynamic social contract which will be able to face up to injustice, inequality and insecurity, which affect social cohesion and the well-being of our countries and the international community as a whole. For the Government of Mexico, a renewed social contract needs to be founded on solidarity, shared commitments and the most broad sense of collectivity. That is why we are sure that peace can only be a product of social justice. Mexico values the efforts put into the adoption of a joint agenda to face up to current and future challenges, which has been promoted by Mr Gilbert Houngbo, to work from this unique forum of social dialogue to that effect. In Mexico we are going through a spring of labour in which we are working very hard to eradicate the policies of wage stagnation and increasingly insecure job markets and the control by corporations of unions which prevailed in the past. This represents a revolution in labour rights which has made it possible to strengthen and consolidate respect for human rights, which are part of the foundation of social justice. As from 2018, when the Government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador came to power, labour policy has turned round completely. In nearly six years, through social dialogue and tripartite consensus, the measures adopted have made it possible to reduce the gaps between rich and poor and guarantee the strengthening of the rights of workers. The labour reform of 2019 was one of the most significant reforms in the world of labour ever in Mexico. It was based on Conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO and guarantees rapid and impartial justice through conciliation and dialogue with neutral and model institutions which address conflicts and make sure that legislation is being complied with and which guarantee that it is the workers who decide, in liberty, which union will represent them, will elect their leaders and approve their collective bargaining agreements. At the same time, there has been progress made on eliminating irregular subcontracting and sub-registry of workers. Better conditions of workers and safer working places are being created. With this reform, three million people have had their real employers recognized. As a result of the reforms, 5.1 million Mexicans have been able to move out of poverty. The wage gap

between women and men has been reduced with a view to making sure that there is a minimum level of prosperity for people who live from their work. At the same time, we have reached the highest level of employment ever, an historic increase in wages and sustained economic growth. And as far as the latter is concerned, it is important to point out that during this government one of the most significant wage recovery policies in its history was entered into. This policy made it possible that between 2018 and the present day the minimum wage recovered 116% of its purchasing power in real terms, and it demonstrated that it is a lie to say that an increase in the minimum wage will generate inflation and unemployment, as was falsely argued for decades to the disadvantage of workers. Now, under a new system of shared responsibility between the public, private and social sectors, there has also been a programme to train young people, which is the largest in the region. The Government has invested around 125,000 million pesos to train three million young Mexicans so that they can have a chance to acquire and develop the skills that they need to be involved in the labour market. And I am pleased to be able to emphasize the commitment of the Government of Mexico to join forces with a view to renewing the social contract so that social justice becomes a reality through integrated strategies for the prevention and eradication of social, labour and economic inequalities in our societies with a view to obtaining the objectives of Our Common Agenda, which we adopted, and we hope that we will achieve those objectives by 2025. I would like to mention that on the 2nd of June we had the biggest election in our history. More than 59 million electors were called on to ratify the continuity of the Government of the Fourth Transformation, and the first female president was elected in the history of our country, Dr Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo. We are sure that the labour agenda for the benefit of workers will continue to be an important pillar of the Government's agenda. Finally, I would like to make an appeal for the ILO, with its tripartite approach and its experience of social dialogue, to position itself as a key player in the global effort promoting inclusion and equality of opportunities and cohesion. So a warm embrace from Mexico. Thank you very much.

Mr Pierre-Yves Dermagne

Government (Belgium)

Vice-president, Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, I am moved to be able to address you and want to address you with conviction, you the world parliament of labour. As you know, Belgium was one of the founding members of the ILO, and for more than a century now we have been supporting the mandate of the ILO for social justice. I would like to thank the Director-General for his report and his proposals, which very much correspond to our expectations. In that context, I would like to pick out several points in particular. Firstly that the social contract has to be anchored in standards. These standards are also, by the way, the best guarantee for workers faced with the political change in direction we have seen through the last elections. Standards have to be kept up to date to take account of the changes in the world of work and the need for protection of workers. You emphasize rightly the role of the tripartite group which makes sure that the corpus [? 54:03] of standards remains robust, clear and up to date, and I can assure you that the Government of Belgium will continue to work tirelessly in the group that it presides. But we need to go further and adopt new standards addressing transitions in environmental, technical or demographic fields. And I would invite all the social partners, all of the social interlocutors, to be ambitious in that regard. And then, as the Director-General has said, we have economic security to consider, the uncertainty, inequality, the concern that we are seeing the social contract

collapse and no longer able to assure human development. We have to react because insecurity attacks the very foundations of our democracies. That is why it is up to us to support, it is a responsibility of ours to support the call for a renewed social contract, underpinned by other initiatives which Belgium is also supporting. For example, the Group of Friends of Decent Work promoting the values and principles of the ILO in New York where Belgium has been active since the beginning. It is also important that we make sure that what we are doing hangs together consistently, looking to the Summit of the Future and the Social Summit in 2025. There I support the proposal on workers' rights made by Spain. And Belgium is also working actively [vgr INAUDIBLE 55:33] Global Accelerator for social protection. A need for social protection was exacerbated by the pandemic of COVID-19 and is still, unfortunately, a matter of great current interest. And also I would like to emphasize the principle of non-discrimination, which is not negotiable for us, just like other fundamental rights. Ladies and gentlemen, these various initiatives all have the same objective and they cannot be successful unless they are based on tripartism. If we understand things correctly, I am well aware that the multiple crises that we are going through and have gone through could make it more difficult to enter into social dialogue, but they also make it clear how absolutely necessary that dialogue is. So it is up to us to make it live, to make it function, to restore trust among our peoples, a trust and a confidence which is a precondition of social peace and thus of universal peace. And it is only dialogue that will lead us to shared progress. That is why the mission of the ILO is more important, more vital than ever and why, from Belgium, I can assure you of our entire support. Thank you very much.

Mr Fayçal Bentaleb

Government (Algeria)

Madam President of the session, honourable delegates, allow me to express, on behalf of Algeria, our pleasure to participate in this 112th ILC. We are persuaded that this very important meeting will be crowned with success which will respond to the aspirations of the people for social stability. I would like to congratulate the Director-General for his efforts to make this conference a success. He has actually focused on the issue of the renewed social contract, which responds to the needs of people for a social contract which contributes to sustainable development and decent work. Among the factors which have had an impact on the labour market in several countries, we would like to mention climate change, the digital revolution and difficulties in the working market and the social effects and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Algeria has developed a renewed social contract in the framework of the values and principles on which our state is based, notably the Declaration from 1945. Respecting fundamental rights without any discrimination is enshrined in the document which is at the basis in our country. The constitution from 2020 identified a pillar called New Algeria. This responds to the aspirations of the people for social and political transformation, ensuring liberty, democracy, ensuring fundamental rights, strengthening social justice and fighting against corruption, ensuring the participation of all citizens. We would also like to reaffirm the rights of workers, hygiene, health, child protection, promoting the right to strike and the right to have freedom of association. Madam President, our policy is supported by the Algerian people, of course, and since its election the Government has started to take measures to put in practice social transformation, fighting against the negative effects of COVID-19. We have also increased participation. We have devoted over 20% of the budget to social transformation to improve the lives of citizens. The minimum wage has been increased by 11%. Salaries have gone up by 41%. We have also

made sure that over one million people have entered the work market. We have beneficiaries. We have people that are trained, and this responds to the requirements of the labour market. We have also provided financial assistance to support workers as well. On social protection, we have developed policies, especially when it comes to national social security systems. This system is based on the principle of solidarity between generations and groups in society. Unifying systems and rules on rights and advantages have been put in place for future generations. This system ensures guarantees to fight against various violations of standards. We have over 30 million people insured now thanks to the policies we have put in place. In addition to that, over 3.2 million people benefit from retirement. This economic situation which we are seeing in our country in recent years has seen a growth rate which has allowed us to eliminate informal work and integrate people into the formal work structure. We all live in a world where we want a renewed social contract, but the Palestinian people are suffering from repression, starvation, faced with systematic genocide where they are denied their fundamental rights. That is why we call on the international community to stop this killing machine which stomps over all the international principles and standards. We need to save the lives of our brothers and sisters in Palestine. We need to allow Palestinian workers to exercise their rights enshrined in the various international instruments. They need to be able to build a sovereign separate State with Jerusalem as its capital. I thank you for your attention.

Mr Adrien Nguema Mba

Government (Gabon)

President, ILO Director-General, ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am taking the floor before this august assembly following the presentation of the Director-General's report 'Towards a renewed social contract'. To start with, allow me, Chair, to congratulate you on your election to the bureau of the Conference. Our congratulations also go to the Director-General for the depth and relevance of his report which calls for a new global pact to ensure decent work and social justice for all. It covers key challenges which affect all countries, including Gabon. Gabon, like other countries, faces major challenges in relation to work and social protection. These challenges are exacerbated by global economic changes, climate change, rapid advances in technology and various crises. In this context, the notion of a social contract is of particular importance because it goes to the heart of our commitments and engagements, especially when it comes to our workers and our fellow citizens. The DG's report focuses on four essential pillars: decent work for all, strengthening social protection, social dialogue and fundamental rights at work. Our Head of State, His Excellency General Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, has had the government of the country fully committed to this vision. Chair, allow me to share what Gabon has been doing in relation to all of this progress that we have made. On the promotion of decent work, my country has just signed with the ILO the Decent Work Country Programme 2024-2027. With the signing of this agreement, the Government of Gabon commits to drafting operational action plans for the national policy for employment which will allow us to create job opportunities which respect international labour standards, guarantee fair salaries and ensure safe and healthy working conditions. Investment in key sectors where we see growth in employment, like agriculture, forestry, technology and IT, renewable energies, will be engaged in the coming months in all of this work. The same goes for the promotion of entrepreneurship as well. On the strengthening of social protection, Gabon plans to guarantee to all workers, including in the informal sector, access to

social security systems which already exist. To do this, reforms are in train for the national social insurance system. On social dialogue, my country's government, in collaboration with the International Labour Office, is currently putting in place a capacity-strengthening programme for the tripartite partners. We are also having in place at the moment professional elections to put in place social dialogue. On fundamental rights at work, Gabon is fully committed to promoting and protecting these rights. Gabon is happy to recall that it is one of the top partners of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. With the ILO's support and the support of others in the UN system, we have been following with great interest our candidature to become a pioneer country for Alliance 8.7. We have also put in place an interministerial committee to fight against people trafficking and child labour. I would like to reaffirm our country's commitment to work with the ILO and other Member States to make sure we have a social contract which is inclusive, equitable and resilient. We are convinced that through solidarity, fairness and collective engagement and commitment we will be able to build societies which are fairer and more prosperous. I thank you for your attention.

Ms Soteroula Riala Charalampous

Worker (Cyprus)

Madam Chair, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, the 112th International Labour Conference takes place at a time when humanity is in a state of shock by the genocide being perpetrated in Gaza against the Palestinian people. The effort to exterminate an entire people cannot be labelled a right to self-defence. So, from the platform of the ILC conference, we want once again to express our support to the Palestinian people and demand a full and permanent end to the war as well as a solution to the Palestinian problem, based on the relevant UN resolutions. The data presented in the Director-General's report to the 112th Session of the ILO International Conference confirms that in recent decades economic and social inequalities have become even deeper throughout the world. In 2023 some 500 million people around the world were living below the extreme poverty line and nearly 7% of the workers were working poor. Globalization has not led to fairer and more equitable development nor to prosperity for all. This situation is the result of the economic policies that were deliberately and consciously implemented by international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF and the dominant political powers both at the regional and local levels. Successive crises of the system have been met with a full-frontal attack on wages and workers' rights as well as with a reduction in state intervention in public investments and cuts on social spending. Today, the workers' income is under attack again due to high inflation. In the process of promoting these policies, the rights to organize in a trade union, to collective bargaining and to strike were also attacked. In my country, Cyprus, a country that was considered a model in terms of regulating the terms and conditions of employment through collective agreements, since 2012 the collective agreement coverage has decreased from 80% to 50% while the policies of labour devaluation and deregulation have led in the last 11 years to the loss of more than €11 billion for the workers. To the workers' ears, when we talk about a renewed social contract it might sound like a meaningless slogan unless it is accompanied by concrete policies and decisions that will change the economic and labour model. Such decisions are to end strict fiscal rules that restrict public investments in key sectors of the economy as well as in social spending; to tax wealth and excess profits, using the revenues to support vulnerable groups of the population and poor countries in general; to take measures for safe and dignified work. This presupposes clear, binding regulations on working hours,

decent wages based on the cost of living, the use of new technologies to improve the quality of work, investments in health and safety, and the promotion of equality. To restore collective agreements as the main tool for regulating employment conditions and to take effective measures against those employers who deny the workers the right to organize in trade unions. To end actions taken against the right to strike. To conclude, there can be no renewed social contract as long as the same policies continue. The wealth produced in every country is the result of the work of workers, and only if this wealth is shared fairly can we speak of a fair and more just world. This is what the workers need in our days. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Andres Fostik

Employer (Uruguay)

President, the Director-General would like our interventions in the Conference to serve as a guide to define priorities moving forward in relation to social justice, decent work and what is being called a renewed social contract. Responding to this invitation, we observe that the report correctly focuses on work as a central element of people's lives. We understand that this concept by itself is inefficient and should be complemented by the responsibility we are given by the ILO: promoting effective policies and actions to generate working opportunities to create jobs. The global unemployment indicators show us that we have not been able to live up to this expectation from society. In our opinion, this is the main priority and the real challenge for the ILO. In most of our societies it is clear that the essential role for creating work opportunities lies with the small, medium and big enterprises. Without enterprises there would be no job opportunities. A second aspect we would like to refer to is the very much consolidated idea that labour problems are solved by creating new standards. We believe that the existing deficit is due to a lack of implementation of standards not a lack of standards, and we see that hyper-regulation of work makes it difficult to apply the rights that need to be protected. We believe that standard-setting efforts must be focused on the main subjects of the world of work and not secondary aspects. I could mention as an example what happened in the ILO with the right to strike, a fundamental right which is in our national constitution. It is a decision that we do not agree with. The Governing Body resolved to avoid a fruitful tripartite debate in this conference. Without broad consensus, it has opted to move essential debate from the ILO to the ICJ. Now the court will have to decide on this fundamental right. Of course it is a very prestigious court and tribunal, but its procedures are substantially different to those of this tripartite house guided by negotiation and consensus. These comments that I am making coincide with our country having joined the ILO 105 years ago as one of its founding members. Today we have 111 Conventions ratified, ranked sixth in the world after the five great nations of the continent which hosts the ILO and which hosts us every year, and that in a tripartite way we can seek to make a better world of work in the different committees that we work in. For decades, to facilitate the standard-setting process during the Conference, the communities and groups of nations designate their spokesperson. Global progress has meant that only two or three spokespeople representing over a hundred countries stick to a subject they want to talk about and they get support from one of the social partners. The other social partner, even with efforts to seek consensus, it is very difficult for them to do so. Almost impossible. The Director-General will have seen this during his spontaneous visits to the committees of the Conference, without interrupting their work. Finally, we would like to express thanks for the technical cooperation provided to our country to try to resolve the pending

observation from the ILO bodies on a fundamental labour Convention, Convention 98, a solution we have been awaiting for over ten years. President, we hope that these comments would be of interest to everyone and that they will provide a contribution to the debate called for by the Director-General. Thank you very much.

Mr Thierry Bodson

Worker (Belgium)

Mr Vice-President, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the Director-General's report recalls that the terms of the initial contract of the ILO, based on union freedom, have proved their value in many ways and that the standard-setting system does not need to be reinvented. The central role of the fundamental standards, now complemented by the Conventions on health and security, have to be solidly anchored in the social contract. Apart from that, we support the proposal that the follow-up to the Declaration of 1998 on fundamental principles and rights at work should be revitalized. As we support the affirmation that other rights, no less important, have to be in the social contract and the citation of the limitation of working hours, the guarantee for sufficient remuneration to give workers, their families a decent standard of life, social security, protection of maternity and access to other rights. The standard-setting efforts of the ILO contribute to the rule of law, to the equality of everyone before the law in a world in which, as I cite the report, not everyone has the same level of economic power. So right from now we want, on the one hand, for the ILO's arsenal of standards to continue to be developed to respond to current challenges, in particular that of insecurity, precariousness of work, and on the other hand that these standards should be ratified and applied. The report itself underlines this crucial point. It says that though the setting of standards is important for our contract, the implementation of these standards and the control of their application is equally, if not more, important. It is no secret to anyone here that the control system of the ILO is subjected to a lot of pressure, with very serious detrimental effects in member countries, including in Belgium. The recent decision to call on the International Court of Justice for a question as fundamental as the right to strike shows that. This leads to my second point. If you say 'contract', you are talking about an obligation and you are talking about good faith between the contracting parties. That means we have to think of things such as reaffirming the independence and the authority of the ILO's mechanisms of control. That also implies the negotiation of new standards and the desire to ratify them and to implement them. Now, the report mentions too many examples of Member States not respecting their commitments. I will just mention one area, that of freedom of association. Anti-union repression remains a reality in far too many countries, and attacks on union freedoms are becoming more and more numerous, whether they are brutal in nature or more insidious, based on an arbitrarily restrictive interpretation of ILO standards, for example. And that brings me to my third point, the role and the responsibilities of the ILO. The Director-General's report calls for the responsibility of all of us, governments, employers and unions, and I am pleased to see that call, that we all accept our responsibility. But he also, no doubt, expects us to invoke the role and the responsibilities of the Organization. The ILO is the social conscience of the world and guardian of international standards and should make its voice heard, has to make its voice heard, take or reclaim its place in the centre of the system of the United Nations in the framework of the new social contract. It has, in particular, as the report says, to go back to the mandate that is given to it in the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944 which says it should examine international, economic and financial policies to see if they fulfil the fundamental objectives of social justice. We

expect that the ILO should be more present in countries to make progress on the ratification of Conventions and to call governments to order when it is necessary. International financial organizations do not hesitate to do that. Why should the ILO remain discrete? We expect the ILO to remain firm and to act without deference, without considering how big a country is or how high their contributions. Its only guiding principle should be the respect for international labour standards and the pursuit of social justice, which are the only guarantors of a universal and lasting peace. Coming to the question of peace, I would also like to make a solemn appeal, which is required by the serious nature of the times we are living through. The risk of a third world war, which would lead to the complete destruction of humanity, cannot leave us cold. We cannot remain passive. Ladies and gentlemen, it is our responsibility to do all that is in our power as an international organization to stop the escalation of war and to stop the irreversible happening. It is up to us to impose negotiation and peace. Thank you for listening.

Mr Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn

Government (Thailand)

Mr President, before I begin, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and the people of Thailand, I would like to express my deepest condolences on the passing away of our dear friend, Mr Graeme Buckley, the former ILO Director for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR. Throughout his six years of service in my country, he showed unwavering dedication and tireless efforts to promote labour rights and decent work for all. I am sure that his legacy will continue to inspire those who pursue social justice. He will be fondly remembered in our hearts. My thoughts are with his family, colleagues and the entire labour community, and may his soul rest in peace. Distinguished delegates, it is my great honour to deliver a statement at the Conference as newly appointed Minister of Labour of Thailand. I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General on the establishment of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. While Thailand is still in the process to join the coalition, I believe that our collective efforts, through multilateral partners, shall play a vital role in advancing social justice, as enshrined in the ILO Constitution. I also agree that universal human rights, equal opportunities, fair distribution and just transition will be key to the success. Renewing the social contract will be crucial to mitigate the impact of significant challenges in the world of work, occurring from demographical and climate change, digital technologies and environmental transition. Believing in the principle of 'leave no one behind', the Government places great importance on renewing the social contract to ensure that rights, responsibilities and prosperity are shared by all. In order to accomplish this goal, we need good governance, citizen participation, inclusive society, the rule of law and human rights. Please let me share some of Thailand's initiatives and practices to ensure inclusive participation and an active labour market. First, the Government is developing a human capital databank which combines all information related to workers, from their education, vocational training, social insurance to retirement pension. The big data enables us to capture the need for skill development and prepare our workforce for the future with more resilience. The Government has redoubled effort in promoting lifelong learning and enhancing workers' employability through upskilling and reskilling programmes. Second, after the long period of economic slowdown during the pandemic, the Government decided to raise the minimum wage to improve the living standard and livelihood of workers that is in line with economic development. The decision was made based on tripartite consultation. Last but not least, today Thailand

has achieved another milestone by ratifying Convention 144 on tripartite consultation. The ratification highlights Thailand's commitment in promoting social dialogue and tripartite consultation on subjects related to international labour standards. It is with the aim to promote constructive relationship and dialogue among employers, workers and government. In closing, I would like to reaffirm Thailand's readiness to work with the global community and social partners to pursue social justice and decent work for all in Thailand.

Mr Antoine Robinson

Worker (Seychelles)

President (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, ILO Director-General, ministers and heads of delegations present, all delegates, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, a very good afternoon to you all. On behalf of the Seychelles Federation of Workers' Unions and the working women and men of Seychelles, and on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General for giving us this second special report. Special, because the report indeed comes at a crucial moment when the world needs to renew the social contract. As said, social justice remains an imperative and an essential condition for universal lasting peace. Seychelles is not left behind in the struggle to deliver social justice on the basis of universal lasting peace without leaving anyone behind, as rightly indicated by the Director-General, amidst the multiple challenges of persisting injustices, inequalities and insecurities facing us in our respective countries and societies today. The DG's report strongly focuses on the importance of the effectiveness of the social contract which lies in the capacity to deliver social justice through decent work, embracing the ILO unique tripartite human-centred and rights-based approach to progress and just transition. The ILO has, since its creation in 1919, availed all the constituents the necessary tools and is still upholding decent work and social justice in the world of work in all its four interrelated and interdependent dimensions, clearly described in the DG's report as follows. The ILO came up with a blueprint of a global social contract more than a century ago, and over the last hundred years the ILO has used the foundation of the social contract to build an unparalleled normative system articulating and addressing the challenges that emerge in each new decade and era. The system does not have to be reinvented. However, in the face of injustices and inequalities, which are still visible and on the rise in all parts of the world, our role of our trade unions in our respective countries is to ensure that we must leave no one behind in an already dangerous, unequal world becoming more unequal every day. What should now be our priority is to ensure a progressive trend in the establishment of the social contract. We are far from exhausting our task, as trade unions continue to struggle for adequate labour protection and access to social protection and more democracy at work, which has been unfairly aggravated by the many challenges in the changing world of work. It is widely agreed that the whole business of an international conference would have been impossible without the application of the ILO's critically important decent work strategic pillars of social dialogue and tripartism. No debates ongoing on our agenda items in this conference would have produced a united vision had they not been based on the effective application of the principles of social dialogue and tripartism. The Seychelles Federation of Workers' Unions welcomes the ILO Governing Body decision to include pertinent agenda items for discussion which, together with other thematic debates and events, will contribute towards strengthening the pillars needed for the advancement towards a renewed social contract, nationally and internationally, hand in hand with the ILO

principles of a human-centred recovery approach and just transition. Mr President, we do not have to reinvent the wheel, as the saying goes. The Seychelles Federation of Workers' Unions firmly believes that a renewed social contract is possible, that it is the only way governments, employers and workers can come together to tackle the injustices, inequalities and insecurities facing us today. Whilst trying to put the workers' perspective, let us not forget that the United Nations has found it necessary to include the Decent Work Agenda in its millennium goals. What stronger truth do we need to be convinced that the Decent Work Agenda is the universal solution towards a renewed social contract? For a renewed social contract, governments, employers' and workers' organizations should make commitments to resolve differences in meaningful social dialogue. Through social dialogue Seychelles has been able to ratify all ILO core Conventions, together with other Conventions all geared towards decent work for all, for peace and social justice to prevail in the Seychelles' world of work and in our society in general. The Seychelles national tripartite consultative committee is presently holding discussions and reviewing its labour laws and policies, which shall ensure the protection of all workers, including women and youth and migrant workers. All social partners are onboard in this tripartite social dialogue consultation process. And as said by the DG, the rule of law requires States to safeguard populations against human rights violations, including those committed by private entities and those arising from businesses' activities. States therefore have a duty to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights violations. This involves the creation and enforcement of laws, regulations and policies to this effect. Our trade union is here to ensure that our labour legislation, earned through the sweat of our fathers and mothers, centred on social justice through decent work, is not eroded and diluted in the name of liberal globalization. The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, through the National Consultative Committee on Employment, comprising of trade unions and employers' organizations and other stakeholders, is continuing with its consultation and discussions forum for ratification of other ILO Conventions. Mr President, I cannot end without commending ACTRAV and the ILO in the continued commendable support they are doing in order to constantly assist and support the empowerment of our Member States and social partners in order to establish, consolidate and strengthen our institutions of social dialogue and tripartism in our respective countries. In Seychelles, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs and our social partners are receiving and enjoying meaningful ILO support in that direction. Wishing all delegates a successful and fruitful conference. God bless us all. I thank you for your attention.

Ms Gloria Inés Ramírez Ríos

Government (Colombia)

Interpreter - Unfortunately, the sound quality is not sufficient for interpretation.

Ms Elsa Sabrina de la Cruz Vargas

Government (Dominican Republic)

Good afternoon, Mr President and representatives of the ILO's Member States, representatives of the International Labour Organization and other delegations. On behalf of Mr Luis Miguel de Camps García, Minister for Labour for the Dominican Republic, it is an honour for me to address you in this 112th International Labour Conference of the ILO to discuss the essential issue of the renewed social contract. In a

world characterized by rapid economic and technological change, it is indispensable to re-establish and strengthen the social contract which guides our labour relationships and social relationships. In the Dominican Republic, as in many other countries, we are faced with a constant challenge, a challenge of guaranteeing that all workers will have fair and decent working conditions and at the same time increasing national productivity to the benefit of workers of enterprises and thus the whole of the State. It is essential that we promote the creation of decent jobs, protect labour rights and promote social inclusion of all citizens. The new social contract that we are suggesting has to be inclusive in the way it deals with the benefits of productivity. It has to be fair in rights and it has to be sustainable to strengthen social peace in our peoples. It has to guarantee the protection of informal workers, respect diversity and equality of opportunities for all. It is indispensable that we make progress towards a model of development which will benefit the whole of society and not leave anyone behind. As a demonstration of our commitment to the creation of a fair and just global labour environment, we have joined the initiative promoted by various European and Latin American countries of working towards a global charter of labour rights, including the point that the first labour right is the right to work, which is made possible by the creation of jobs, especially so that productivity will continue to benefit the players in society. And this is a proposal made as a contribution of the ILO to the upcoming Social Summit in 2025. This charter does not just defend the basic and fundamental principles of fair wages, safe working conditions and equal treatment in all working places across the world but it also reiterates our collective responsibility to defend and to develop these fundamental rights, at the same time addressing labour rights which will provide protection, faced with the challenges of our times, in particular, the climate crisis and the digital and demographic transitions. Given that, we call on all countries to strengthen international cooperation and to adopt public policies which will promote economic growth and, above all, will promote sustainable and fair human development. Only through a multilateral approach, characterized by solidarity, will we be able to create a prosperous and just future for everyone. Distinguished President, delegates, finally, it is a pleasure for me to take advantage of being here to announce the Dominican Republic's adhesion to the Global Coalition for Social Justice. This decision is a reflection of our firm commitment to the basic principles of social justice, equality and of dignity for everyone. Thank you.

Ms Sandra Hassan

Government (Canada)

Honourable colleagues, delegates and friends, I am honoured to be here today on behalf of Canada's Minister of Labour, the Honourable Seamus O'Regan Jr, who sends his regards. I will be delivering my remarks in Canada's two official languages, starting in English. Today, I would like to address an issue that cuts to the heart of our societies: social justice. To ensure the establishment of a society based on social justice, we must first begin with a solid foundation. That foundation is built on a social contract that entrusts our institutions to serve the public interest. In this regard, the DG's report to the ILC, 'Towards a renewed social contract', is timely. The strength and stability of those institutions has never been more important, especially in a post-pandemic world that has exposed the weaknesses, gaps and inequalities in our systems. At a time when the rules-based international order faces unprecedented threats, concerted global efforts are required to ensure that the multilateral system remains effective, efficient, relevant and accountable to address the challenges of the 21st century. The ILO, with its unique

tripartite structure and normative mandate, has a key role to play. Canada is firmly committed to multilateralism through the safeguarding of good governance, democracy and rules-based international order as well as respecting, promoting and realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work. Canada is also committed to the goals of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We are working collaboratively with partners on labour issues to support inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, including to support fair, sustainable and inclusive trade. Over the last several years, Canada has taken on an important role as chair of the Equal Pay International Coalition, whose goal is to advance equal pay for work of equal value. With that goal in mind, Canada is taking steps to achieve pay equity. The Pay Equity Act, which came into force in 2021, means that Canadians in federally regulated workplaces can count on equal pay for work of equal value. But we must remember that equity is about more than just pay. It is also about equitable access to opportunities and meaningful employment. We cannot resolve these inequalities without transparency. At the start of the year, the Canadian Government launched EquiVision, a website providing data on the level of representation of women, native people, people with handicaps and members of visible minorities in the workplaces of private sector workplaces subject to federal registration and the levels of payment that they receive. Canada is the first country to make all of that information accessible to the public. Equality and fairness are still not easy to achieve, but Canada is taking specific measures to move towards them. The Report of the Director-General also calls for exhaustive policies on employment which will target investment in sectors with a strong potential to create formal jobs, including the care economy. The unequal burden that is borne above all by women in the provision of non-remunerated care limits their ability to contribute to the economy, to education and to public life. The Government of Canada is working along with its provincial, territorial and native partners to ensure that all families in Canada will have access to a system of learning and will be able to provide high-quality care to young people so that parents can be involved in economic life and achieve their full potential in economic life. We think that every country can make tangible changes to the current system which will have specific concrete effects for our people and will help us to create a society in which it is possible to achieve equality. Thank you.

Mr David Acuña

Worker (Chile)

President, in addition to welcoming the DG's report, I would like to address you and the workers, employers, member delegations. Chile is a small country but we are ahead of the game. We have recovered dialogue and we have established agreements. We have once again a social movement with our body. We have recovered the role of influencing political processes. We are occupying important spaces, putting at the centre of the discussion decent work, to make progress towards social justice and social equity. We are seeing the fulfilment of historic demands that we have had, achieving with a basis of social dialogue with the Government and employers many positive outcomes. We have seen unprecedented increases in the minimum wage and a law reducing the working week to 40 hours. We are discussing and ratifying Conventions 190 and 176. For our country, the Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO are instruments which allow us to move towards more rights and more social justice. We have made a call to the Government of Chile to prioritize social and labour rights with full respect of freedom of association. We call on the Chilean Parliament to ratify Conventions 155 and 81. It is urgent that progress be made on this because they are

very important for Chile. So is Convention 102 on social security and 149 as well on ensuring health and a safer, fairer and equitable future for workers and the population. In the agreements we have reached in negotiation on the minimum wage, it has been established that the Government of Chile this year sent a sectoral negotiation draft, which had been gotten rid of during the dictatorship, which is fundamental in a future in which we have a world with new challenges in terms of labour relations, better working conditions and a fairer economy. In the 16 countries with the highest labour productivity in the OECD, there is sectoral collective bargaining. We need to formalize spaces for reaching agreements, which ensure minimum guarantees for workers, and we will keep fighting for this longstanding demand of ours to be fulfilled. We do not need to be afraid of sectoral collective bargaining. In our country, despite an increase in the minimum wage, it is still below the poverty line, affecting the quality of life of families in our country. We have called for progress towards a living wage, and we are building a tripartite observatory which will provide input on jobs and informality, on income, expenses and debt levels in families in order to be able to build a comprehensive wage policy which focuses on assigning real value to work. We call on the ILO to ensure we can establish the real value of work, providing technical inputs which enrich the debate in order to move towards true social justice. Social dialogue is the way to strengthen fundamental rights where we promote freedom of association and the right to strike and collective bargaining, which are fundamental for strengthening democracy. We call on governments and employers to be part of the social dialogue and work towards developing wage policies. We are not afraid of talking about the redistribution of wealth, better wages and conditions. We are not afraid to talk about decent work and meeting the commitments established in the SDGs. We are not afraid of the right to strike and freedom of association. We are not afraid of making a real cultural change, ensuring social justice and equity. Thank you very much.

Mr Vytautas Šilinskas

Government (Lithuania)

Chairperson, Excellencies, Director-General, distinguished delegates. Speaking a day before the inaugural forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, I want to emphasize that the coalition will significantly enhance development cooperation for decent work and social justice. As rightly stated in the Report of the Director-General to the Conference, social justice and decent work are central to constructing an effective and sustainable social contract at both the national and global levels. Lithuania will continue to advocate for the importance of integrating social justice as well as fair and equitable green and digital transitions into all relevant international discussions and multilateral forums. Lithuania commends the International Labour Office for its coherent approach to labour market governance through tripartism, social dialogue and international labour standards. These are the main pillars for a fair, socially just and inclusive labour market at the global scale. Special emphasis should be placed on inclusive social dialogue, as the presence of strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations is essential for ensuring social justice. Lithuania endorses the ILO-integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining. The world of work is directly linked to the global economy, which in turn is intertwined with peace and stability. Lithuania urges the ILO to continue supporting a human-centred recovery in Ukraine aimed at preserving lives, jobs and livelihoods. Lithuania, along with many other ILO constituents, reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and therefore aligns with the resolution

adopted by the Governing Body in March 2022. As recognized in the resolution, this aggression constitutes a blatant violation of the UN Charter and is entirely incompatible with the aims and purpose of the Organization and the principles governing ILO membership. Following this, Lithuania continues to question the appropriateness, suitability and ongoing feasibility of the ILO sub-regional office presence in Moscow. We also deeply regret the lack of meaningful progress by the authorities of Belarus towards implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry from July 2004 regarding the adherence to ILO Conventions 87 and 98. This issue was underscored during the high-level roundtable convened by the ILO to discuss freedom of association in Belarus. Lithuania reaffirms its strong support for the application of article 33 of the ILO Constitution and endorses effective follow-up to the resolution of the International Labour Conference in 2023. The world of work is undergoing structural changes with the adoption of digital technologies and disappearance of physical borders between countries, highlighting the need for instruments that can adapt to these changes in a timely manner. The need to invest in the capacities and support that both people and economies need in order to navigate their way through the many transitions ahead is well reflected in the report of the Director-General of this esteemed organization. We expect the ILO to be at the forefront of leveraging these new challenges towards a new social contract to advance social justice and promote decent work for all. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Panus Thailuan

Worker (Thailand)

Dear Mr President and distinguished delegates, on behalf of Thailand's worker representative, I would like to thank the President for giving me this opportunity to make a statement at this globally recognized conference today. The main topic of this year's conference, social justice, is particularly catching the interest of workers in Thailand. Social Justice remains not only a global issue but also the desire of all workers around the world in building social justice in the world of work. Nowadays, workers in developing countries are suffering by unfair distribution. The workers' quality of life and social justice in employment persist at a very low level. Workers who struggle in capitalism around the world are sharing the same ambition for a fairer employment with equal access to social protection. The regretful part is, no matter how hard they try to fight, workers are still on the weaker side and are forced to live with disadvantaged conditions. The situation even worsens in some countries. This is the case for Thailand as well. It becomes harder to find fairness and social justice in employment. While employers continue to be rich, workers are stuck in the same poverty or even poorer than before. It is also getting harder to find a society of fair coexistence because money is a factor that stands between employers and workers. Employers tend to misuse money as a tool to justify their fairness and respect for equality. For example, providing compensation whenever unfair practices occur or where there is a lack of justice. At the same time workers, who normally have no alternative choices, choose to accept the money rather than seeking justice. Thailand has been facing this kind of issue for so many years. Workers' organizations and the labour leaders in Thailand have been trying to reduce the exploitation in employment, such as subcontracting, and prevent the abuse of power by the employers. However, this is difficult because employers can use money as a tool to overcome the workers, making it more difficult for workers to have job security, especially for the labour leaders who may face the risk of layoffs at any time as long as justice and equality are under the influence of money. As a result, very few

leaders have power to voice for justice. Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as Thailand's Workers' delegate, I hope that my opinion presented today at the Conference will contribute to our collective approach to ensure fairness and job security for the global workforce. Thank you.

Mr Joseph Farrugia

Employer (Malta)

Mr president, distinguished delegates, the Report of the Director-General addresses a topic which is fundamental to the concept of social dialogue on which the existence of the ILO is based. The report does not stop at discussing the relevance of the idea of a social contract in a global society. It also casts a challenge to the ILO constituents about the need for a renewal of the social contract to tackle worldwide tensions caused by the rise of geopolitical instability, extremist ideologies and a general sense of scepticism in the ability of institutions, both national and global, to really make a positive impact on the life of the average citizen. It is not a cry of despair but rather a call for participants in social dialogue to live up to the ideals of the Declaration of Philadelphia and to examine its results 70 years after it was established. As explained in the report, social contracts are an expression among members of a society or a community and government of our respective responsibilities and duties towards each other. They promote the common good over self-interest, through social cohesion, good governance and equal opportunity, among other aspects. The full reach of the implications of a social contract might lie outside the remit of the ILO, with its focus on the world of work. Yet, there can be no question that the social partners, through the ILO, play a key role in promoting the ideals and achieving the aims of social contracts and to be active participants in their updating as a reflection of the ever-changing world of work. Decent and productive work does not just happen. It is the result of enterprise and initiatives undertaken by the private sector. It is through sustainable enterprise and job creation that people can aspire to a better life and to fulfil their potential as productive citizens. Although within the ILO it is generally accepted that the tripartite model rests on three pillars, the pillar on which employers stand tends to be shorter in terms of recognition than those of the governments and workers. This lopsided approach creates an imbalance in the social dialogue process, and through it, the stability of the social contract. The private sector is a major source of innovation and technological change which brings about upskilling and value added, leading to better conditions of employment. It is acknowledged that the private sector has to be subject to governance and compliance mechanisms, and reasonable labour market regulation is necessary to safeguard the rights of employees. However, governments have to lead by example. In Malta the recent scandals concerning the public health sector, social security benefit fraud and other major infrastructural projects, with the alleged involvement of senior politicians and persons in high office, have rocked the country and shattered trust in our major institutions. This weakens the concept of the social contract and undermines the core values that place entrepreneurship, hard work and merit as cornerstones of personal and business success. There is a strong sense among the Maltese social partners and civil society about the need to address a worsening deficit in the rule of law. In general, Malta has experienced positive macroeconomic performance over the past years, but it is difficult for such results to be sustained unless there are supporting strategies that factor in social and environmental requirements, together with good governance. Therefore, any expectations for an improved social contract would be meaningless without a commitment to effective governance in all its

aspects, trust in government and a focus on quantifiable outcomes. The Director-General's report mentions that the social contract needs to be grounded in norms that are responsive to the changing world of work. In Malta, social dialogue has been active in opening the economy to new forms of employment relationships whilst safeguarding employees' rights and also a revision in minimum wages. This is being achieved with full participation of employers in our social dialogue structures. It also reflects a desired transition towards a flexible labour market which complements the restructuring of the economy towards higher value-added activities that make it less dependent on the importation of low-paid labour. Maltese employers fully respect a human-centred approach to the social contract. Employees in Malta enjoy a high level of trade union representation. In fact, ILO statistics rank Malta as the 11th country with the highest trade union density in the world. We support union membership, provided that it is based on freedom of association without any imposition from either government, employers or unions. The societies that register the most sustainable progress are the ones that are the most adaptable to a changing economic, social and technological environment. This is perhaps more applicable to small countries like Malta that are dependent on international developments over which they have scarce opportunity to influence. The reframing of the social contract relies on the extent to which social dialogue is the force that provides societies, at national and international level, with the drive and vision for positive change. Thank you.

Mr Ahmed Ali Awadalla Ahmed

Employer (Sudan)

Greetings, Mr Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour to address this assembly in the ILO in the 112th Session of the ILC representing the employers of Sudan. I am standing before you in order to shed light on the challenges faced by the employers after the war of 15th April, since 2023, that was launched by the militia that has destroyed all the infrastructure of the Government and that has incurred losses for the employers up to 80% in the fields of agriculture, industry, SMEs as well as craftsmanship. This is a call for all the productive sectors. This has led to the destruction of all the productive sectors. Six million people have become jobless. They do not get any wages. They have become, all of them, refugees. And Sudan, despite all this, is still committed to all the standards of work, and the Government, the employers as well as the workers are committed to this. Before the war, the tripartite committee used to meet monthly in order to tackle all the challenges of work and to find solutions. The group of employers in Sudan defends all the rights of the workers, and despite all the challenges, our members have insisted on contributing to the economy of the country and to create job opportunities. The war has affected and impacted on the employers and on the work environment. Ladies and gentlemen, workers are the main pillars of productivity, and employers in Sudan wanted to guarantee all their rights and all their obligations, but the economic losses due to war led to making us fail to stand to our commitments. The impact of the war was huge on our society, and many companies, many small and medium enterprises were affected by this. We urge the ILO to give us the technical and logistical assistance. We need an ad hoc committee to assess all the losses that we have and that has affected all the production sector. We are very much interested in benefiting from the experience of all the countries that have experienced the same crises and conflicts. In order to reconstruct, we need your cooperation. First of all, the economic recovery. We need financial assistance. We need credit as well as investment incentives. We urge all the foreign investors to help us in order to restructure our

economy and to rebuild it. Second, we need to upgrade the skills for all the workers, and we need to keep pace also with the demands of the market as well as to foster vocational training. Third, it is very important to have social dialogue. All the workers and the employers need to go into a productive dialogue, a constructive one, and in order also to encourage all the labour practices that are fair and equitable. Fourth, health and safety as well as their specifications. The war has affected this field, and it was inevitable that we lost all the assistance in that. In conclusion, the employers of Sudan are resilient. Nonetheless, they need your support and solidarity. Let us work together hand in hand in order to create jobs and to guarantee welfare. We invite you to be in solidarity with us for a stronger Sudan and for a brighter future. I thank you very much for your kind attention.

Ms Alison Durbin

Government (Australia)

It is my honour to address you today at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. The Australian Government deeply values our engagement with the International Labour Organization in advancing social justice and decent work for all. We commend the commitment of the ILO Director-General and the initiative to promote a renewed focus on the importance of a social contract and ensuring the world of work is at the forefront of national, regional and international discussions and priorities. Every day our global community is confronted with new complexities and challenges. The interconnectedness between all our societies, our economies, both physical and virtual, brings great responsibility to work together to support social cohesion and social justice and to protect and empower those most vulnerable to inequality. The tripartite nature of the ILO provides a unique lever to address the global challenges we face and to strive for an equal, fair and just transition towards a sustainable future. Australia recognizes that, along with tripartism and social dialogue, multilateral cooperation is central to achieving our shared objective of decent work. For this reason, we are proud to have joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice and look forward to engaging with partners to address immediate areas of action. The Australian Government has undertaken significant measures to address inequality, discrimination and exclusion in the world of work, with a key focus to improve gender equality. Earlier this year, the Australian Government launched 'Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality' to address gender-based violence, gender stereotypes and the imbalance in unpaid and paid care, economic inequality and security, women's health and the lack of representation in leadership and decision-making. Alongside this strategy, the Australian Government has implemented concrete social justice actions to protect the most vulnerable in our society, including clarifying that workplace protections under Australian legislation cover migrant workers, regardless of their visa status; strengthening Australia's anti-discrimination framework to protect employees who have been or are being subjected to family and domestic violence from discrimination in the workplace; and safeguarding 'employee-like' workers on digital platforms, such as food delivery drivers, by establishing a system for minimum standards. The Australian Government has also amended workplace relation laws to address loopholes that had the potential to undermine the principles of fairness, secure work and better pay, including by criminalizing wage theft, establishing clear pathways for casual employees to convert to more permanent work and introducing a criminal offence for industrial manslaughter. There is, however, more to be done as we face increasingly complex and compounding global challenges such as the transition to environmentally sustainable economies and

the rise of artificial intelligence and its associated opportunities and risks. The Australian Government commends the ILO for its concrete actions to advance social justice. We look forward to working collaboratively with all to continue to deliver tangible outcomes to improve the lives of working people. Thank you.

Ms Eka Margishvili

Employer (Uzbekistan)

Dear delegates and guests of the Conference, today I would like to start with the important principle of everything in the name of human, for the good of human, where a person is not only worker and employer and, for sure, an office holder. Every day, as the well-being of the population grows, the world's employers must also be prepared to increase the quality of social support for workers. In recent years, Uzbekistan has made great efforts to ensure better living conditions for the people and has achieved significant success in ensuring the interests, honour and dignity of a person in the country, liberalizing the economy and entering world markets. Particular attention is paid to ensuring human rights and freedoms and international cooperation in these processes, following the principles of openness and transparency and gender equality. Uzbekistan today is an active platform in Central Asia for economic and social cooperation, which is confirmed by the international community. In this regard, the priority areas of the development are the reduction of poverty, the development of the green economy, the support and creation of opportunities for women's entrepreneurship, public-private partnership in industry, infrastructure and education. Today, the Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan includes eight big associations in Uzbekistan. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, association of textile, silk, leather electrical and construction industries, as well as the Council of Farmers of Uzbekistan, uniting a total of [vgr INAUDIBLE 147:35] employer companies in Uzbekistan. Based on this, we organized an international conference about gender equality in the workplace, in countering harassment. The result of our conference was the signing of a communiqué by the community of employers of Uzbekistan recognizing full responsibility and openness in ensuring gender balance in all Uzbek companies. Dear participants of the event, taking the opportunity, allow me, on behalf of the Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan, to express my deep gratitude to the ILO team and issue the following two proposals. Firstly, promotion of openness to national gender audit of national companies, and second, commitment to the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. Ultimately, I would like success in the employer community, to say our power is in supporting each other and business success in social lifestyle. Thank you.

Ms Jeannette Jara

Government (Chile)

It is an honour for me to take part in this 112th International Labour Conference as Minister for Labour and Social Welfare of the Government of Chile. Let me start by thanking the ILO Director-General, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for his leadership in promoting the Global Coalition for Social Justice, an initiative our country actively supports. We would also like to greet the tripartite delegation of the workers and employers. I would also like to greet the senators representing the legislative bodies who are joining us here. I would like to focus on decent work, which is a cornerstone of the programme of

President Gabriel Boric. During the first half of his term in office, and under his leadership, Chile has made significant progress, like the ratification of ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the workplace and Convention 176 on safety and health in mines, an important one for a mining country like ours. Two historic increases in the minimum wage have occurred as well, and we approved two laws which will improve workers' quality of life. We have reduced the working day to 40 hours a week, a longstanding demand, and we have a law on work-life balance as well. There are also significant challenges such as strengthening rights and opportunities for equitable and safe participation of women in the labour market. We have also made relevant normative and institutional changes to strengthen social protection and increase employability and to have safe places and spaces for work. Next week we will also start a new draft bill process which would create equality between women and men, because there is no social justice without gender justice. On employment, I would like to say that since our government came to office two years ago we have been fighting against inflation and promoting growth, and 550,000 people have gone back into employment. Of course progress needs to be made, and we are looking at upskilling people to make them prepared for the future of work, strengthening training in digital skills, modernizing the national system for labour skills certification and updating the national policy on labour research. We need to make the most of the opportunity we have offered by e-mobility and the global transition towards the green economy, where Chile plays a leading role thanks to its vast reserves of copper and lithium and geographical conditions which generate solar and wind energy for domestic consumption and also for the production of green hydrogen. We must emphasize that these changes were possible thanks to tripartite social dialogue. This has been key for the country to be able to make all the achievements we have mentioned, improving people's lives. But as I have said, I think we need to reiterate the need to have convergence so that our countries can implement reforms. This includes improving pensions of current and future pensioners. This pension reform is an ethical, moral, much needed and indispensable thing we need to do for our country. I would like to say that we are going to ratify ILO Convention 155 on workers safety and health and Convention 81 on workplace inspection. We would like to express thanks for the fact that we have been chairing the ILO Governing Body and currently chairing Alliance 8.7. We would like to say that economic growth is the strength of both parties, workers and employers. All of this, of course, needs common efforts from both sides. Thank you very much.

Mr Luis González Arias

Employer (Paraguay)

President, it is a pleasure for me to congratulate you on behalf of the employers sector of my country in your election to preside over the work of this historic and significant 112th International Labour Conference, and at the same time wish you every success in your work. When looking carefully at the Director-General's report, we agree, as Paraguayan employers, that the world is indeed facing various challenges such as technological advance, climate change, demographic changes, increasing informality, the lack of education and training for vulnerable sectors of society, to mention only the most relevant. However, it is not an issue of searching for a magical solution or an overambitious solution. We have to build on the basis of what we have already achieved in tripartite work over the years, reaffirming and updating the social contract to maintain its legitimacy and the support of the various parties. One way of strengthening this process is to take as a basis national social contracts and adapt them to the specific

circumstances and priorities of each country. Allow me to express our agreement with what the Director-General mentions in his report where he emphasizes the importance of cooperating through institutional means to forge consensus, speed up action and fulfil the mandate of promoting social justice through the strengthening of the social contract. In Paraguay we have a functioning democratic system. The authorities are all elected by the popular vote in respect for human rights. Social protection and recognition of human rights are a part of that system. One great social achievement was the approval of a legislative act, No. 7235, at the end of 2023 which regulates the supervisory role of the state in the bodies that provide for retirement provision and pensions. There the employers and workers were actively involved in the work with the Government, and that work led to a successful set of regulations whose implementation is now in process. And with this, in the future we will have a retirement system with healthy and sustainable finances so that it will be possible to give people who contribute a non-working life in dignity. Coming to issues of more current concern, the employers' organizations have been flanking micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the difficult path of formalization in their working towards a more clean and sustainable economy and in the improvement of their productive operations to create decent jobs and thus contribute to social prosperity. At the moment there are various projects underway which provide support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and they are led by the employer sector with the cooperation of international bodies, including the International Labour Organization. And we would like to thank the Organization and express our desire to continue cooperating. We would like to express our concern with the challenges that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are faced with. For example, the impact on this sector of the economy of the COVID-19 pandemic, the apparition of new technologies such as the digital economy, including artificial intelligence. And if it is not possible for this sector of small, medium-size, micro enterprises to adapt, then that will have a negative impact on the economic and social development of our countries. Finally, we think that coordinated, transparent tripartite work on legislation and on projects for cooperation are a key factor to address and make progress on successfully addressing the challenges of the accelerated and changing world of work. I would like to thank the Workers' delegate of our country for their support in continuing to accompany us on our search for a better life in Paraguay.

Ms Yasemin Eren

Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Mr President, Excellencies, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, OIC, works to advance member countries' progress amid global challenges. COVID-19 exacerbated unemployment in OIC nations, underscoring the need for job creation and economic growth. OIC emphasizes the vital role of the private sector, particularly small businesses, in employment. The recent 15th Islamic Summit, held in Banjul, The Gambia, under the theme 'Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development', urged Member States to promote wide access to decent jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities, skills development, decent work conditions and income security, and to foster unity and solidarity for sustainable development. OIC institutions, including the OIC Labour Centre inaugurated in Baku, Azerbaijan, stand ready to assist Member States in economic growth and job creation efforts. The centre serves as a vital platform for Member States to collaborate on labour-related issues. This collaboration is essential for fostering a cohesive approach to workforce management and ensuring that the member countries can collectively address common challenges in the labour sector.

Additionally, education is a cornerstone of social development. Our 2025 Programme of Action prioritizes inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels. We aim to promote lifelong learning opportunities that empower individuals with skills needed for gainful employment, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Mr President, the ongoing genocide in the Occupied Palestinian Territory underscores the urgent need for accountability and justice within the social contract, especially in the face of the failure of international cooperation and diplomacy, marked by double standards and exclusion. In this regard, the OIC welcomes the special sitting and the Director-General's comprehensive report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We call on the International Labour Organization to halt Israel's impunity and address the violations by the occupying power of international labour Conventions. A renewed social contract needs to ensure freedom, justice and accountability for all. Thank you.

Mr Stephen Cotton

International Transport Workers' Federation

Thank you, President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary-General and distinguished guests. I am Stephen Cotton, the General Secretary of the ITF. We represent nearly 18.5 million transport workers and we want to say congratulations to all of our colleagues in the ILO for the marvellous job they have done for the ILC this week. In particular, we want to recognize Gilbert Hounghbo for his continued vision and leadership in the most difficult of times. Globally, we are facing converging economic, political, social and climate changes, and these have the potential to continue to exacerbate inequalities. We are seeing a decent work shortage in transport and across the global. Workplaces are becoming increasingly unsafe, employment more precarious and standards of living are falling, including the fundamental right to strike and the right for collective bargaining. Our societies are under attack. Democracy around the world is being threatened. No social justice can exist in societies where there is a violation of basic human rights, and that is why we put on record our full support for the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Together, we have a collective responsibility to build better workplaces, ensure inclusivity and effective labour protections for all workers. As the Director-General's report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories notes, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic, with devastating effects on livelihoods, safety and well-being on working Palestinians. Alongside my colleagues in the global union federations, we took part in a mission to Palestine last month to reinforce our depth of commitment to the Palestinian workers and their unions and heard first-hand their profoundly moving testaments about the pain and destruction in Gaza. There must be an immediate ceasefire. The only viable path to a lasting peace is an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a two-state solution. We need renewed efforts to restore democracy in Myanmar. Many union activists are still in detention, have been killed or are in hiding. The ILO Commission of Inquiry in Myanmar, it is impossible to exercise freedom of association. We urgently need more effective international responses to hold the junta accountable for the atrocities. Even in times of war and conflict, transport workers continue to keep our societies moving, ensuring the safe passage of people and ensuring the communities have vital supplies and the goods they need. Take Ukraine, the country's ports, railways and roads continue to survive and sustain that society. We continue to condemn Russia's repeated attacks and call for unwavering solidarity to workers operating in such awful circumstances. Looking at the action we as a global community can take, we must continue to applaud this conference for taking decisive decisions in relation to States' repeated and flagrant violations of international labour

standards. We must not forget the importance of the ILO's supervisory body, including the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, in ensuring States implement the Conventions they ratified. We reaffirm our commitment to C190. While a number of governments have ratified, there is still much work to be done, and we ensure that the ITF and the labour movement will be there to make sure it is implemented. Finally, following a decision of the ILC in 2022 to include a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and a right at work, we recommend the standard-setting discussion on protection against biological hazards in the working environment. Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate change impacts on workers have demonstrated the need to develop a comprehensive and forward-looking legal framework for the respect, promotion and realization of the right to have a safe, healthy working environment. Thank you and good evening.

Mr Daniel BERTOSSA

Public Services International

Honourable delegates, distinguished guests and workers, I stand before you today to shed light on the dire situation of public service workers around the world. Public services are the backbones of our society. They ensure the well-being of our people and the progress of our nations. All workers benefit from these services, but the vulnerable workers benefit the most: precarious workers, women workers, migrant workers and children. Yet the workers who provide them are under attack. If COVID has taught us anything, it is that when these workers cannot do their jobs, then we all suffer, and sometimes we die. In Japan, for over 70 years public service workers' rights have been undermined by the lack of compliance with Convention 87. This Convention guarantees the freedom of association and protection of the right to organize. But Japan's failure to uphold these standards means public sector employees, for example firefighters, still do not have a voice and still are not allowed to bargain collectively. In Kenya, public service workers, particularly doctors and healthcare workers, are being attacked and intimidated. The General Secretary of our affiliate, the doctor's union, was shot this year by police at a peaceful protest. Healthcare workers and professionals save lives. They must not be targeted for standing up for their rights. Such attacks not only threaten their safety but they also jeopardize the health of the entire nation. In Argentina, the new ultra-liberal government has dismissed massive numbers of public service workers and announced privatizations of essential services. This weakens the public institutions that serve the Argentinian people and it deliberately undermines democracy. The erosion of job security and public services are alarming trends that must be reversed to protect the social fabric of the country. And in Gaza our members in the health sector are the most at-risk health workers in the world. Almost 500 healthcare workers have been killed in this conflict as well as 190 UN workers: the largest in the UN's organizational history. In Ecuador, public service workers have been stripped of their labour rights, and four different governments from both the left and the right have done nothing to restore them. Their voices are being stifled and they cannot negotiate fair conditions and wages. Just a few years ago, we all clapped for these workers. They were at the front line of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. They risked their lives to protect us during one of the most challenging times in recent history. Yet the gratitude shown has not been translated into meaningful support and protection for them. Too many governments have already forgotten their sacrifices. Instead, they face increased marginalization, job insecurity and attacks on their rights. They were there for us then. We must be there for them now. The ILO must make the Declaration of Philadelphia

real. We must strengthen the supervisory mechanisms so that Member States comply with the core Conventions and uphold the rights of all workers. Labour is not a commodity. Workers are not an expendable resource. We are human beings with rights and dignity that must be respected and protected. That is how we honour the sacrifice of the thousands who died from COVID to keep us safe. That is how we will achieve the ILO's mission of promoting social justice and decent work for all. Thank you.

Dr Markus Demele

Kolping International

Chair, delegates, for the Catholic social federation, Kolping International, with around 400,000 members in 60 countries who I have the honour of representing here, this year's report from the Director-General is a confirmation of what we think and a call to action. The report on the 10th year of the implementation of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, which we decided on in 2015, addresses the particular need to achieve these goals through decent work. Because if we take the claim that we want to leave no one behind truly seriously, then that will not happen by handouts and philanthropy but through the creation of opportunities for people to be involved in making a contribution wherever and whenever they were born. The majority of the people in the world, despite binding Conventions and political statements of intentions, despite SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda, work in informal, sometimes very precarious working relationships. And it is clear that this, to some extent, depends on an inconsistent approach to the implementation of other sustainability goals. The first Sustainable Development Goal, the fight against poverty, cannot be achieved if people cannot earn enough income through the work of their hands and minds or be covered by social security. And Goal 12, responsible consumption and production, cannot be reached if consumers have a choice between cheap goods, which are clearly produced by the exploitation of human labour, and much more expensive products certified by innumerable seals and certificates which are not granted on an independent basis and depend on the principle of voluntary compliance. And the Director-General in his report points out other inconsistencies. This unbalanced situation, which is expressed in precarious working relationships, lack of social security, neglected labour inspections and perverse shaping of prices, which completely leaves out of consideration ecological aspects and the follow-on costs of activity, is a result of incoherent shaping of policy which simply does not think of financial, economic and social aspects all at the same time. Apart from that, there is an interaction between the neglect of the fourth component, the ecological component, and the spreading of work which is not decent work. We welcome the commitment of the Director-General to strengthen the role of the ILO as the only tripartite UN organization, as a pioneer in the call for consistent coherent policy. Chair, delegates, the Director-General in his report rightly addresses two central questions which all social partners have to consider. What can we do to revive a social contract without which we will not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals or the objective of the ILO of social justice? As a Catholic social association which has been working with the International Labour Organization for more than 30 years now, we see ourselves as being in a community of further organizations inspired by Catholicism which for many years have been addressing the future of work and the challenges of the social and economic transformation. We seek dialogue with partners who are with us on the path to bringing together the different areas of policy, truly and sustainably, together with the goal of social justice. Only together will the social partners, along with civil society, be able to create a climate of

solidarity in society which understands decent work for all, everywhere in the world as a self-evident component of the way that we work in our economy. The Pope addressed the partners in the product 'The Future of Work: Labour After Laudato Si', 79 years after the end of the Second World War, on the 8th of May 2024 with these words. He said, "The world needs a new commitment, a new social contract which will bring all of us together, the older and the younger generations, to protect Creation and for solidarity and mutual protection within a human society." Kolping International takes on this task. We are engaging ourselves in the Global Coalition for Social Justice. We believe in the value and dignity of every individual human being, who should not be left out of consideration, and particularly in the world of work.

Mr Nilton Neco Souza Da Silva

Alternative Democratic Trade Union of the Americas

President, the Continental Directive Council of the Alternative Union of the Americas, ADS, congratulations the Director, Gilbert Hounbo, for his work and on his leadership. Apart from ADS, who greets all of the delegates present here, in particular the representatives of the workers of the whole world, in this significant conference. The Alternative Democratic Union of the Americas considers the Director-General's report on a renewed social contract, presented to this conference, to be a positive and consistent contribution. ADS has been struggling continuously to defend the rights and acquisitions of the workers of our continent of America, which has suffered so much. We denounce and reject all attacks on rights, the persecution of unions and union leaders and anti-union practices on the part of businesses and some governments in our region, including Colombia, Panama, Peru, El Salvador, Venezuela, Brazil and others. It is very important that the ILO should be more careful and vigilant to make sure that governments implement effective public policies which will promote and strengthen social dialogue, decent work, take care of the environment, union freedoms, social justice and democracy. Geopolitical tensions continue to be a matter of great concern. Irrational international trade disputes, conflicts, wars, the genocide in Gaza and the global crisis of governance are leading to an increase in social inequality, unemployment, poverty and violence. This situation affects and seriously weakens collective bargaining, social dialogue and democracy. The ADS is profoundly concerned about the increase in poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, attacks on workers' rights and on democracy in the majority of the countries of the Americas and the world. President, ADS represents more than 25 million workers and 20 unions in 13 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In our second continental congress, which took place in May 2022, we reaffirmed our values and principles to defend the rights of workers for union independence, union freedoms, freedoms of association, social justice, sustainable development, defence of the environment and democracy. Given this, we are available to contribute to the ILO in its work in debates and cooperation on a new social contract, a global coalition on social justice and other matters of interest for the workers of the Americas and of the world. We hope that we will be able to work together in unity on questions of common interest with the ILO and other union organizations and social organizations at a national, regional and global level. Thank you very much.

Ms Valerie BICHELMEIER

Make Mothers Matter

Ladies and gentlemen, my organization, Make Mothers matter, or MMM, congratulates the Director-General for his report and very much appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion. This statement is supported by the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, of which MMM is a member. We fully agree that a new social contract is urgently needed at a time when we are facing multiple crises and ever-greater challenges. It is clear, however, that a new social contract requires bold structural transformation. The report rightly questions the ability of our current economic system and “its narrow and exclusive goals of financial and price stability to deliver social justice”. It also acknowledges that “the usual fixes are not likely to work and that we will need to adapt our policies and institutions and come to a new understanding of our responsibilities to each other”. We at MMM could not agree more. A new social contract must be embedded into systemic transformation, beginning with the economy. It is time to redefine what we call development and progress, move away from the GDP growth narrative and repurpose our economic system and policy-making so that the economy first serves the long-term well-being of people and the planet and supports the work of caring for each other and for our natural environment. Whether you call it a human-centred economy, as proposed by Mr Samans of the ILO, a human rights economy, as advocated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, or a well-being economy, which is a path that a few countries have already embraced, we urgently need an economy which is in the service of life and sustainable and inclusive well-being for all: the basis of social justice. The report also stresses the need to address gender disparities in the provision of social protection, these disparities being connected to women’s lower labour force participation and their mainly informal work, which in turn is rooted in the unequal sharing of caregiving work and responsibilities. It fails, however, to recognize that care should be a collective responsibility and that the new social contract must support a more equitable distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, first between men and women but also across society. Women have long shouldered the majority of both paid and unpaid care work. The resulting costs in terms of lost income and opportunities too often translate in poverty for women, in particular in old age. The care gap is at the root of a gender labour force participation gap, the gender pay gap, the pension gaps, not to mention women’s glass ceiling to access decision-making positions. Women who are mothers suffer specific discrimination and challenges, a motherhood penalty which is at the root of social and economic injustice for many. We particularly commend and support the report’s recommendation that the social contract needs to ensure access to and the provision of essential public services and universal access to social protection, and call for urgent implementation of social protection floors worldwide. As a major stakeholder, the private sector must also take its share of responsibilities and costs by providing support to employees having caregiving responsibilities, in particular parents. This will not only positively impact those employees and society in the long term but it will also benefit companies themselves through talent retention, employees’ loyalty and attracting new talent. As part of a necessary systemic transformation, a paradigm shift is therefore also needed in the world of work, from families, mothers in particular, adapting to companies, to companies adapting to families and the realities of care. In summary, we are calling for a social contract that kickstarts a care society where the value of care work, whether paid or unpaid, is recognized as valuable and essential work, adequately supported and fairly distributed. This is everyone’s responsibility. We at MMM will continue doing our

bit. We ask that you join us in this endeavour. I will end with a quote from Tim Jackson, who is an ecological economist. He said, "Without care we are nothing, our progress is nothing. Without care there is no economy." A new social contract simply cannot ignore care. Thank you.

Mr Rajeev Dubey

Employer Vice-President (India)

Thank you very much, madam. Ladies and gentlemen, that brings us to the end of our list of speakers for this plenary sitting. I thank all of you for your contribution to this afternoon's debate. Our plenary session is now closed.