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Plenary sitting: Outcome of the work of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality

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Thursday, 12 June 2025, 5.15 p.m.

President: Mr Moyo

Outcome of the work of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality: Presentation and discussion

The President

Before we finish our work for the day, the Conference has one more item on its agenda, which is the adoption of the outcome of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality. The text of the proposed resolution, which contains the Committee's conclusions, can be found in [Record of Proceedings No. 7A](#). The report on the Committee's proceedings is contained in [Record of Proceedings No. 7B](#).

I welcome the Officers of the Committee, namely: Mr Dogoh (Côte d'Ivoire), Chairperson; Mr Ahmed (Bangladesh), Employer Vice-Chairperson; and Mr Baah (Ghana), Worker Vice-Chairperson. The Reporter is Ms Mbouzie Ahanda Épouse Abah (Cameroon).

I will first give the floor to the Reporter, so that she may present to us the outcome of the Committee's work. The Officers of the Committee will then take the floor.

Ms Mbouzie Ahanda Épouse Abah

Reporter of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality

It is a great honour for me to present to the Conference for adoption the proposed resolution containing the conclusions of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality. Allow me first to thank the Committee for its trust in nominating me as Reporter. The subject of this discussion, the informal economy, presents significant challenges for the realization of workers' rights – including the fundamental principles and rights at work and access to adequate social protection – and working conditions. As we all know, the informal economy is a major feature of the world of work. While there are marked differences among countries and regions, all economies are affected. Over 2 billion workers globally are in informal employment, representing nearly 58 per cent of total employment worldwide.

This issue resonates deeply across my continent, Africa, and even more so in my country, Cameroon. In 2006, following an assessment of the economic climate and with the aim of accelerating recovery, the Government decided to establish a ministry responsible for small and medium-sized enterprises, the social economy and handicrafts, recognizing the sector's potential to generate jobs and growth if properly regulated. Nine years after this decision, the ILO adopted the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). Ten years after the adoption of the Recommendation, this discussion on promoting transitions towards formality is both timely and necessary. It reaffirms the ongoing need for the ILO and its constituents to reflect on and assess the progress made and the outcomes achieved in addressing this global challenge. While it is prevalent in low and middle-income countries, the informal economy exists in all parts of the world, including in high-income countries. Moreover, this discussion gives the ILO's constituents a crucial opportunity to fully understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in this area.

Over the past two weeks, the Committee focused its discussion on four points: the main drivers of informality were discussed and agreed; the lessons learned from countries'

experience in implementing Recommendation No. 204; the country-level innovations, including several approaches that have gained prominence, with new developments offering opportunities to address informality and promote the transition to formality; and the priority actions that the ILO's constituents and the Office should take to address the root causes of informality and promote the transition to formality, including through research and data, capacity-building, and leadership and strategic partnership.

In total, we held 11 sittings in plenary, including 1 extended sitting. In addition, the drafting group held 6 sittings. The number of sittings and the discussion of the 76 amendments that were received are a testament to our collective effort, which led to these comprehensive conclusions.

We had rich and fruitful discussions – very frank, direct and constructive – and always with a true spirit of social dialogue. The Committee managed to accomplish its work and reach a consensus thanks to the tireless commitment of the Chairperson, His Excellency Mr Franck Dogoh of Côte d'Ivoire. He steered the debate with outstanding efficiency, genuine kindness and a deft diplomatic touch, fostering a climate of trust among all the constituents. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to him for his skilful guidance, insightful contributions and unwavering commitment to ensure that our dialogue was both productive and meaningful.

This outcome was also the result of the efforts of the two Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Farooq Ahmed, representing the Employers' group, and Mr Anthony Baah, representing the Workers' group, and the Government members. I thank all the Committee members for their engagement and constructive inputs. I also acknowledge the dedication of the members of the drafting group, who proposed to the Committee a set of draft conclusions for discussion.

Allow me also to acknowledge the enormous efforts made by the Office in preparing and providing a comprehensive and forward-looking report. In particular, I wish to thank the representative of the Secretary-General, Ms Celeste Drake; the deputy representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Frédéric Lapeyre; the Coordinator of the Committee, Ms Margherita Licata; the Senior Expert, Ms Florence Bonnet; and all the technical and coordinating staff of the Secretariat for their invaluable contributions and support, including the experts, translators, interpreters, reporters, précis-writers, technicians and administrative staff.

The proposed conclusions are structured in three sections. Section I, entitled "Addressing informality leaving no one behind: An urgent need for action", frames the discussion with stark data that underscore both the scale of the transition challenge and the decent work deficits in the informal economy. It purposefully spotlights groups at heightened risk and the barriers they face, then closes by unpacking the multifaceted and interrelated drivers of informality that will command Members' attention in the years ahead. Section II, entitled "Accelerating the implementation of Recommendation No. 204: Main lessons learned", identifies prerequisites for the transition to formality and new developments offering opportunities to promote formalization. Section III, entitled "Advancing decent work through the transition to formality, leaving no one behind", provides a set of recommendations to guide the policy action of governments and employers' and workers' organizations, with support from the ILO, with a view to strengthening action for the effective implementation of Recommendation No. 204 and ensuring that no one is left behind. It reinforces the global leadership role of the ILO in advancing the transition to formality agenda at the global, regional and national levels through its technical support and policy guidance, research and data, capacity-building and leveraging partnerships.

To conclude, I truly believe that these conclusions, drawn from our discussion, will greatly guide and enhance our collective efforts to address informality and promote the transition to

formality. Therefore, I have the distinct honour and privilege of submitting to the International Labour Conference for adoption the proposed resolution containing the conclusions concerning the general discussion on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work.

Mr Ahmed

Employer Vice-Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the ILO for placing this important item on the agenda of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference, which will be drawing to a close tomorrow. I also express my warm compliments to the Workers' bench and to the governments for their active, constructive and forward-looking engagements throughout the discussions. All of the tripartite constituents have shown an exemplary spirit of consensus, which is very much appreciated. On behalf of the Employers' group, I simply say thank you to everyone.

As we conclude, we reaffirm our strong commitment to advancing the effective implementation of the conclusions being adopted on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work. Ten years after the adoption of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), informality remains pervasive, affecting nearly 60 per cent of the world's workers and 80 per cent of enterprises. The challenge is structural, complex and evolving, requiring not only renewed political will, but also practical and context-specific strategies that deliver measurable outcomes. We therefore welcome the strong implementation-oriented focus of these conclusions. They rightly move beyond reaffirming norms and turn attention towards supporting national and sectoral strategies, institutional reforms and actions that can bring meaningful change on the ground.

The Employers strongly support the recognition that the transition to formality must be enterprise-driven and productivity-led. Informality persists, not because workers or businesses choose it, but because the formal economy has yet to provide sufficient incentives and opportunities to absorb them. Enabling sustainable enterprise development, particularly among micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, is essential to this process. For formalization to succeed, we must reduce the cost and complexity of doing business, ensure regulatory clarity, improve access to finance and markets, promote skills development and scale up business development services. These are the foundations upon which decent and formal jobs are created and maintained.

We also appreciate the balanced emphasis placed on facilitating formalization, preventing informalization and promoting the creation of decent jobs in the formal economy. This comprehensive perspective is vital, especially as we confront disruptive changes in technology, demography and supply or value chains. We welcome the call for a global and time-bound road map towards effective formalization, to be developed in consultation with the tripartite constituents. Such a road map with short, medium and long-term objectives and a clear monitoring framework will be critical in supporting Member States to translate policy into implementation.

At the same time, we stress that formalization efforts must remain nationally-driven and tailored to country realities, respecting legal frameworks, economic structures and institutional capacities. Effective coordination, sound diagnostics and targeted investments will be essential. We also highlight the importance of tripartite consensus in advancing issues such as due diligence, employment classification and wage-setting mechanisms. The Employers

reiterate that internationally agreed language and existing instruments, such as the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and the outcomes of the relevant expert meetings must serve as the basis for future work. Avoiding unnecessary overlap with other committees and forums was also helpful in terms of maintaining policy coherence and reducing the risk of duplicative or inconsistent approaches during our discussions.

The conclusions provide a wide range of practical entry points that can support a transition towards formality. These include the promotion of integrated digital systems to simplify registration and compliance, the extension of social protection and public services to uncovered groups, and the strengthening of labour administration. We particularly welcome the emphasis on an enabling environment, fiscal and regulatory incentives and support for enterprise upgrading. These are actionable levers that, when implemented well, can generate both economic growth and social progress.

The Employers also acknowledge the need for targeted interventions to reach those most affected by informality, including women, young people, migrants and vulnerable workers across various sectors. However, we stress that such efforts must be built on partnerships, inclusiveness and shared responsibility, mobilizing the capacities of governments and workers' and employers' organizations alike. We appreciate the ILO's commitment to supporting the constituents through technical assistance, data development and peer learning. In particular, enhancing the capacity of national statistics systems and labour market institutions will be essential to track progress, identify bottlenecks and design better-informed interventions. We encourage the ILO to ensure that its support remains pragmatic, responsive to Members' needs and focused on implementation. Furthermore, we endorse the proposal to include a dedicated outcome on formalization in the ILO's programme and budget and encourage the Office to strengthen collaboration across the United Nations and with financial institutions and development banks to mobilize the required resources. Formalization cannot be achieved without sustained investment, institutional capacity and alignment with broader national development strategies.

Moving forward, our collective priority must be delivery. We cannot afford another decade of slow and uneven implementation. Formalization is not merely a legal or administrative exercise. Rather, it is a development imperative that requires economic dynamism, institutional trust and inclusive governance. The Employers remain committed to working with our social partners and the ILO to support formalization strategies that are rooted in enterprise sustainability, productivity, growth and decent work. We must focus on what works, on scalable solutions and enabling conditions, and on practical reforms that create real incentives for formalization. Let us ensure that our efforts from the discussions do not remain on paper only, but lead to concrete actions and lasting change for workers, businesses and societies across the world.

Mr Baah

Worker Vice-Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality

I speak today on behalf of the 200 million plus workers in the informal economy who remain trapped in that sector; on behalf of the women who work without protection or recognition; on behalf of the young and the migrant workers who are too often excluded from basic rights; and on behalf of the many millions who contribute daily to our economies without the security, dignity or voice that they deserve. I speak also on behalf of those of us who grew up with informality all around us, who saw our families, friends and neighbours work long

hours without contracts, without social protection and without fair pay. This is the reality for many of the Workers' representatives who took part in our discussions, and it is what gives our work such urgency.

Informality is not new. Since the adoption of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), we have seen that it is not simply a problem of the past; it is an entrenched feature of our global labour markets and, in too many cases, it is a deliberate strategy: a way to avoid responsibilities, reduce costs and shift risks onto workers.

Informality is present in agriculture, in domestic work, in construction, in transport, in mining and, increasingly, in the platform economy. It is no longer limited to low-income sectors of our countries; it has crept into high-income countries too, through misclassification, abusive contract subcontracting and undeclared work. In Africa, over 85 per cent of workers are in the informal economy. In Asia and the Pacific, that figure is at nearly 70 per cent. The figures remain shockingly high in many other parts of the world. Informality means a lack of rights; it means no social protection; and it means insecure livelihoods, unsafe conditions and exclusion from remedies. It weakens the foundations of decent work and undermines progress towards equality and development.

But amid these challenges, I am proud to say that this general discussion has produced an important and constructive outcome, which reflects the reality of informality and its diversity and complexity. We achieved broad recognition of the many workers affected, from migrant workers to rural and agricultural workers, domestic workers, home-based workers, care and support workers, street vendors, recycling workers and waste-pickers, construction workers and miners. These workers are too often invisible in policy. Today, they are seen and named.

We also achieved recognition of key drivers of informality, ranging from the failure to declare employment and make social security contributions, to the stigmatization and harassment that informal workers face in public spaces. We secured acknowledgement of the structural and legal barriers that keep workers informal, including a lack of adequate compliance and enforcement measures, a lack of care services, restrictive migration laws, a failure to recognize skills or qualifications, and persistent gender discrimination. We reaffirmed the central role of gender-responsive policy. Women remain explicitly listed among the groups most at risk, and the outcomes call for action to close gender gaps and expand protections. This is not just a matter of fairness, it is a matter of social and economic justice.

We achieved joint commitments to strengthen the climate resilience of workers in the informal economy and the importance of seeing formalization efforts go hand-in-hand with efforts to achieve a just transition. The shift to greener economies should bring opportunities for decent formalized jobs for all. Importantly, we recognized the need to address employment misclassification, a growing tactic used to deny rights to platform workers and others in non-standard forms of employment. The outcome calls for effective regulation to ensure that employment relationships are properly recognized and protected. It also reinforces the need for increased public funding and national strategies to create formal jobs with social protection. It supports international cooperation and solidarity, recognizing that formalization requires financing, capacity and time-bound national commitments.

Within this discussion, we achieved recognition of the fundamental enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining in order to provide strengthened representation and voice to workers in the informal economy, as well as to facilitate the transition to the formal economy. We must now work to strengthen the right of informal

workers to organize and their right to join trade unions and to be recognized and included as social partners in every step of the process to formality. Their voice – our voice – is essential. We know that formalization is possible. We have seen examples of progress when governments, employers and workers come together to develop inclusive policies backed by adequate resources and political will.

Let me be clear, this discussion must not stay on paper. We must now continue to work towards full formalization. Recommendation No. 204 remains our guiding principle, our guiding framework. Its principles must be put into practice through integrated approaches that promote labour rights, extend social protection and advance decent work for all. This text provides a strong framework for governments' actions to develop and fund ambitious and time-bound national strategies to achieve full formalization in close cooperation with the social partners. It also urges governments to expand universal social protection systems based on rights, solidarity and adequacy. We call for the implementation of a living wage in line with the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, held in February 2024, and for policies that guarantee decent working conditions, including occupational safety and health.

We have made progress – and I would like to thank, on behalf of my colleagues who work with me, the Government and Employers' delegates who helped us to get so far – but our work is far from done. Formalization is about recognizing the rights, dignity and contributions of the majority of workers in the world. We simply cannot build inclusive, sustainable and just economies on the back of informality; we cannot. Let this outcome be a turning point. Let us honour the mandate of this discussion with real action and move together towards a future of work that leaves no one behind.

Mr Dogoh

Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality (Original French)

It was a great honour for me to have been given the responsibility of chairing this important general discussion committee on innovative approaches to addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality at this 113th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to reiterate my thanks for the trust you have placed in me.

First of all, I would like to say that the work of our Committee was conducted in a constructive spirit on the basis of consultation, mutual respect and consensus, which is reflected in the quality of the conclusions that we reached after two weeks of intense reflection and sharing of our experience and knowledge on this issue.

Allow me to reiterate my very sincere thanks to the two Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee, Employers and Workers, as well as to all members of the Committee, for their frank collaboration and their willingness to listen and to achieve consensus, which greatly facilitated my work. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the Office teams for their extensive preparatory work and for their availability and expertise on this issue.

The importance of this discussion concerning a matter of major interest, and the expectations of the ILO tripartite constituents in this regard are clear. As indicated in the report prepared by the ILO for this general discussion, over 2 billion workers globally are in informal employment and the informal economy accounts for 8 out of 10 enterprises in the world. This reality of the world of work poses major challenges for the realization of workers' rights, the

improvement of their working conditions and the extension of social protection, particularly for independent workers. It also undermines the promotion of decent work, hinders productivity and negatively impacts the development of sustainable enterprises.

That is why the adoption of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), was an important step that changed the way that we address the transition of workers and economic units to the formal economy and how it is included in public policies and in the action plans of employers' and workers' organizations.

This general discussion allowed us to discuss the deep-rooted causes of informality, our respective experiences, good practices and innovative approaches, as well as the numerous challenges that are still awaiting us, but also, and above all, the priority actions to be implemented to accelerate the formalization of our economies, on the basis of social dialogue and the diversity of national contexts. In this respect, I would like to recall the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, which reaffirms our mandate for social justice and the importance of a human-centred approach to the future of work throughout the world.

The conclusions adopted by the General Discussion Committee constitute an excellent opportunity to be seized and should serve as a compass for our various States and allow them to implement, in the framework of tripartite consultation between Governments, Employers and Workers, operational and integrated action plans to accelerate the transition to the formal economy, with the support of the ILO and other technical partners.

These priority actions to be implemented, combining different drivers in terms of policies, improving the business environment and mobilizing financial resources and strategic partnerships, will without a doubt contribute to the promotion of more inclusive economic and social development that will not leave anyone behind.

In short, the joint road map that will be developed in consultation with the tripartite constituents, which is one of our Committee's powerful recommendations, should help to promote the transition to the formal economy and combat discrimination against workers and groups in vulnerable situations.

It is on this note of hope and commitment that I would like to end my statement, unreservedly recommending the adoption of our Committee's conclusions.

The President

I declare open the discussion of the outcome of the work of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality.

Ms Lisboa Loureiro

Government (Brazil), speaking on behalf of a group of countries

(Original Spanish)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Mexico, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Brazil. These were two weeks of intense debate in which Workers, Employers and Member States of the ILO were able to express and reaffirm the importance of making the transition from the informal to the formal economy, in line with the principles established in the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). Since then, despite some progress, new challenges have arisen or become greater, such as the effects of climate change and technological issues, which have exacerbated the vulnerability of groups such as young people, older people, migrants,

refugees, indigenous and tribal peoples, people with disabilities, domestic and care workers, homeworkers, street vendors, waste pickers, rural and agricultural workers, in particular women. In this regard, maintaining the use of the term “gender” in the text attested to the consensus that this is a widely recognized concept that is fundamental for addressing inequality and discrimination, as enshrined in various international instruments such as the ILO’s Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), which emphasize that measures to prevent violence and harassment must take into account gender-based violence, especially against women.

We consider it a matter of priority to recognize the care economy as a strategic sector for social inclusion, gender equality and economic justice. We therefore note with particular satisfaction the inclusion, in the conclusions, of the proposal put forward by the Workers strongly urging that public financing be extended to this sector, promoting decent work that gives access to decent livelihoods and fully formalized employment, as well as universal, comprehensive, sustainable, effective and adequate social protection. Social dialogue is an indispensable principle in the development of the necessary solutions, together with State measures which guarantee, for example, effective labour inspection. All of the approaches proposed and enshrined in the conclusions demonstrate commitment to the centrality of the human person in our decisions, without leaving anyone behind.

Ms Wysocka-Madej

Government (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland align themselves with this statement.

We would like to highlight and express our strong appreciation for the excellent steering work of the Committee’s Chairperson, Mr Franck Dogoh, Director-General for Employment at the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection of Côte d’Ivoire. His diplomacy, patience and time management skills were instrumental in the successful conclusion of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality.

Informality concerns 58 per cent of the global workforce and 80 per cent of enterprises. For most people, informality is not a choice, but the result of limited opportunities in the formal economy, low incomes and the absence of alternative livelihoods. It concerns us all. It presents a major challenge to the realization of workers’ rights, including social protection and working conditions. It hinders productivity and undermines sustainable enterprises, public revenues and governments’ scope of action. It is a complex, structural and evolving challenge that affects all regions.

In the European Union, informality is below the global average but persists in forms such as undeclared work, under-declared wages, revenue concealment, bogus self-employment and certain non-standard forms of work. These practices create gaps in labour and social protection and undermine the rule of law, public finances, fair competition and institutional capacity.

We remain fully committed to the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), which is a global reference for addressing informality through rights-based, inclusive and sustainable approaches rooted in social dialogue. We call for stronger multilateral cooperation with the ILO in a coordinating role aligned with the Global Coalition for Social Justice and initiatives like the United Nations Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Partnerships with international financial institutions and

development banks are crucial, and formalization should feature prominently in the post-2030 development agenda.

We reached consensus on balanced conclusions that will support the Office in preparing a road map to guide our efforts towards effective action to address informality in the years ahead. Equally important is the process we have gone through. We would like to thank the social partners – Employers and Workers – and our fellow Government colleagues for their constructive engagement. Our special thanks go to the Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Farooq Ahmed and Mr Anthony Baah. Our exchanges have helped enrich mutual understanding. We also express our warmest gratitude to the Office for its efficient support and guidance, and to the interpreters and translators for greatly facilitating our work. We look forward to continuing our joint efforts with all the tripartite constituents in effectively following up on the conclusions.

Mr Mosaase
Government (Lesotho)

I would like to give special thanks to the Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality for a job well done. And it would be wrong of me not to thank Kenya for representing the Africa group with distinction in the Committee.

Lesotho supports the adoption of the report of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality. The deliberations in the Committee have been meaningful and very helpful, and Lesotho will move forward in this regard and develop a policy framework that facilitates the transition in line with Article 20 of the Protocol on Employment and Labour of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). As an SADC Member State, Lesotho will fast-track the ratification of this Protocol, which aligns with our deliberations in the General Discussion Committee. With an uncompetitive private sector, skills mismatch and high levels of informality, unemployment and underemployment, this general discussion has come at a critical time for our country, with the recently released results of the 2024 Labour Force Survey confirming worrying levels of unemployment and informality that will be a ticking time bomb, if not urgently addressed. The most vulnerable, unfortunately, are women and young people.

We are determined that no one should be left behind, as we work on accelerating the implementation of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). The conclusions of the General Discussion Committee will further provide a good base for a comprehensive and inclusive policy that drives formalization. We urge fellow Member States to accelerate national, regional and international efforts towards formalization. The discussions on transitions have been broad and multifaceted, and align with the Report of the Director-General entitled *Jobs, rights and growth: Reinforcing the connection*. Therefore, efforts towards creating productive employment and ensuring the protection of the fundamental rights of workers and strategic interventions for economic growth will surely address informality, in the medium to long-term. There is an urgent need for action towards advancing decent work, social justice, and universal and comprehensive social protection for all. Let us all work hard, hand-in-hand with the social partners, to improve the world of work.

Ms Sánchez
Employer (Argentina)
(Original Spanish)

On 12 June 2015, the International Labour Conference adopted the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). The purpose of this

instrument was to address the structural and cross-cutting issue of informality in countries through the development in all of them, to a greater or lesser extent, of comprehensive policies and approaches to promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Ten years have passed since that adoption, and yet this issue, which is as relevant as ever, if not more so, is once again bringing together governments, workers and employers from around the world and taking centre stage at this Conference session. What happened during that decade? Everything happened, and it happened very quickly, at an unimaginable speed, making it difficult for us even to remember what our lives and jobs were like at that time. Wars, technological revolution, even a pandemic. However, levels of informality remain unacceptable, damaging and affecting people's lives and productivity.

It is clear that what has been done has not worked and that a change of approach is needed. There are no miracle cures, and solutions cannot come from a single sector. We cannot continue to fight this scourge by relying solely on diagnoses. That path leads nowhere. Nor can we persist with the measures implemented to date, as the current situation and statistics show that they have all failed.

Everything has been said. Now what is needed is an effective implementation phase with an innovative approach involving integrated policies and strategies. A call to action. Informality cannot be tackled through more regulations, rigid rules or a system of controls and sanctions against formal businesses, which seems to have the opposite effect. We must put an end to outdated thinking and stereotypes. We must be resilient. We need an environment conducive to growth, strong, productive and competitive companies, attractive formalization policies, simplified registration, incentives and differentiated policies for small and medium-sized enterprises, and conducive to the promotion of education, with a focus on the most vulnerable sectors. Only in this way can we embark on the path towards formality and achieve the goal we have all set ourselves: decent, productive and freely chosen employment.

Ms Shah
Worker (India)

I begin my speech with a heavy heart, to pray for the departed souls who were victims of a plane crash in my city, Ahmedabad, early this morning; I offer my prayers for them.

I take this opportunity today to congratulate each one of us present in the room for the efforts, commitment and solidarity demonstrated over the last two weeks to ensure that workers in the informal economy are given a voice and visibility and to ensure the validation of their work and contribution. The battle that Ela Bhatt, the founder of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), started five decades ago – of removing preset ideas and attitudes towards the workers of the informal economy – now seems to be moving forwards, as today we have finalized a resolution and conclusions on promoting the transition to formality.

The path-breaking Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), will now surely get some reinforcement. This will allow for the preparation of future programmes with a focus on the collection and dissemination of statistics concerning informal economy workers and facilitate evidence-based policymaking.

We are particularly happy that the text now acknowledges the gender inequalities that exist and the groups that are often excluded from formal social protection systems, who thus lack visibility and have increased vulnerability. We also congratulate our group, which has enabled a plan of action for gender-responsive and inclusive policies and regulations to ensure growth and decent work for women workers in the informal economy.

The climate change issue – which was not part of Recommendation No. 204 a decade ago – has today become a great concern for us all. The Committee recognized the near-permanent adverse impact of climate change on workers and decided to work on building the climate resilience of informal economy workers.

Last but not least, the conclusions also recognize the fact that the transition from the informal to the formal economy is a complex but gradual process that needs to address the demands of informal economy workers, and we need to bring about reforms in policies, laws and regulations that prevent formalization.

I would like to end my speech by asking each of us to continue to commit to recognizing the contribution of the workers of the informal economy, particularly women, and to working towards a progressive but balanced approach to the transition of workers and worker-led economic units towards formalization.

Mr Acosta
Government (Colombia)
(Original Spanish)

Might I begin by recognizing the rigorous work of the Office and thanking all delegations present here for their sustained commitment to social dialogue, the founding principle of this house and the cornerstone of a just, democratic and sustainable international political structure.

Colombia reaffirms its conviction that the formalization of employment cannot be understood simply as a technical operation or a statistical matter. It is, rather, a profoundly political and ethical decision. It is the commitment to a market that recognizes work not just as a commodity but as a human right.

The figures speak for themselves. Millions of people – especially young people, women and migrants – remain outside social protection, trapped in informal circuits which perpetuate inequality and exclusion. We are therefore delighted that the conclusions on social dialogue incorporate explicit references to gender discrimination and the disproportionate impact of informality on historically marginalized groups.

From our perspective, the focus on gender is non-negotiable. It is neither an ornament nor an idealistic aspiration, it is a tangible tool to correct asymmetries which can be seen in wages, labour conditions, access to services and participation in the market.

In the same way, we must underscore that health at work cannot continue to be the privilege of those who have formal contracts but must be a guarantee extended to any person who contributes their strength, knowledge or time to productive activity. Formalization must go hand in hand with firm commitment to universal access to occupational health, understood not only as medical attention but as a working environment that promotes prevention, safety and well-being. Making work dignified also means protecting life; no economy can sustain itself at the cost of exhaustion, exposure to hazards or the systematic denial of care.

At the same time, we support the social partners' call to focus consensus on the transition to formality and on constructing a rights-based market and to say that this will require the commitment of economic actors to build labour relations that promote the human dignity of all workers.

In this spirit, Colombia welcomes those delegations that have determinedly defended retaining gender-sensitive language throughout the discussions at this session of the

Conference. Together with fellow countries from the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries, such as Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay, we have maintained that the commitment of this session of the Conference to justice and equity is irreversible.

The social justice that we defend will not be possible if we do not acknowledge those who have systematically been made invisible. The transition to formality is also an act of memory, of dignity and of political will. We welcome the fact that the decisions of this house are equal to this responsibility.

Ms Brishoual
Worker (France)
(Original French)

At a time when informalization risks are gaining ground, including in the global North, one key message must continue to reverberate when this work is over: the transition to a truly formal economy, guaranteeing rights and health and safety at work, cannot take place without a resolute commitment from governments and enterprises, particularly multinationals. All too often, these multinationals set up in industrialized countries outsource their production to second-, third- or fourth-tier subcontractors operating in structural informality, where workers' fundamental rights are flouted, wages are derisory, and protection is virtually non-existent.

This hidden informality is often a strategic choice in the interests of economic competitiveness, but it also stokes poverty, perpetuates job insecurity and prevents any prospect of decent work. Multinationals must now be responsible throughout their value chain by fully exercising their duty of care. This means demanding that subsidiaries and suppliers operate within the law, guarantee freedom of association, uphold social rights and ensure decent pay.

Informality is not a choice freely made by workers. Unfortunately, it is often the result of institutional abandonment, a condition imposed in order to survive. As long as enterprises fail to offer formal jobs, nothing will change. It is high time that large enterprises stopped being vehicles of precarious employment and became a driving force for formalization in a more sustainable, fairer and climate-friendly economy.

This is why, to ensure the effective implementation of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), and the conclusions that will be voted on this year, we are calling for the introduction of legally binding due diligence mechanisms and the adoption of an international treaty on responsible business conduct, supported by the ILO. Because, yes, we do need a robust global framework to make rights effective everywhere, for everyone.

Ms Jiménez Paniagua
Worker (Dominican Republic)
(Original Spanish)

Might I at this point say that, although I come from the Dominican Republic, I am speaking on behalf of the workers of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas. We value the fact that in commemorating ten years of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference, this general discussion on approaches to addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work has taken place. As participants in the Committee, we view as a positive achievement the design of new strategies that allow us to move forward with better

and more results in labour formalization for the acquisition of workers' rights in order to achieve decent work for the large group of men and women working in the informal economy.

We also recognize the importance of Recommendation No. 204 as a crucial framework that has allowed us to generate an ongoing debate on the subject over the last ten years. We also value the systematization of national experiences on formalization that is being implemented in various countries worldwide. Even though they are on a small scale, they show us that progress can be made. Workers' unions are firmly committed to organizing the men and women who work in the informal economy so as to make the process of the transition to formal employment more feasible. We know it is not an easy task, but it is essential because these people are in the best position to change their daily lives, thanks to their collective dynamism, creativity and innovation.

Ms Sephomolo Employer (Lesotho)

After ten days of insightful and meaningful exchanges, we now move towards the adoption of the resolution containing our conclusions concerning the general discussion on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work. This issue transcends mere economics; it directly impacts human lives, dreams and aspirations and the dignity of countless individuals around the globe.

In my country, Lesotho, as in many others, informality remains significant and persistent. Too many talented workers and innovative economic units remain trapped in the shadows of an invisible economy, hindered by unjust and overly complex barriers. Their potential remains untapped, and their contributions to our societies are undervalued. We simply cannot afford to revisit this topic in another 10 or 20 years, only to discover that minimal progress has been made. We must seize this moment to act decisively and practically. Let us simplify regulations, improve access to essential resources and digital technologies, and invest substantially in education and training. Our aim should be to make formalization intuitive, attractive and equitable.

I sincerely hope that the effective implementation of this resolution, particularly through the road map, will deliver concrete and lasting improvements. It has been a privilege and honour to participate actively in this Committee and to contribute to such an important endeavour. Today presents us with an extraordinary opportunity to transform our commitments into tangible actions, building a fairer and more prosperous future for all.

I wish to thank the Employer Vice-Chairperson, who represented the Employers with vigour and integrity and passion, ensuring that every message reflects the values that they hold dear. I also thank the Chairperson for his leadership, not only in strengthening our collective efforts, but also in empowering each of us to strive for greater success. We thank the Worker Vice-Chairperson and his constituency; we appreciate every contribution and look forward to continuing this journey with them for a brighter future. Allow me also to thank the International Organisation of Employers, as the secretariat of the Employers' group, and the Governments, which we commend for their unwavering commitment and constructive engagement. Advocating vigorously and collaboratively for our perspectives to achieve viable and lasting solutions remains the cornerstone of effective tripartism. Let us continue to advance together with resolve and optimism.

Mr Marjit
Employer (India)

It was a pleasure for me to contribute to the work of the Conference. It has been a moment to cherish for me. This is the first session I have attended and I will always remember this moment.

We had discussions on innovative approaches to informality. The exchanges were rich, constructive and helped broaden perspectives through genuine tripartite dialogue. The spirit of collaboration has advanced a more coherent global approach. Informality persists due to limited access to formal employment, institutional and regulatory constraints, democratic pressures, demographic pressures, rapid urbanization and recurrent economic shocks. Many workers and economic units remain in informality out of necessity, lacking viable formal alternatives.

Promoting the transition to formality requires action on several fronts. This includes harnessing digital technologies to simplify registration and service delivery, fostering cross-sector partnerships and embedding formalization strategies within broader sustainable development agendas. It is essential to ensure these efforts are inclusive, especially for women and young people.

Our Committee placed particular emphasis on three strategic imperatives. In respect of the first, strengthening government and institutional capability, we focused on the key priority of building the ability of public institutions to design, implement and monitor effective formalization policies. In respect of the second, fostering knowledge sharing and cooperation, we focused on how exchanging experiences and practical solutions among constituencies can accelerate learning and support more responsive policymaking. In respect of the third, advancing collaborative digital solutions and data systems, we focused on strengthening digital skills, tools and data systems and enhancing the understanding of informality, to inform targeted action. Here I would like to mention that, in India, there has been a major focus on digitization through great initiatives like the e-Shram and Education to Employability portals.

In closing, I am confident that the effective implementation of these new recommendations will support productive growth, which is essential if we are to address the structural roots of informality. I thank the Conference, in particular the Committee, our Vice-Chairpersons and the Chairperson for this opportunity, and I cannot thank the International Organisation of Employers and the ILO enough for this wonderful process, which we should continue.

**Resolution and conclusions concerning the general discussion on
addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for
decent work**

The President

We will now proceed with the adoption of the proposed resolution concerning the general discussion on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work, which contains the Committee's conclusions, the text of which has been published in Record of Proceedings No. 7A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts, as a whole, the proposed resolution and the conclusions contained therein?

(The resolution and conclusions are adopted.)

I would like to thank all the members of the Committee, and the members of the Secretariat working behind the scenes, for their commitment and dedication. Congratulations to them all for these excellent results. That brings us to the end of our proceedings this evening. I thank all participants for their contributions and declare the sitting closed.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)