



Thirteenth sitting

Tuesday, 16 June 2009, 9.00 a.m.

President: Mr Zellhoefer

ILO SUMMIT ON THE GLOBAL JOBS CRISIS (CONT.)

The PRESIDENT

Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege to call the 13th sitting of the 98th Session of the International Labour Conference to order.

Today, we are to proceed with the programme of the ILO Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis. The first item on our agenda is the panel discussion on “Co-ordination, development cooperation and the global jobs crisis”.

(The record of the panel discussion on “Co-ordination, development cooperation and the global jobs crisis” is contained in Provisional Record 11B.)

I now call on Mr Simerka, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, to come up to the podium to address the Conference.

Mr SIMERKA (*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic*)

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to speak to you here at the International Labour Conference.

As you know, the Czech Republic currently holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the topic that we are discussing here today, the consequences of the global economic crisis, the Czech presidency has also put at the forefront of the EU agenda during these past six months.

I have had the privilege to experience both sides of the social dialogue, as a former trade unionist and now as a minister, so I can better relate to issues that you, the ambassadors for millions of workers from all over the world, have to deal with every day.

It has been said many times that the crisis is global and hits millions of people around the world. The EU is no exception. Our labour markets continue to deteriorate and the unemployment rate may reach 10 per cent or more. Overall business and consumer confidence remain low, and expectations concerning employment prospects continue to be negative. Everyone is hit.

According to the latest EU Commission report, more men have lost their jobs than women, especially in the construction sector and the car industry. The crisis has the heaviest impact on the most vulnerable groups, such as young people, the elderly, families with young children, and the disabled, and it is our duty as government leaders, of course in cooperation with the social partners, to limit the negative consequences as much as possible.

Of course the crisis will end one day, hopefully sooner rather than later, and our current responsibility is to support the creation of jobs that we can offer to the unemployed. Job numbers are shrinking across several sectors but we must persuade people that losing a job is not the end of the world. If we increase the employability of our workforce, public employment service in our countries will have an easier time in finding them new job opportunities.

I wish to underline that up-skilling and requalification might increase the chances of creating new jobs in the future. The crisis is the time for tripartite and social dialogue, more cooperation between social partners, and decent work to go hand in hand. Workers should not raise unrealistic expectations. Employers should accept their responsibility for their employees. Government is here to help whenever possible, first of all through legislation and as a guarantor of the rule of law.

The recent Employment Summit, held in Prague in May this year, proposed several concrete actions to tackle rising unemployment. Let me mention just a few of them as a possible source of inspiration. First, action should aim at maintaining as many people as possible in jobs, for example by temporary adjustment of working hours in combination with retraining. Further efforts are needed to create a friendly environment for entrepreneurship to stimulate job creation, for example by lowering non-wage labour costs, investing in research and infrastructure, and reducing administrative burdens, especially as inspiration could be found in the EU common principles of flexicurity.

Special attention should be given to small and medium-sized enterprises. The efficiency of national employment services should be improved earlier, then effective active labour market measures should be tailored to individual needs, focusing especially on avoiding long-term unemployment and social exclusion.

More focus should be given to an increased labour supply by promoting more inclusive labour markets and increasing access to employment. Full labour mobility will improve matching on the labour market and enable people to fully use their potential, allow the free movement of workers to contribute to economic growth without a negative impact on labour markets and enhance the social cohesion of destination countries.

Our effort in the EU is aimed at designing active labour market policies in line with the concept of flexicurity, on the basis of four components: first, effective labour market policy; second, flexible and reliable contractual agreements or arrangements;

third, comprehensive lifelong-learning strategies; and fourth, modern and adequate social protection systems.

In the Czech Republic we have introduced two successful government programmes to keep people in jobs while increasing their skills. Both programmes are supported by the European Social Fund and offer companies opportunities to train people instead of firing them. The programmes cover the costs of the retraining, as well as of the salaries of employees participating in such training. The response of our employees was positive and I recently allocated more resources to both programmes. We can all agree that it is better when people work for their living and are not dependent on the social protection system.

We remain firmly convinced that social protection must prevent social exclusion and should motivate people to rejoin the labour market as soon as possible in order to escape long-term unemployment. Each measure should balance income security and social protection schemes with the stability and sustainability of public finances.

Governments all over the world have spent an incredible amount of money and now is the time to focus on efficiency and results.

We all understand that actions and measures are needed, and we cannot saddle our children with debts which they will not be able to repay.

Of course there is no "one size fits all" solution. But what I have been talking about here today is a set of policy measures which we are promoting in the European Union, and countries can adopt them according to their national situation and needs.

The ILO can play an important role in monitoring and analyzing the impact of the crisis on employment. In many countries in the world, social dialogue and tripartite negotiations are still in their infancy and technical assistance from the ILO could be very important.

I would like to draw your attention to the ILO publication *Social dialogue in times of crisis*, which came out in May. There are still countries where workers cannot freely join trade unions and where trade union leaders are targeted by undemocratic, repressive regimes.

Twenty years ago almost to the day, our Polish friends successfully completed their fight against the communist regime and, with the ILO's voice of support, the independent Solidarity trade union was able to win the first free election in the Eastern bloc and start the democratic changes in Eastern and Central Europe.

I wish you a productive and fruitful Conference and, to all of us, a fast recovery from the crisis.

The PRESIDENT

I should like to inform the Conference that we are now ready to receive the visit of His Excellency, Mr Tertius Zongo, Prime Minister of Burkina Faso.

Welcome, Your Excellency, to the 98th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Somavia, to introduce the Prime Minister.

Original French: THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Prime Minister, it is a pleasure for us to have you here at the Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis, at which you represent a friend of the ILO, His Excel-

lency, Mr Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso.

We recognize and pay tribute to your extensive academic, diplomatic and political experience. You are the author of a number of books on economic affairs. You have been Burkina Faso's Ambassador in Washington and you have also served as Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs.

With you here today I would also like to recall, with respect and gratitude, the political leadership provided by His Excellency, Mr Blaise Compaoré, who facilitated the holding of the African Union Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, in Ouagadougou in September 2004.

The Ouagadougou Summit was a milestone event at which the Decent Work Agenda was adopted as a development agenda at the highest political level.

Africa already had the vision to say, "listen, if you really want to help us, focus on decent work. That is what we need". This was the approach that, after this meeting, was taken up in all the other regions of the world.

Today, to face the crisis, Prime Minister, you suggest that "we rethink the system of governance and regulation of the global economy, the element that is absolutely crucial to the future, and develop greater synergy and solidarity in our actions, in particular towards the weaker economies". Those are your words.

As you are well aware, that is the objective of the Global Jobs Pact. Its objective is also to be able to take place throughout the world, representing the specific interests of different regions and different countries.

Prime Minister, your address will give us a better understanding of the issues in all this for your country and your continent, and allow us to develop new approaches for confronting this crisis, which is affecting all of us.

Thank you very much for being here with us today.

Original French: Mr ZONGO (Prime Minister, Burkina Faso)

I would like to preface my remarks by saying that the kind introduction by the Director-General of the ILO makes us feel at home and shows his great knowledge of our country, people and leaders.

His Excellency, Mr Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso, has entrusted me with the pleasant task of addressing your assembly on his behalf, and on behalf of the Government of Burkina Faso and its people, and of extending our warmest greetings to the International Labour Organization which is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, and to all member States represented.

The ILO remains the only international organization with a universal mission to have weathered the storms of the Second World War and the major economic crises of our times; and this serves to remind us that work is a vital constant for mankind and essential for human development. We must therefore reaffirm our commitment to the original values and major objectives which lay behind the establishment of our Organization in 1919.

I would also like to congratulate the President and Officers of the Conference upon their election and ensure them that our delegation will work alongside them so that the outcome of our work is crowned with success.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to reiterate the congratulations of our President, Mr Blaise Compaoré, to the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, for his re-election in November of last year. He has demonstrated great leadership skills at the head of our Organization, and has honoured his commitment, supported by the ILO tripartite constituents, to take up the challenges we face as a result of the crisis and to guarantee social justice throughout the world.

Burkina Faso welcomes the inclusion on the agenda of the Conference of a high-level panel on "Managing the national jobs agenda in times of crisis".

This is, of course, a very serious recession, the worst we have experienced since 1930. It has already led to all sorts of fundamental upheavals and changes in our view of the workings of the global capitalist system.

However, there were many warnings and calls for increased solidarity and a fairer world governance, but they fell on deaf ears – until the dramatic hunger riots in 2008.

We consider the message of the leaders of the G20, who met on 2 April 2009 in London, to be a sign of renewed wisdom – or at least an invitation to make a fresh start. And my country would like to take up that invitation because it is vital to review the legitimacy of the current model of globalization.

However, the real demands of my country – and undoubtedly those of other developing nations, particularly African countries – to the world economic powers are that they fulfil the commitments they have already made: to speed up funding, increase concessional resources, improve conditionalities for funding and introduce greater flexibility with regard to debt.

The gravity and extent of the crisis are restricting growth, limiting exports and undermining efforts in Africa to achieve harmonious development. According to estimates from the international financial institutions, Africa, in order to maintain its pre-crisis growth, needs around US\$50 billion in extra resources in 2009 and US\$56 billion in 2010.

In order to accelerate growth and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Africa will need an additional US\$117,000 billion in 2009 and US\$130,000 billion in 2010.

Furthermore, in order to tackle the effects of the crisis, and despite all sorts of constraints, African governments are turning to innovative techniques and strategies to enhance growth and ensure that the results of these strategies are reflected in the consumer's shopping basket.

As my country has been invited to give its views on the current situation, I should like to share with you the way Burkina Faso is tackling this crisis.

Like other countries on the African continent, Burkina Faso is experiencing repercussions from the crisis, often referred to in terms of the "cost of living". The most visible has been a drop in the growth rate, which has fallen to 3 per cent – instead of the predicted 6 per cent, based on the performance of 2008 when it was 5 per cent.

Second, there has been a worsening in the balance of payments, due to declining cotton prices and a falling off of remittances sent home by migrant workers.

Third, we have experienced a credit crunch as a result of the drying up of liquidity and flows, both in the banking system and the regional financial

markets, to which our national treasuries have had increasing recourse. They have been issuing bond floats or treasury bonds, at the risk of increasing the cost of these transactions. This will certainly be detrimental to economic and financial activity and doubtless affect our national private sector.

Fourth, there has been a falling off in public revenue and enhanced public social demand to palliate the effects of the crisis.

Fifth, there has been a decline in public development aid; and, sixth, vulnerable groups such as women and children have been the most affected by the worsening economic situation.

Burkina Faso has courageously taken a number of initiatives in order to find innovative solutions, liable to mitigate the effects of the crisis for all sectors of society, especially the poorest.

Together with our development partners, we have made considerable efforts and carried out drastic reforms in order to maintain our macroeconomic performance.

With a view to consolidating our assets and coping with the repercussions of the international crisis, I believe we should adopt a proactive stance and remain alert in order to spot any problems that might occur in economic and social sectors ahead of time, so that we can find lasting and sustainable solutions to these difficulties.

We are therefore introducing a monitoring, alert and follow-up system, which will follow economic and financial developments at both national and international levels, in order to anticipate the measures that need to be taken to protect growth and development.

In order to reverse current trends and improve the living conditions of our people and their families in a tangible fashion, it is essential to have innovative policies that will allow for the creation of productive and decent jobs. Consequently, in order to preserve employment, our country has opted for the restructuring of some struggling enterprises. The State is therefore envisaging the introduction of a restructuring programme by establishing a national fund for the restructuring of undertakings in difficulty, in order to ensure their long-term viability. Apart from making these enterprises less vulnerable to external shocks, this fund will help create or consolidate 6,000–8,000 jobs.

There have been many initiatives to help youth employment and establish direct dialogue between the social partners, on the one hand, and the most vulnerable sectors of society, i.e. women and children, on the other. The Government has succeeded in achieving substantial results and alleviating the worst effects of the crisis in our society.

For example, training programmes enable us to train 10,000 young people each year throughout the country, with particular focus on areas in which there is a high employment demand.

The fund to promote youth employment, which provides basic financial support and technical follow-up, without demanding security or guarantees, has allowed the training of 5,000 young people and implemented 614 job-creation projects.

Furthermore, with regard to social security and protection, the major change has been the implementation, in the short term, of a national health insurance system, which will cover all the working population.

Given the extent of welfare demand, these various programmes will be stepped up and completed by a

coherent social security network. In order to create the conditions necessary to give a boost to the economy and create decent jobs, we shall have to use our imagination in finding ways of accessing external funding to tackle the effects of the crisis. As far as the international financial community is concerned, we expect from them an improved scheduling of assistance to facilitate planning and the implementation of development programmes.

From the legal standpoint, I am pleased to inform you that our Parliament in Burkina Faso has authorized the Government to ratify the following ILO Conventions: the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142); the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183); the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184); and the Constitutional Amendment of 1997. Ratifying these international instruments at this precise moment in time demonstrates the political will of Burkina Faso not to use the crisis as a pretext to call into question the fundamental rights of workers. On the contrary, it wants to take the opportunity of this crisis to strengthen social protection and the protection of employment and vocational training.

This Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis is giving my country, once again, the opportunity to reaffirm its belief in the need to promote and consolidate the Decent Work Agenda, as well as in the relevance of the conclusions of the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, which was held in Ouagadougou in 2004.

Burkina Faso would also like to reassert its willingness to welcome – together with the ILO Regional Office for Africa, to whom I would like to pay tribute for its efficiency and availability – an African assembly on the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact which will be approved. The date of the meeting in Africa has yet to be determined.

Burkina Faso is very pleased to note the relevance of the items on the agenda for that assembly, which will certainly make their mark. It therefore supports

the proposal of the Director-General of the ILO to adopt a Global Jobs Pact, which places employment and social protection at the very heart of measures to give a fresh boost to the economy and bring us out of the crisis – for, if it is not resolved, we shall find ourselves facing a major social crisis.

The measures spelt out in the Pact can contribute towards reversing the recession and putting the economy back on the road to recovery; however, a true solution to the crisis involves structural reforms to the world economy, supported by the principles of shared world governance and a more democratic leadership within the international institutions.

Burkina Faso is expecting, as the outcome of the Summit, a further commitment from the international community to lay the foundations, once and for all, for a world economy which is lasting and fair and based on combating poverty. We hope that innovative and consensual solutions will be found and that firm action will be taken to stimulate and relaunch economic growth. We need to change, to find fresh alternatives, to promote a green economy which, tomorrow, will provide us with sustainable growth and active solidarity.

We eagerly await the contributions from the participants at this Conference, so that we might adopt and implement the Global Jobs Pact – an instrument in which we place our hopes that it might promote a fairer globalization and guarantee decent work for us all.

Burkina Faso, speaking through me, welcomes the relevant conclusions that have emerged from the work of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses and calls for their adoption.

On this note of hope, I wish you every success in your work.

The PRESIDENT

Many thanks, your Excellency, for sharing your profound insights and perspectives on the Global Jobs Crisis with our constituents. We are honoured by your presence here at this critical session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 1 p.m.)

Fourteenth sitting

Tuesday, 16 June 2009, 2.30 p.m.

*Presidents: Mr Zellhoefer, Mr Hossain,
Mr Allam and Mr Palma Caicedo*

ILO SUMMIT ON THE GLOBAL JOBS CRISIS (CONT.)

The PRESIDENT (Mr ZELLHOEFER)

The 14th sitting of the International Labour Conference is called to order. We shall now continue with the fourth sitting of the Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis.

Mr SWEENEY (*Worker, United States*)

Although the Director-General is not here, I want to salute him for convening this important Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis.

I want to also recognize and thank our own Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, for so quickly engaging, understanding and acting on the critical issues facing working families in our own country as well as around the world.

We are living in truly extraordinary times – times of enormous danger, but also of great hope. On the one hand, we are faced by the most serious financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. Workers worldwide are losing their jobs, their incomes, their homes, their savings and retirement. On the other hand, with the election of President Obama in the United States – and the new possibilities for greater global cooperation – together we may be able to chart a new course for the global economy, one that is stronger, more balanced and more sustainable, both socially and environmentally.

There can, however, be no return to “business as usual”. Five years ago, I had the honour of serving on the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The Commission recognized the enormous and dangerous imbalances in the global economy, and made a set of strong recommendations to help build a fairer and more sustainable global economy for the future.

Implementing many of those recommendations – and aggressively dealing with the immediate and critical reality of growing worldwide unemployment – will now be a test of our political will and our ability to persuade governments to cooperate in reforming the structures of global governance and addressing the underlying global imbalances that have brought the global economy to its knees.

What will it take to build a sustainable economic recovery? In the United States, the Employee Free Choice Act is a legislation that can restore America’s middle class and create an economy with shared prosperity.

America achieved the largest middle class in the world when our country respected workers’ fundamental human rights to represent themselves and bargain for better wages and benefits.

Through bargaining, workers transformed poor, dead-end jobs into living wage jobs with healthcare coverage, retirement security and opportunities for training and upgrading. We have learned important lessons about what has worked for working families and what has not.

In the months ahead, we can begin to shape a new political and economic course for our countries and the global economy.

But today, at this Conference, we must focus specifically on the ILO and its important contribution to speeding up an economic recovery. Furthermore, we must take the immediate responsibility to deal with emergency measures to protect the jobs of those who are still working, to expand employment programmes for the most vulnerable, and to deal with emergency measures for those now thrown into unemployment.

The Director-General has prepared an excellent analysis of the crisis and laid out an ambitious and far-reaching Global Jobs Pact for our discussion. The recommendations and contributions made by the ILO will be critical to inform the work of the G20 meeting this fall.

The Director-General’s partial report in the G20 meeting and his own participation in the G20 meeting, which will be held in Pittsburgh in the United States, are so important. But, it will also underscore the importance of a coordinated global commitment to creating proper jobs for all the unemployed and addressing the recovery of the real economy.

G20 leaders will then indicate their support of the recommendations, such as protecting workers’ rights, including migrant workers, promoting international labour standards, particularly collective bargaining to address wage deflation; creating job-intensive investment in infrastructure and green jobs; extending social protection and supporting pension systems; restructuring companies with workers’ participation; and recognizing the role of the ILO in the global economic system.

With the assistance and the support of each of us – the tripartite constituents of the ILO – we will need to rise to this historic occasion, one where the ILO can make a real difference in the lives of people around the world.

When governments call on the ILO to provide its analysis and recommendations as they did at the London G20 Summit, the ILO must be able to move quickly and effectively.

The ILO should immediately begin to prepare a substantive body of analysis and recommendations to Member governments and institutions on maximizing decent work for delivery at the G20 meeting this September.

We can each assist the Director-General in driving the creation of decent work as the objective and the outcome of global policy coherence among all governments and international institutions.

To change direction and chart a new course for the global economy, we must begin anew.

Mr DONNER (*Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands*)

The theme of work and security would seem to be a paradoxical one to be discussing in the midst of one of the worst financial and economic crises we will probably experience in our lifetimes.

Every day thousands of jobs are being lost worldwide and people are feeling increasingly insecure. Governments are trying to stem the rising tide of mass unemployment, but so far we are still groping around for a satisfactory answer, and yet the ILO puts work and security on the agenda. It is a courageous decision and one to be commended, because even if the outcome of the crisis is still unpredictable, we will only get through it and emerge from it stronger than before if we remain true to the ultimate aim of decent work and security for all.

The crisis has its origins in international markets. It affects us all and the solution will likewise have to be a coordinated effort. Together we stand, divided we fall.

No country will be able to get out of this global crisis purely under its own steam. Though most of us do not know for sure what measures will get us out of the crisis, we have a fair idea of what measures are likely to keep us in it for longer. Protectionism, beggar-your-neighbour policies and a race to the bottom in the area of social security. Those are the painful lessons learnt in the 1930s.

The restoration of growth and trust and the protection of open markets are therefore the three pillars for a return to growth. Return to growth is a necessary precondition for the recovery of work and security. These are essential conditions but they are not sufficient alone. Our economies are suffering a severe setback in their development as a result of the present crisis. And this could lead to a prolonged period of stagnation and high unemployment if we do not succeed in stimulating recovery that favours employment over financial and capital expansion.

Like most European countries, the Netherlands has implemented measures that allow enterprises to preserve employment despite the severe loss of business. Experience has shown that it is better for people to be employed part time than unemployed full time.

The focus of our effort nonetheless remains directed at preserving economic activities and creating new jobs by providing investment and tax relief. We have set up a nationwide network of mobility centres involving the cooperation of public and private employment services. They provide new job opportunities, retraining and career change support

and thus enable people to move to new jobs even before they become unemployed.

Over the past six months, they have succeeded in helping to find new work in almost half of the cases in which there was a threat of redundancy. To ensure employment and social security in the longer term, it is imperative to restore economic growth. In doing so, we must adhere to the Decent Work Agenda, even in times of crisis, or, rather, precisely because of it. Implementation of the Decent Work Agenda is the ILO's answer to the problem of establishing lasting employment and social protection. It has been said that, paradoxically, only in growth, reform and change is true security to be found.

Indeed, reforms to improve social security systems, both in terms of offering adequate security and better protection and stimulating labour market transitions, are key to ensuring that we emerge stronger from this crisis. The alternatives to continuing reform and growth are just too bad to contemplate: stagnation, growing poverty, social unrest and political instability. But reform is not just about changing the system. It is also about changing people.

Geneva is commemorating this year the 500th birthday of the great church reformer, John Calvin, who taught people that personal responsibility and individual ethics are, in the end, more important than the system we live in. This is the great lesson we have to apply to social reform in our time.

(Mr Hossain takes the Chair.)

The PRESIDENT

I would like to welcome His Excellency, Mr Bruce Golding, Prime Minister of Jamaica, to this 98th Session of the International Labour Conference, and to express gratitude on behalf of my fellow Officers and on behalf of the Conference itself for his acceptance of the Director-General's invitation to address us. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Juan Somavia, to introduce our distinguished guest.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Prime Minister, it is an honour and a pleasure to welcome you to this Summit. Jamaica, a small island State open and vulnerable in many ways, is hard hit by the latest storm. But, undaunted, you are responding with spirited independence and confidence, so characteristic of your people and of your region, and you bring an important experience to this gathering.

Yours is a vision of a peaceful, prosperous and just society where not everyone will be rich, but where perhaps no one would have to be poor. One of your island's most famous sons captured the danger of persistent and deep inequality with his well known lyrics, "Them, belly full, but we hungry; a hungry mob is an angry mob". This could be applied to many societies throughout the world. And you, mindful of the crisis that predated the financial meltdown, have drawn conclusions and identified the transformations required and the action needed to respond to the urgency of today, as well as the imperative of sustainable development for tomorrow. You made this point with a lot of vigour today in our conversations. You are seeking to build a culture of dialogue in policy-making, a social partnership, engaging the private sector trade

unions, but also the opposition, in moments of great need.

Prime Minister, for this year's celebration around Labour Day, you urge fellow Jamaicans "to catch the vibes". I had to find out that this meant to get into the spirit of sharing and expressing solidarity, before I quoted you. I think it is a powerful message for the present times. Your journey here expresses your connection with the message of the Summit; that the future we want must be built on the dignity of decent work and that is the objective for the Global Jobs Pact.

Prime Minister, we are certain we can count on you to spread this message so that businesses, ministries, regional and international institutions, in fact all catch the vibes, and pool their efforts for jobs, for justice, for a Decent Work Agenda and, particularly, join together in addressing this crisis for the benefit of countries, but also in our case, for the benefit of our tripartite constituency. So Sir, thank you so much for being here and thank you for your leadership. We are extremely honoured to receive you at the International Labour Conference.

Mr GOLDING (*Prime Minister, Jamaica*)

You have done me and my country a great honour by inviting me to address this important world body.

I am mindful of the ILO's long and illustrious history, emerging as it did in the aftermath of the First World War.

I am mindful of its uniqueness, bringing together governments, capital and labour, the three most critical stakeholders in determining the shape and condition of our world.

I am mindful of the significant achievements you have made in establishing and monitoring standards and good employment practices, and in promoting enabling legislation to secure those gains.

Above all, I am mindful that the vista of the ILO goes far beyond mere labour market practices, recognizing as it does that employment is just one facet, albeit a vital one, of the condition of humankind. The ILO has embraced a broader range of issues having to do with equality, democracy, human rights, environment and the quality of life in that environment, and the pursuit of social justice.

The ILO was founded in the realization that lasting peace and security are best attained and guaranteed through building prosperity that is shared equitably. The world will never advance to the extent that it can, poverty and hunger will never be eradicated and peace and stability will never be sustained if the creation of wealth is pursued at the expense of social justice.

Despite your outstanding achievements over the 90 years of your existence, there is much work to be done. The philosophy that defines what you do, the symmetricalization of minimum, acceptable working standards throughout the global market, has still not been embraced in some parts of the world, and even where it has been formally accepted, it has not always been enforced with the rigour and purpose that are required.

Many age-old problems that you have wrestled with remain unresolved. In an ever-changing world, old paradigms must give way to new realities. New challenges have emerged that must be confronted with urgency.

You have faced many tough challenges before. The Great Depression of the late 1920s drove many

economies over the precipice and created untold hardship for working people throughout the world. The ILO provided leadership in helping to rebuild and in enhancing the rights and the role of workers in that rebuilding process.

The ideological and hegemonic conflicts that led to the Second World War and the devastation that it wrought also posed huge challenges to which you had to respond. Not only did it reconfigure the political landscape of the world, but it ushered in a new era of global economic management. Your role in creating the institutional arrangements to secure harmony and mutual respect among the functionaries in the production of goods and services was celebrated in the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.

You have had to contend with the turbulence of the Cold War, the tightrope that you had to walk and the dislocating impact you experienced in the late 1970s. You survived all that. Your mission was preserved.

You are, once again, faced with a challenge no less formidable and no less demanding than any you have faced before. The global economic crisis has brought even robust, thriving economies and corporate giants to their knees, and has placed millions of workers on the scrap heap of despair. Countries once held up as templates of rapid economic development, are now on the slippery slope of economic demise. The impact of the global crisis on struggling economies and already impoverished people is even more severe.

You, Mr Director-General, have warned that unemployment could rise by almost 60 million. The Millennium Development Goals, with a target date of 2015, appear to be fading hopes, still to be pursued but not likely to be attained. Worse yet, the gains of the last two decades are in danger of being reversed, commanding us to start all over again.

You have warned of the social recession that is likely to persist even after the economic recession is declared to have passed, and you have warned, as well, of the political crises and instability to which it could give rise. Your perceptiveness is apropos. I support your call for a Global Jobs Pact. Job creation is not an outcome of economic recovery. It is essential to economic recovery. It is the only sustainable way of stimulating the demand for goods and services without which investments will not take place, factories and businesses cannot be revived, and the decline in trade will not be reversed.

This both provides the path to recovery and, at the same time, explains the cause of the crisis. For too long, unregulated financial markets have been engrossed in creating artificial wealth, unsupported by real output or real jobs. The phenomenon of "job-less growth" is not merely a factor of improved technology. For too long, the global economy has relied on demand fuelled by credit rather than earnings from productive activity. Financial instruments and derivatives have been created, packaged alluringly and sold as assets having nothing to do with making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, or creating a job for a person who had never been employed before. At some point, the bubble had to burst. We have come to that point, that bubble has burst!

What is to be done next? And who is to do it?

We may have wandered into this situation, we cannot expect to wander our way out of it.

The severity and complexity of the current crisis can be measured by the fact that few analysts, no matter how eminent, seem to be able to agree on how long it will last or how to fix it.

The crisis originated in the banking sector and then spread like a pandemic throughout the real sector. Unlike other financial crises we have seen before, this one is not consigned to particular sectors, markets or regions. It is worldwide. Over the last 30 years, the world had created an interlinked, intertwined and interdependent global financial system. Money circles the globe through interconnected capital markets almost at the speed of light. A housewife who puts her savings in a bank in Bangladesh or Romania or Peru or Jamaica is totally unaware that her money may be invested in a European bond market or on the US stock market or in a subprime mortgage portfolio before she gets back home and, because of this interconnectedness, the toxicity that erupted in the United States has spread right across the globe. Experience has shown that economic recessions associated with a banking crisis are long and recovery is slow. The recovery curve is usually the shape of “U” not a “V”. Indications are that in this case it is more likely to be the shape of a “W”, with a base that is rounded and broad, not narrow and sharp. Initial signs of recovery have more to do with the depleting of inventories that require replenishment than with a restoration of demand.

If the banking system is to be fixed before the real economy can be fixed, who is to bear the losses that have been quantified but have not yet been put to bed?

Losses in terms of asset values are estimated at more than US\$50 trillion – more than three-quarters of the gross domestic product of the entire world. That is not money belonging only to corporate conglomerates. It includes money that represents the savings, investments and pension funds of millions, indeed billions, of people, including ordinary working people throughout the world who are now US\$50 trillion poorer, many of them completely wiped out.

If asset holders are to bear these losses, it will be a long time before confidence returns: for banks to resume lending, for investors to start investing again, and for consumers to be able to start spending again – all of which are critical preconditions for economic recovery.

But, if governments are to absorb these losses, the impact on fiscal deficits and debt burden will militate against economic recovery and growth, not to mention the political hazards to be encountered if taxpayers are called upon to bear the consequences of a crisis they did not cause. It is a moral hazard. It is a policy-maker's nightmare.

Our focus cannot be just on weathering the storm, on riding out the crisis. Nor should we hope for a return to the “good old days” of the pre-crisis era. The mistakes that those “good old days” allowed to happen must not be allowed to happen again.

The leaders of the world have already acknowledged that the global financial system needs to be overhauled. The widely held view of the last quarter of a century, that markets are best left to regulate themselves, has been discredited, but there is no consensus as to what should replace it.

The Bretton Woods institutions, established in the wake of an earlier global crisis, may have been appropriate to that time and circumstance. They

proved incapable of averting or even anticipating the current crisis and in their current modalities they are unlikely to be able to get us out of it.

The role of the IMF, as the sentinel of the world's financial practices, has been usurped by rating agencies whose assessment of some market instruments itself contributed to the financial meltdown.

World Bank lending has not kept pace with the demand for development financing, with the result that countries have turned increasingly to the commercial markets, where short-term deposits are aligned to long-term lending through variable rate instruments.

The recent decision by the G20, to provide US\$1 trillion in emergency funding through multilateral institutions, will allow some quick transfusion to developing and emerging economies whose finances are haemorrhaging, and is to be commended. I suggest, however, that what is needed is much broader than access to loans. For many countries, it is painful to have to borrow, so heavily indebted as they already are.

We do not need a long, drawn-out diagnostic exercise. That has already been done. It is these diagnostics that informed the identification of the Millennium Development Goals. What is missing, as we find so often, is the will to provide the policies and resources that support the achievement of these goals.

The developed countries had undertaken to commit 0.7 per cent of their GDP to official development assistance. Most of them are still far from that target. Developing countries had undertaken to integrate these Millennium Development Goals in their national priorities and fiscal expenditure. Many of them have failed to do so.

Even if all of these commitments had been honoured, it is unlikely that the MDGs would have been achieved on a sustainable basis because the underlying structural deficiencies and capacity issues would not adequately have been addressed.

The current and long-term effects of the global crisis have left many countries facing not only the certainty of failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, but the stark prospect of seeing the complete reversal of the marginal gains that they have made in reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of their people. Countries that instituted much-needed reforms at huge costs are being deprived of the rewards that those reforms were intended to bring.

It is my respectful view that we need a fundamentally different approach. It is an approach that is rooted in a basic truth that we so often ignore – that the world we share is much more than the air we breathe or the stars we see at night or the sun around which we rotate. Technology and globalization have turned the vast ocean that separates us into small ponds, distant markets into stalls within the same bazaar and trade the means of communicating with people who are unaccustomed to communicating with each other.

The response to the global crisis must approximate this new conjoined but heterogeneous landscape.

I therefore support the recommendation, emanating from the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses, for an integrated and synchronized global action plan involving the multilateral institutions and the developed and developing countries. We all have to be on the same page, pursuing the same

agenda. The current practice of meeting in separate rooms, discussing the same issue but in exclusive forums, will not produce the common strategy that the crisis requires.

You are here today and this week deliberating on the crisis, seeking to find solutions. Next week, the United Nations will stage its own high-level conference in New York. In September, the G20 will be meeting in Philadelphia. Too many cooks do not necessarily spoil the broth. What is necessary is that they must all be cooking in the same kitchen.

The need to reform the global financial system, which has been widely acknowledged, runs into the problem that there is a divergence of views as to what should be the shape and content of that reform. We need urgently to build a consensus on the way forward. We need to act assiduously, learning from the misfortunes of the recent past and before the sense of urgency recedes, before we return to business as usual.

I support the view that we need to reconfigure the deliberative structure in whose hands the future direction of the world will rest. In a globalized world, decisions must be made with global authority and global participation. It is not enough for us to have to achieve emerging market status before we are invited to sit at the table. Despite our diversity, we are today indivisible. Developing countries account for 37 per cent of global trade. Developing countries provide the market for 23 per cent of the exports of the industrialized world, not an insignificant amount by any means but, more importantly, with a population five times the size of the developed countries, we represent a huge potential market if the standard of living and purchasing power of our people can be increased. A more proactive effort on the part of the developed countries to help these countries to develop is not mere benevolence or altruism; it is good business sense, it is a sound investment for the expansion of their own markets. Global prosperity is the surest way to achieve global stability. In the race to achieve prosperity, we must not see ourselves as competing against each other; rather, we are runners in a great relay, competing against poverty, against hunger, against underdevelopment and against instability.

It is therefore time for a new global planning and decision-making structure that encompasses the developed and the developing world, a structure that encompasses the critical multilateral agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank and, most definitely, the ILO.

The emergency assistance being provided must be sufficient, and must be sufficiently flexible, to help stabilize the trauma that countries are suffering from shrinking revenues, crippling debt burden, declining exports, severe curtailment of capital flows and the denial of access to credit.

But we need something even more substantive. The economic crisis left by the Second World War gave birth to the Marshall Plan. It was in recognition of the fact that there could be no peace and stability without rebuilding economic prosperity. It was targeted against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Western Europe was able to experience unprecedented growth for the two decades that followed.

The plight in which the world economies currently find themselves requires no less concerted and sustained a response. It is within this broader context that the lasting value of the Director-

General's proposals for a Global Jobs Pact must be seen. I have placed it in this broader context because, while creating jobs is a social good, it is essentially an economic decision.

If those jobs are to be meaningful and sustained, they require investment, they require that workers be trained, they require that the enabling infrastructure be put in place and they require the appropriate technology to be applied.

Investment will not find its own way into these recesses where the jobs need to be created, where the power and potential of human beings who have been deprived of opportunity can be unleashed. The inadequate and overstretched budgets of poor and developing countries will not be able to support the expenditure required to properly educate and train their people. Nor will they be able to finance infrastructure required to attract and support these investments.

Consistent with the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses, I urge world leaders to consider the establishment of a global development initiative, incorporating programmes that already exist but introducing new programmes and additional resources. It must involve a major emphasis on education and training, the transfer of technology, investment-linked infrastructure and a structured programme tied to multilateral loans and appropriate investment guarantees to encourage and facilitate private sector investment that will provide real jobs, create real output and build sustainable prosperity.

Developing countries must do their part through sound fiscal and macroeconomic policies, through efficient, transparent and accountable government, and through focused and consistent policies.

Within the context of the new global trading arrangements, and the yet to be concluded Doha Round, market access and market asymmetry must be structured to support these new centres of investment, employment and production.

Labour market policies must be calibrated within the context of enlightened social dialogue to support this new thrust. Sacred cows of the past will have to yield to the pressing imperatives of the present and the brighter prospects for the future.

We are in extraordinary times that call for extraordinary thinking and extraordinary leadership.

President Obama's Chief of Staff poignantly declared that you never want a serious crisis to go to waste. It is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.

Shakespeare was right: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries."

This is the tide in our affairs. If ever there was a time, now is the time. If ever there was a cause, this is the cause. Let this cup not pass from us. Let us seize the moment and let us do what is right.

The PRESIDENT

Many thanks, Prime Minister, for sharing your perspectives on the global jobs crisis and significant policy insights with the representatives of the ILO member States present here at the Conference. Your views have been of great interest, and they will help us in our work as we approach the end of this very important session.

The world is facing an unprecedented global economic downturn. Singapore, being an open economy, inextricably linked to international trade, has also been affected.

Singapore's gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to contract by between 6 per cent and 9 per cent this year. The number of retrenchments during the first quarter of 2009 was significantly higher than during previous quarters. The labour market outlook remains weak for the immediate future.

In these difficult times, Singapore's unique brand of tripartism has served us well. The trust, common understanding and shared purpose built over the decades have enabled the tripartite partners to swiftly address the crisis with a united front.

In November 2008, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), the Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF) and the Government took the important first step by issuing a set of Tripartite Guidelines on Managing Excess Manpower. The key message of the guidelines is "cut costs to save jobs" and not the more conventional approach of "cut jobs to save costs". The aim is to reduce retrenchments and unemployment, emphasizing the importance of shared sacrifice in these uncertain times and that management should take the lead in any cost-cutting measures.

In addition, the Singapore Government introduced the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR). SPUR has two key strategies. The first is to save existing jobs by helping employers to send their excess manpower for training. Under SPUR, they receive substantial subsidies for course fees and absentee payroll. The Government has also introduced a Jobs Credits Scheme, which provides employers with a quarterly cash grant of up to US\$600 for each local employee. These initiatives are part of the Government's comprehensive Resilience Package to help companies manage their manpower costs and save jobs, while at the same time upgrading their workers' skills and building capabilities for the future.

Our second strategy is to help workers who have lost their jobs find new ones as soon as possible. Through SPUR, we encourage workers to enhance their employability by completing relevant training programmes. This will help them ride the winds of the upturn when the economy recovers.

Singapore's overall Resilience Package to help deal with the downturn totals US\$13.7 billion. So far, it has been money well spent, as jobs are being saved. In the first quarter of this year, despite the economy slowing down by 10.1 per cent year-on-year, we are happy to note that Singapore's unemployment rate of 3.3 per cent remains one of the lowest in the world. At the end of May this year, some 107,000 workers and 1,800 companies had committed to training under SPUR. With more workers receiving training under SPUR, the quality of Singapore's workforce will improve in the long term.

Even while we work hard to fight the downturn together, Singapore remains focused on longer term objectives. First, we want to develop a globally competitive workforce. Apart from building up the capabilities of our workforce, we are raising productivity and encouraging our enterprises to innovate. Second, we are enhancing the income security and lifelong employability of our workers. In 2007,

we implemented the Workfare Income Supplement scheme, which helps low-wage workers and encourages them to continue working. In 2012, we will enact legislation mandating the re-employment of older workers beyond the retirement age of 62. Third, we will continue to build globally-leading workplaces, through improving occupational safety and health as well as promoting progressive human capital development and employment practices.

Although the economic outlook is still uncertain, with strong tripartite cooperation and commitment, we are confident that we will weather the crisis and emerge stronger than before.

Even in these difficult times, when countries are facing job losses and high unemployment, there are opportunities for us to seize, including the chance to deepen regional and international cooperation and partnership.

As a titular member of the ILO Governing Body for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, Singapore is pleased to announce that a total of 13 collaborative projects were endorsed at the recently concluded sixth ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting. Cooperation between ASEAN and the ILO has also made progress. In addition to existing collaboration to strengthen ASEAN capability in industrial relations, labour statistics, and occupational safety and health, projects on social security and tripartite cooperation have been initiated. In 2010, we hope to receive ILO support for new projects, which include the second ASEAN conference on human resources and a comparative study on labour law and practice.

This crisis also offers more opportunities for deepening cooperation and partnership between ILO member States. Instead of focusing on protectionist measures, it would be more beneficial for member States to share our experiences in managing the crisis. For this reason, I would like to thank the ILO for taking the initiative to organize this timely Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis.

In closing, I am confident that, under the able leadership of its President, the 98th Session of the International Labour Conference and the Summit will be very successful.

Ms WILKINSON (*Minister of Labour, New Zealand*)

I am pleased to represent New Zealand at this important event, and I congratulate the ILO and the Director-General on enabling this Summit to take place.

I have been impressed by the way in which all parties at the Conference are focused on the key issues confronting us and are working hard to find solutions to them.

Like most countries, New Zealand has been affected by the current economic situation. We entered a downturn in early 2008 due to a number of local factors which were then magnified as the flow-on effects of the financial crisis spread throughout world economies.

Consequently, we have seen economic contraction, with unemployment rising from a 22-year low of 3.5 per cent in late 2007 to its current level of 5 per cent, with forecasts near 7 per cent in 2010.

In responding to the crisis, the New Zealand Government has therefore recognized the role it must play in keeping the economy going and focused on two key priorities.

First, cushioning the hardest-hit New Zealanders from the effects of the recession, both through help-

ing business protect jobs and by giving New Zealanders who lose their jobs the best possible chance of finding new ones.

New Zealand's fiscal stimulus package is about 5 per cent of our gross domestic product – amongst the largest in the world. We have introduced new programmes to help workers who have been made redundant, and we are maintaining key social security entitlements and benefits.

Secondly, we are setting out a credible road to economic recovery, so we can emerge stronger from the recession than when we went into it. This includes longer-term measures to lift New Zealand's productivity, improve competitiveness and boost growth.

In this, we have taken an inclusive, tripartite approach, recognizing that the problems arising from the current situation affect all New Zealanders.

In late February, our Prime Minister, the Honourable John Key, hosted a national Jobs Summit which saw unions, business and Government united by a common desire to do as much as possible to keep New Zealanders in work during this recession.

The Summit identified a list of employment and skills-focused measures for stimulating demand and improving our long-term economic prospects.

This included a new job-support scheme which will see the Government help stave off redundancies by making a wage contribution to help employees through a period of reduced work hours.

Although New Zealand has been affected far less severely by the crisis than some other parts of the world, we still face uncertain times. New Zealand is a small trading nation and, like others, we are being buffeted by the economic storm sweeping the planet.

To echo the sentiment so eloquently expressed by President Sarkozy, New Zealand believes in a principled approach to international relations.

At a practical level, we have already actively incorporated labour and environmental arrangements as part of the free trade agreements we have negotiated.

Dealing with the crisis will mean ongoing budget deficits and an expected doubling of government debt over the next three years. We expect the New Zealand economy to permanently lose about 50 billion New Zealand dollars of output through to 2012, compared with what would have happened without the recession.

New Zealand therefore agrees with the Director-General that a coordinated response to the crisis is needed that promotes a focus on jobs and growth.

To be of greatest value, a Global Jobs Pact must add something meaningful to the existing international debate, and focus on practical measures to help the ILO's constituents deal with and recover from the crisis.

This focus should be sharpened, not broadened into other areas, and existing tools such as the Global Employment Agenda should be used where relevant. We are wary of any attempts to describe or define a "new globalization" which detract from developing practical support measures for constituents.

The current crisis poses a huge challenge to the tripartite partners and to the ILO itself.

This challenge will not be met through rhetoric, but by practical and useful actions developed to assist ILO members ride out the crisis and achieve a

sustained social and economic recovery that reflects the shared values of this Organization.

Original Spanish: Mr CORBACHO CHAVES (Minister for Labour and Immigration, Spain)

First of all, I would like to say that the Government of Spain recognizes the great work that is being done at this 98th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In the last 30 years we have seen new economies join world trade. This is something positive and we should rejoice. However, this integration does not always go hand-in-hand with social development. Although global poverty levels measured in terms of an income of US\$1 a day have fallen, the fact remains that inequality is also increasing at all levels, between regions and countries and within countries themselves. The informal economy and the illegal trafficking of persons show clear signs of expanding, and it appears that the necessary measures to reduce the risks of climate change are not being taken. As the ILO itself has said on many occasions, neither trade nor growth will automatically reduce poverty by themselves and therefore the most effective way of reducing poverty is by tackling it head on.

The Decent Work Agenda is a promising starting point from which to redirect the current process of globalization. As you know, everyone is experiencing great difficulties throughout the world. The crisis of financial origins has now affected the real economy and has had a major impact on employment. We are therefore experiencing the first major crisis of the globalized economy, which all countries are making a great effort to overcome. In a globalized world we have to establish standards that regulate economic, financial and labour markets at the global level. Clear and transparent rules are needed and tax havens have to disappear. The world is ever more globalized and the effects of the crisis are no longer local but global. It therefore seems logical that there should be more standards regulating the financial economy on a global scale, and it also seems logical and reasonable that there should be no room for tax havens in a globalized world.

We therefore have to overcome the present crisis and make progress towards a sustainable economy based on social justice and respect for the environment. This has to be done without it being a burden on the weakest and without losing ground on social rights. The present world economy encourages global corporations to relocate from one economy to another in the quest for lax labour laws and lower taxes, thereby leading to more inequality and worsening employment conditions.

A globalization as envisaged by the Decent Work Agenda does not mean finding independent solutions to world challenges but significant liberalization through other means. The integration of world trade is a fundamental prerequisite for promoting growth. At the same time, a distribution of its benefits will greatly reduce inequality and prevent the worsening of labour conditions.

This combination of liberalization and distribution, which is very close to what we European economies have been doing for decades, can increase the positive effects of a fairer globalization. Improving economic opportunities for people in their home countries is not only the best long-term solution to illegal emigration but also a good opportunity to promote economic development.

To sum up, in order to overcome the global financial crisis, we require a global effort. The think-tank for designing the future is the G20. We have to guarantee that the values defended by the ILO are present in this new model and the Spanish Government therefore advocates the presence of the ILO in the G20 and will support initiatives to this effect.

The Spanish Government, which I represent, and the Ministry of Labour, which I head, have no doubt that this is the way out of the crisis and towards a much fairer world, and this is something we are committed to. I would like to express my gratitude to the ILO for inviting me to take part in this session.

Mr LITTORIN (*Minister of Employment, Sweden*)

When I was a child, my grandmother used to say that work creates health and wealth. And I think that this is why these times are so difficult.

World unemployment increased by 11 per cent last year to 190 million people. According to ILO estimates, another 40 million people will lose their jobs by the end of this year. These are indeed alarming figures.

The current economic crisis is a major challenge for policy-makers around the world. But I do, however, have confidence in our ability to react swiftly and in a coordinated manner to meet these challenges. Therefore, the Global Jobs Pact, envisaged as a policy contribution by the ILO to mitigate the impact of the crisis, is an important initiative that can help shape a productive and sustainable recovery. The Pact should, above all, be operational and contain proposals that could help speed up and facilitate an exit from the crisis. If adopted by a large number of countries in a coordinated way, the Global Jobs Pact and the synergies and interactions between national job pacts would increasingly acquire global significance, with reinforcing effects across countries.

The ILO should strive to give specific advice on how employment and social policy strategies can supplement efforts already taken by governments and other international organizations. The Decent Work Agenda should be taken into account when elaborating national stimulus packages. Let us not miss this window of opportunity to set the framework for a lasting recognition of the ILO's role and the principles it embodies in the world economic system.

I would also like to stress the importance of the social partners in this respect. It is central that all actors concerned have the same goal, the same road map. Working to strengthen social dialogue and tripartism is an essential element for managing the crisis. Short-term measures to counter the effects of the crisis have proven to be necessary in Sweden, as elsewhere in the world.

While I will not argue over the specific measures taken, I will argue that it is absolutely vital that we are smart when applying these measures so that they do not have negative spill-over effects on other member States, or make our labour markets structurally weaker.

Short-term actions, therefore, need to be coherent, with long-term objectives. The implementation of structural reforms must also go on in times of economic downturn. Measures must focus on facilitating both transitions from one job to another and transitions into the labour market for those without a job.

In times when companies are hard hit and entire industries are facing mass redundancies, it is tempting to resort to protectionist measures. I believe that it is crucial that we remain focused on securing the employability of individuals rather than conserving specific jobs or industries. We know that protectionism is not a sustainable solution in the long run and that it only hampers mobility and damages trade in the short term. We may not be able to save every single job, but we can work with the employability of our workforce. We can reinforce active labour market policies to avoid the risk of unemployment becoming persistent and social exclusion increasing.

The greatest threat is not increased unemployment in itself, but the risk that newly unemployed people will be trapped in unemployment, or leave the labour market permanently. Lessons learned from earlier crises show us that it is of utmost importance to work with the activation and reactivation of our unemployed in order to prevent long-term unemployment and permanent inactivity.

Active labour market policies can, therefore, play an important role in helping individuals adjust to changing labour market conditions. If properly designed, they can enhance employability and improve employment prospects, as well as facilitating matches between the skills of workers who lose their jobs and the skills required in the future.

In a period of economic downturn, it is also crucial that measures are adopted to counteract inequality and enhance the empowerment of women: progress in gender equality shall not be hampered by the economic crisis.

To summarize, the Decent Work Agenda suggests that the responses cannot stop with fiscal stimulus and a quick fix of the financial systems alone. Measures to address unemployment and social impacts must be included. As the incoming presidency of the European Union (EU), Sweden will, in close cooperation with the EU institutions, continue the work carried out by the EU so far in this area.

To conclude, work creates health and wealth. And we need more people in our labour force, not less, for our world to become a better place for all.

Mr BOLE (*Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Education, Youth and Sports, National Heritage, Culture and Arts, Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment, Fiji*)

The Director-General's Report on tackling the global jobs crisis challenges the wisdom of our economic and social policies. Obviously, our collective efforts lack the moral character to fairly distribute the fruits of globalization. We urgently need to effectively tackle the global jobs crisis together, before it is too late.

To empower our national Decent Work Agenda, the Fiji Government has incorporated the social justice principles of the 28 ILO Conventions which we have ratified to date in our new labour laws. These laws prohibit all forms of discrimination at work, including forced labour and gender discrimination.

And we welcome the findings of the Global Report on the elimination of forced and compulsory labour and the discussions on gender equality.

The Fiji Government's commitment to urgently address the global jobs crisis is shown by its approval only two weeks ago of a tripartite proposal to establish Fiji's first national employment centre. This is a one-stop-shop agency designed to actively engage Fiji's unemployed in meaningful economic

activities. The centre will facilitate, coordinate and monitor all our current employment promotion and small business creation activities, with the aim of boosting employment, creation and productivity. It will also manage our new national volunteer scheme in close partnership with our training institutions.

The Government also plans to strengthen our social protection regime by replacing an outdated workers' compensation system with a no-fault scheme for all workers. The reformed system is planned to provide better health care and social security for injured workers and for dependents of deceased workers. The new workers' compensation policy and law are targeted for endorsement this year and for implementation next year. We plan to amalgamate it with the national OHS service and the Department of Environment, with significant savings to taxpayers, ensure sustainable development, and reduce our vulnerability to climate change. We are also reviewing our pension scheme to ensure better coverage and social protection benefits to mitigate the adverse affects of the crisis.

In this regard, we fully support the vision of the ILO Global Jobs Pact presented in the Director-General's Report, which balances the immediate needs of providing jobs for all workers with sustainability. The Government has also integrated ILO social protection standards with productivity improvement in our new labour laws, to help deliver our recovery efforts. We consider this integration as a vital ingredient to ensure sustainable social and economic development.

We welcome the report of the Committee on HIV/AIDS. The Government presented and launched its first national code of practice for HIV/AIDS in the workplace last year. We have intensified our awareness of the new code and we thank all international agencies for their partnerships with the Government in this important mission. And we thank the ILO for implementing its EU-funded project on child labour in Fiji this year, which has progressed very well with our full support.

We have also reformed our minimum wages system under the new labour laws and have introduced the first upward revisions of the sectoral minimum wage in a couple of weeks' time, from 1 July, with a view to establishing a national minimum wage hopefully by next year. This will provide a basic social protection floor to help prevent a downward slide in real wages. Under the new labour laws, social protection in the form of redundancy benefits is also provided for economic reasons. In this connection, we would like to draw attention to the Government's intention to consider a maternity taxation scheme, to prevent discrimination against female workers.

Fiji's first mediation service was established in September last year under the new labour laws, with a very high settlement rate of 84 per cent. Since its inception, Fiji's mediation service has proved to be a very effective labour market stabilizer, peace builder and productivity booster. For the first time in Fiji's history the vulnerable non-unionized workers, about 70 per cent of the employment sector, have been empowered to access the mediation service free of charge to resolve their employment grievances. This important social justice landmark effectively promotes peace and productivity among the social partners.

Fiji's reformed labour laws have become its main platform for relaunching and implementing its national Decent Work action plan with our social partners, so as to effectively respond to the employment and social protection challenges of the global economic crisis. They also help us stay the course towards achieving our Millennium Development Goals.

The dynamic spirit of tripartism in Fiji has resulted in the Prime Minister agreeing last week to the Government's considering positively the resurrection of Fiji's tripartite forum. Government appreciates the strategic national importance of the forum as a means of promoting social dialogue and consensus building at the highest political level and of responding effectively to the current and future Decent Work challenges.

In this journey towards Decent Work, we are fully committed to proceeding on the path of sustainable development that is friendly to both our people and our vulnerable environment. We fully support the conclusion of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses that the magnitude of this global, financial and economic crisis urgently demands unprecedented and effective global, regional and national coordinated responses that are integrated and fair.

We are therefore looking forward to active collaboration from world bodies, other nations and international agencies, including the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and the ILO, of course, so as to constructively engage in this journey. This will ensure decent work for all, not only for the rich and the powerful nations, but also for nations that are poor and weak – a fair globalization that awakens our spirituality, a globalization that promotes righteousness, peace and real social justice for all.

Mr CÔTÉ (*Employer, Canada*)

It is with mixed feelings that I am addressing you today. If it were not for the global economic crisis, I probably would not be at the podium this afternoon.

While I am proud as a Canadian and an Employer delegate that the global economic crisis was put on the agenda of this year's Conference at the suggestion of the Employers, one cannot but stop and reflect on the fact that the economic crisis has impacted on everybody around the world: workers, employers and their family members. That said, it is not all doom and gloom. There is light at the end of the tunnel and it is not the proverbial train. What is not known is how long the tunnel is.

Depending on the experts you listen to, the crisis will get worse before it gets better – or we are either starting to get out of the recession or the worst is over. I am not a macroeconomist, I am just a lowly banker; but I would like to share with you the Canadian banking experience which, in relative terms to the economic crisis, is good news, with more good news to come.

As we have heard throughout the Conference and again yesterday and this morning, the banking industry around the world has seen the finger squarely pointed its way and carrying the blame for the economic crisis. While some of that blame is warranted, it is important to highlight that not all banks are to blame. Certainly the banking system in many countries is still very sound, Canada being one of them. I am not ashamed to say that I am working in a bank in Canada; actually I am proud to say it.

Of course the banks in Canada have not been immune to the crisis. We have taken our lumps and

some of the loans on our books are still in a precarious position. However, the banks in Canada, as an industry, are one of the largest employers and they continue to provide employment to over a quarter of a million workers. In a country with a population of roughly 33 million people, this is not an insignificant number. It is also important to note that the vast majority of those jobs are full-time jobs and close to 80 per cent are occupied by women. Our compensation schemes are gender-neutral, and we are breaking the glass ceiling in promoting women. It is work in progress, but good progress is certainly being made.

Our senior executives, while well compensated, have not seen the excess experienced in some banks around the world and their compensation is in line with the economy: up when it is good, down when it is not.

While a very small portion of our workforce in the banking industry is unionized, less than 1 per cent, we have had a long history with unions and collective bargaining, and we are willing partners to productive social dialogue. I would like to point out, though, that social dialogue takes many forms and it is not necessarily synonymous with collective bargaining.

We are governed by the national employment standards contained in our Canada Labour Code and we are proud that legislation and regulations contained in the Canada Labour Code have been achieved through a tripartite dialogue. I must congratulate our Government for having had the foresight and the courage to initiate that tripartite dialogue, which has resulted in standards that social partners have jointly agreed to and which represent today's reality for the most part. I say "for the most part" because there is still some work to be done on that front. It is work in progress, but the key word is progress.

Banks in Canada remain profitable and have not needed, nor will they need, any financial bailout. We are in that enviable position for a number of reasons, but mainly because we are highly capitalized and we have sound lending practices. It is important to note that our capital levels are regulated, but banks, through self-regulation, far exceed the minimum regulated levels.

While we have taken a more restrictive approach in certain lines of business, most notably in investment banking, credit for individual workers, SMEs and business in general is still readily available and for us it is business as usual. Yes, we are more prudent, but we are in the business of lending money and that is what we intend to continue doing.

This has, and will have, a positive impact, on the whole Canadian economy: will create jobs, will promote entrepreneurship and contribute to hopefully put the crisis behind us in the not-too-distant future.

People who claim that capitalism is dead or on its deathbed could not be more wrong. We strongly believe that in a free-market economy, it is not the role of the governments to create jobs, it is the employers'. Governments certainly have a key role to play and are an equal stakeholder with employers and workers, but they are there to support by providing assistance, regulate when it is necessary and facilitate the social dialogue.

I wish to thank you for having given me the opportunity to share with you some good news. There is still a lot of work to be done, but together we can

get it done. To quote Mr Musyoka, the Vice-president of Kenya this morning, "arambi" – let us pull together.

Original French: Mr RHMANI (Minister of Employment and Vocational Training, Morocco)

I am particularly honoured to take part on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco in this high-level summit on the global jobs crisis and the ways of dealing with it.

I also take this opportunity to thank the International Labour Office for having given priority to this issue on the agenda of the International Labour Conference through a rich and fruitful discussion.

As everyone knows, the financial and economic crisis being experienced throughout the world today has not ceased to increase the unemployment rate, without speaking of the resulting job insecurity. For sure, several summits have been held in order to deal with the crisis. Similarly, international financial institutions, the major economic groupings at the global level, have tried to adopt solutions and have taken numerous measures, but their impact sadly remains too limited because they only concern the financial aspects of the crisis.

The budgetary recovery measures announced and implemented in numerous countries do not have the same impact as the direct aid given to banks to save them from bankruptcy. Neither do they give enough attention to employment and social protection, which are essential components of decent and productive employment. As we see it, these measures would gain from international coordination to guarantee enhanced effectiveness, given the effects that the crisis has had on emerging and poor countries, for example, African countries.

We consider that the guiding principles of these measures should be the following: the promotion of decent work; assistance to developing countries, given the deterioration in exchange rates and the fall in remittances from nationals residing abroad; better coordination to adopt measures in a negotiated and concerted framework, bearing in mind the interests of all; and enhancing workers' employability so that they can adapt to new changes in the labour market.

Morocco, a country which in recent years has implemented an active development policy to combat unemployment and promote workers' rights, has not escaped the effects of the financial and economic crisis affecting the world today, even though it has a healthy financial system.

These effects have been experienced in the relevant sectors, above all the export sector, and in terms of the remittances from Moroccans residing abroad.

In order to attenuate the negative effects of the crisis and to preserve jobs in the sectors affected, and despite the initiatives taken by the Government aimed at encouraging domestic demand by increasing the public investment budget, tripartite social dialogue rounds have been held, and are being continued, to try to reach a consensus.

Parallel to these social dialogue rounds, a strategic monitoring committee has been established. This committee has a twofold goal: on the one hand, to ensure the resistance of the productive sector of the economy and, on the other hand, to avoid massive job losses.

In this context, a framework agreement was signed between the Government, the banks and employers' confederations relating to the support pro-

vided by the public authorities to the sectors affected by the crisis.

The objectives of the measures recommended in this framework agreement essentially revolve around safeguarding jobs and have three components: commercial, financial and social components.

The social component of this agreement includes the State paying all of the employers' payroll taxes, that is 20 per cent of the wage bill, on the sole condition that the enterprise does not proceed to reduce the official number of employees.

In conclusion, the current international crisis, whatever its causes and true nature, is emerging in a spontaneous and sudden way and has resulted in immediate negative effects on all developed and developing countries. In view of this conclusion, the solutions to be adopted should be negotiated, concerted and coordinated and be part of a comprehensive global development strategy.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which adheres vehemently to the principles of human rights, cannot forgo this opportunity to plead for the establishment of a new international economic order, one which puts the human being at the heart of all development action. The Global Jobs Pact proposed by the ILO is a tangible response to this, and the principles of decent work can pave the way for a more sustainable economy, allowing women and men throughout the world to live and work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.

Ms GOLDBERG (*Employer, United States*)

Last week, in commemoration of the World Day against Child Labour and the tenth anniversary of Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour, US Senator Tom Harkin gave a moving and eloquent address in this room. He reminded us that child labour is a uniquely offensive practice that is never acceptable and never excusable. He challenged all of us to be more proactive and to do more in this fight.

This challenge is particularly relevant in the context of this Jobs Summit and of the Jobs Pact we have negotiated here over the past two weeks. Economic hardship should never be an excuse for violating fundamental rights but, sadly, as we all know, violations are often a consequence. We need increasing vigilance to prevent a downward spiral that threatens the progress we have made thus far in the fight against child labour, and that endangers more children.

I would like to take my few minutes here to share with you the response of my organization, the United States Council for International Business; and, indeed, of organized employers in this house, to Senator Harkin's call to action.

First, as employers, as engaged members of our communities, as mothers and fathers and grandparents, we appreciate both the human dimensions of this problem and our joint responsibility for addressing it. Despite recent progress, hundreds of millions of children can still be found working in deplorable conditions. Much child labour is part of subsistence-level economic activity in the informal economy. Some is the result of abusive practices by governments. The issue for us is that a considerable portion occurs at the bottom end of global supply chains. Companies that invest in, and source from, developing countries are at risk of being unwittingly implicated in its use. Thus, for us, this is not only a human rights issue, it is a business issue.

Child labour in global supply chains is on the agenda of activists, the media and public and private investors as never before. The consequences for businesses of being associated with the use of child labour can include reputational damage and shareholder disappointment or even disinvestment. In affected communities, when child labour is detected, too often there is no remediation, and a problem that stifles and stymies development and prevents children from realizing their basic rights continues unchecked.

To uphold universal values and avoid complicity in child labour problems, companies must understand the prevalence of child labour in the countries and sectors where they operate. They must actively manage the risk that child labour will occur somewhere along their supply chains.

However, child labour is a complex and dynamic problem, arising or diminishing in response to changes in any of a number of conditions, many of which are beyond companies' direct control. Moreover, in most countries, it is illegal and hidden from plain view.

Recently, US companies came together in a forum jointly sponsored by the United States Council, the International Organisation of Employers and the ILO, to address these challenges by hearing from a number of experts, including experts from the US Government Departments of State and Labor, and sharing their experiences.

Our goal was to explore strategies that work in identifying, preventing and remediating child labour. Our conclusions can be summarized by five key themes.

First, addressing child labour requires the engagement of all stakeholders, including governments, international organizations like the ILO, employers of all sizes, employers' organizations, NGOs, socially responsible investment funds, unions, and other members of civil society.

Second, better information and data are required at all levels. We cannot constructively raise awareness or ensure the appropriate allocation of resources unless we can be confident that we know the nature, size and location of the problems. The ILO has a special role to play in this regard in helping to collect and disseminate information and improve data accuracy.

Third, we need to share and leverage local best practice solutions, recognizing that solutions will require a holistic understanding of the issues underpinning poverty, including quality education and the provision of other basic social services. One of the ways companies have organized themselves is by industry. Important child labour initiatives are under way, for example, in the cocoa, sugar and cotton industries. These initiatives are most fruitful where governments are willing to recognize and address the issue as a national priority. In this respect, we look forward to working together for example with the Government of Uzbekistan, to address the issue of child labour in the Uzbek cotton industry.

Fourth, tools and resources are available. We can all work to better disseminate them and we can better leverage our mutual efforts and commitments.

Fifth, and finally, industry-wide supply chain perspectives are important. Supply chains are often diverse and complex, and clarity on the roles and responsibilities within them is critical to undertaking corrective action and holding supply chain entities accountable.

Companies have a powerful tool here already in their risk management strategies and experience which, by definition, address the complex interaction of risk factors in commercial and operational activities. However, we must ensure against unrealistic expectations. It is not in the power of company supply chain management programme, however robust they are, to solve this problem alone. If we want sustainable solutions, at the end of the day governments will have to take responsibility and engage with both companies and workers' organizations, and other actors to develop cooperative approaches that fit national circumstances.

Eliminating child labour is a challenge to all of us: governments, workers and employers. I hope these brief remarks today convey some sense of the seriousness with which the employers in my country regard these challenges, and of their commitment to working together with many other groups in society to share experiences and innovations in this common cause.

(Mr Allam takes the Chair.)

Original Japanese: Mr WATANABE (Senior Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan)

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to offer our congratulations on the 90th anniversary of the founding of the ILO. It is wonderful that the 90th anniversary ceremonies held in many countries have been so successful. We held a symposium with the ILO and social partners, which I believe was useful for many participants. We highly praise the contribution of the ILO to the realization of social justice in the labour field, through 188 Conventions and 199 Recommendations based on the establishment of international labour standards and the effective monitoring of its constituents.

Since last year the financial and economic crisis has greatly affected the entire world, especially Japan. The annual growth rate of Japan's GDP of the first quarter of 2009 is negative, 14.2 per cent, which is the biggest decline since the Second World War. In addition, the unemployment rate rose from 3.8 per cent last October to 5 per cent this April. It is clear that we need to take all possible measures in order to recover from this crisis. Given the situation, it is timely that Director-General Somavia has published his Report, *Tackling the global jobs crisis: Recovery through decent work policies*. It is an extremely valuable document that gives concrete guidance not only to member States, including Japan, but also to workers and employers, and we give it our full support.

Allow me to address two points. First, I would like to speak about employment responses to the global financial and economic crisis. Under the current global crisis, I believe that adopting employment measures through coordination between governments and the social partners is a shortcut to ensuring the stability of people's lives. In the first place, it will prevent more people from losing their jobs and make more jobs available. In addition, measures to help those who have lost their jobs to find productive employment quickly are essential. For this it is necessary to implement effective employment and labour market policies, to expand unemployment benefits and to reinforce job training and job placement. This March, the employers' and workers' organizations and the Government of Japan reached an agreement on the specific response

of each to the crisis, including the maintenance of jobs, job training, job placement, living support during job training and job creation in the hope of doubling the number of jobs. The Government of Japan will take action based on this agreement and will promote social dialogue in order to overcome the current financial crisis, in close cooperation with the social partners. In this process, we would like to confirm the importance of taking action that enables all people willing to work, including women, the elderly, migrants and others, to participate in society through employment and work.

Secondly, I would like to address the ILO's leadership in the jobs crisis. The financial and economic crisis has caused a global aggravation of the employment situation. The ILO needs to have a strong influence in stopping and reversing the trend. We expect the ILO to exercise strong leadership in bringing about decent work for workers facing the deterioration of their working conditions and environments.

The Director-General points out in his Report that the increase of non-regular workers resulted from social depression, and emphasizes the necessity of social protection. We agree with his observation that, in order to recover from the jobs crisis, it is essential to stabilize the social basis of life by enhancing the functions of the labour market and promoting social protection.

The Government of Japan places the greatest importance on mitigating people's anxiety about their livelihood by ensuring stable employment and stable lives, and it has taken a number of employment measures aimed at creating and maintaining employment, and reinforcing the safety net.

The Government of Japan has informed the ILO the good practices promoted by our policies and we are determined to cooperate with the ILO in exercising leadership in the jobs crisis by continuing to do so.

Japan has been conducting bilateral cooperation on establishing unemployment assurance systems and strengthening job placement organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

In addition, Japan is considering giving support to the Asia-Pacific region under the ILO's multi-bilateral technical cooperation programme, thereby continuing to contribute to the realization of decent work.

Also, Japan has just started to cooperate in the creation of sustainable and environmentally-friendly employment in accordance with the ILO's Green Jobs Initiative.

Every country, including Japan, is tackling the jobs crisis caused by the economic crisis, and support from the ILO will play a very important role in the recovery of the global labour market.

In the current global economic crisis, which is recognized as the worst in 100 years, the importance of the ILO is all the greater. I would like to reaffirm that the Government of Japan will continue to support the ILO.

To sum up, we agree with the idea of decent work for all and will continue to collaborate with the ILO.

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

The Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis will continue with another panel discussion on the subject of *Rights at work, social dialogue and enterprise survival in times of crisis*.

(The sitting continued with the panel discussion, the record of which can be found in Provision Record 11B.)

(Mr Palma Caicedo takes the Chair.)

Original Vietnamese: Ms NGUYEN THI KIM (Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam)

It is my great honour to speak on behalf of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam at this important Conference, and I would like to take this opportunity to extend our best greetings to the President and all participants at the Conference.

First of all, I highly appreciate the Global Report under the follow-up to the Declaration, *The cost of coercion*. The Government of Viet Nam holds a clear and consistent view on the abolition of forced labour, which is embodied in the Constitution, Labour Code and in other legal documents. The Constitution of Viet Nam states that “to work is the right and responsibility of each citizen”. It also stipulates that “it is prohibited to ill-treat workers, or to force anyone to work under any form”.

Alongside developing laws and regulations, Viet Nam has adopted and implemented relevant policies to promote communications, inspection, training and the incorporation of forced labour issues into various socio-economic activities.

Efforts have also been made to promote international cooperation with ASEAN countries, within the COMMIT Initiative and with other countries in combating human trafficking and labour migration. In general, Viet Nam’s framework of laws and policies is in harmony with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). Official reports of courts and labour inspectors do not show violations of forced labour regulations in Viet Nam.

Since 2008, the global financial crisis and economic downturn have had a negative impact on employment. How to cope with mass job loss is high on the agenda of many countries. Viet Nam is not an exception.

In 2009, Viet Nam’s GDP growth is projected to drop to 5 per cent, compared to 6.18 per cent in the previous year. The negative impacts of the financial crisis and economic downturn are reflected in the significant reduction of foreign direct investment and export revenue.

The risk of inflation has reduced consumption in goods, and there is shrinking employment in a number of key economic sectors.

The first quarter of 2009 has seen 65,000 workers lose their jobs, approximately equal to the figure for the whole year of 2008. In addition, 39,000 workers are underemployed and thousands of overseas workers have to return home prematurely due to job loss.

Recently, there are signs that job loss is losing momentum. Labour demand in concentrated industrial zones is starting to increase, providing a source of employment creation. One typical feature of Viet Nam’s economy is agricultural dominance, with 70 per cent of the workforce being in the agricultural sector. In the process of economic transition, workers move from rural to urban areas and work in industrial zones.

In a time of economic crisis, a number of these workers go back to the rural areas and work in agriculture again. The unemployment pressure in urban

areas is therefore less intense in Viet Nam than in industrialized countries.

In this context, we highly appreciate the ILO’s timely response in conducting research, assessing the situation at regional and global levels, and proposing recommendations and measures to help member States overcome the crisis, in particular the Global Jobs Pact that high-level leaders are discussing at this important Conference.

Since the beginning of 2009, the Government of Viet Nam has introduced policy measures to curb inflation and put a brake on the economic downturn, promote sustainable enterprises and ensure social protection.

In particular, a stimulus package of US\$8 billion, which is 9 per cent of GDP, has been adopted. Policies to sustain employment and develop the labour market have also been put in place. These include: low interest rate loans for enterprises in difficulty to assist them in paying salaries; social insurance premiums; job-loss allowances to workers; and loans for redundant workers so that they might undergo vocational training and find new employment. This is the right time to invest more in training, retraining and human resource development.

In close cooperation with the social partners, the Government is according high priority to – and increasing investments in – a wide range of social protection programmes, including: the implementation of voluntary social insurance and unemployment insurance; the National Target Programme on Employment; the Sustainable Poverty Reduction Programme; vocational training for rural workers; and social housing programmes, which target workers in industrial zones and poor people. These programmes have provided essential support to unemployed workers, young people, women workers, migrant workers, rural workers and ethnic workers, as well as other disadvantaged groups, and helped them improve their lives and prepare them with the necessary skills to re-enter the labour market as the economy recovers and grows.

Besides addressing the urgent impacts of the global economic crisis, Viet Nam is also developing its legal framework and formulating long-term development plans with a strategic vision. Priority is given, inter alia, to developing the labour market and human resources; upgrading skills; improving employment quality; enhancing industrial relations; promoting social dialogue; reforming wage policies; implementing social protection programmes; and promoting occupational safety and health.

In this context, we recognize and appreciate the support given by the ILO within the Decent Work Country Programme 2006–10, as well as the bilateral and regional cooperation framework with ASEAN and foreign countries. Thanks to this support, practical programmes and projects have been designed and implemented in the labour market and in the areas of industrial relations, human resource development, gender equality, social protection and capacity building to enforce labour standards.

On this occasion, it is my honour, on behalf of the Government of Viet Nam, to express our appreciation for the support we have received in the past years and we look forward to seeing more fruitful cooperation activities in the years to come.

Mr AHMED (*Worker, Pakistan*)

The discussion of the jobs crisis in the Committee of the Whole and at the ILO Summit has once again

highlighted the fact that the crisis is a product not of the developing nations but of the lack of transparency of the international financial system and of the greed and profiteering of chief executives and managers of financial institutions and speculative markets.

It also highlights the failure of the international financial institutions to learn the lesson from the earlier financial crises faced by Russia, Argentina and the free market countries of East Asia. The neo-liberalism model has failed.

We welcome the chief objective of the recovery plan advocated under the able leadership of the ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia, of tackling the crisis and promoting decent work by means of the coordinated efforts of the international financial institutions. We urge the G20 countries to associate the ILO and the international financial institutions fully in their deliberations in order to further this objective.

I would like to draw the attention of the ILO's tripartite stakeholders assembled here to the conditions imposed by the IMF on Pakistan for a loan of US\$7.6 billion. On the one hand, you have the developed countries, which are being offered low interest rates and stimulus packages for their economic development, for job creation and to avoid the bankruptcy of their major enterprises. Public expenditure, too, is being boosted in order to create jobs, and bank interest rates stand on average at 1 per cent. Enterprises are being granted subsidies in order to alleviate poverty and provide social protection for the unemployed.

By contrast, the IMF has asked the Government of Pakistan, which has been hard hit as a front-line State in the international alliance against terrorism, whose army is fighting the war at the cost of precious lives, whose civil population is being killed by suicide bombers in retaliation, and whose economic and social fabric is severely strained by rising unemployment and poverty, I repeat, the IMF is asking the Government of Pakistan to reduce the country's fiscal deficit to 2.5 per cent (compared to almost 7 per cent in the United States), to reduce public expenditure, to raise the interest rate to 14 per cent, to stop subsidizing fuel, energy and food, and to levy surcharges even on items of daily consumption such as food and energy.

How are these unjust IMF conditions going to help us fight against poverty and unemployment when our young workers are entering the labour market at the rate of 1.5 million per year? How can they not feel despair and frustration? How can this not engender increasing social, economic and political tension?

We would like to appeal to the IMF and the World Bank to withdraw the unjust conditions imposed on developing countries such as Pakistan, so that they can have a breathing space to tackle the international financial crisis through public investment, so that they can pursue the road to recovery outlined in the Global Jobs Pact. Our Government needs the investment, technology and other forms of assistance of the IMF and the international community in order to apply a fiscal policy that allows us to help the poorest segments of society, to provide special care for migrants, to develop a low-carbon environment, to offer each child equal opportunities in education, to give priority to the generation of decent work, increased employment, quality public services and sustainable enterprises, to foster cor-

dial industrial relations between workers and management, to introduce social protection for vulnerable groups, particularly women, young people and workers employed in the informal and rural sectors, to help repatriate returning migrant workers, to pursue a two-level market policy and guarantee a fair minimum wage, to increase international and internal demand for its products, and to encourage social dialogue and respect for the fundamental rights embodied in the ILO Conventions.

We congratulate the distinguished members of the Committee of the Whole – especially Chairperson Mr Rapacki, Vice-Chairperson Mr Trotman and Ms Sharon Burrow of the Workers' group, and the members of the Employers' group – on the historic formulation of the Global Jobs Pact. We do not only urge its adoption. We appeal to international organizations and to the leaders of developed nations to make sufficient funds available to the ILO to allow the Global Jobs Pact to be translated into action.

In Pakistan's labour movement we have been making a concerted effort to force policy-makers to introduce progressive economic and social and labour reforms, in order to alleviate unemployment and poverty, promote the core labour standards within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme, wage a successful battle against social and economic deprivation, raise the dignity of working men and women and ensure a better tomorrow.

We appreciate the work of the ILO at both the international and the regional and country level, as well as its technical cooperation. We wish all the distinguished delegates success in their just efforts to achieve the goal of decent work and social justice. We trust that they will overcome their difficulties and together resolve the international financial crisis through social dialogue and the promotion of social justice for which this Organization stands.

Ms KOPAČ MRAK (State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia)

This year's Conference is being held under extremely uncertain economic circumstances. It is a long time since our society was faced with such serious challenges as it is faced with this year and the values defended by the International Labour Organization have never been as important as they are today.

The crisis that has spread to all continents and social structures in just a few months is still present. Measures and coordinated solutions of the international community are showing the first positive and optimistic signs of recovery, financial stability and trust.

It is in these difficult and uncertain times that we have to respect with greater intensity the standards and rules which this Organization has developed and promoted during its years of existence.

Decent work has to remain our commitment even in this time of crisis. The same is true for social partnership. During the crisis, social dialogue has to remain the framework for cooperation and a common tool for adopting recovery measures.

In Slovenia we have successfully used social dialogue and this is one of the reasons why I believe that our recovery measures have been successful and timely. In Slovenia we have adopted two intervention acts within the framework of social dia-

logue aimed at preserving employment, especially in sectors hit hardest by the crisis.

The first act enables companies' short-time working arrangements and the second enables temporary dismissals of employed persons when companies are faced with a shortage of orders.

These measures not only allow an employer to respond quickly and without redundancies in the case of a shortage of orders, but they also allow employees to keep their jobs. With these measures we wish to avoid a situation where, upon the signs of economic recovery, employers conclude atypical employment agreements with employees who were made redundant during the crisis.

To reduce the negative effects of the crisis, Slovenia has also increased substantially the resources allocated to the active employment policy, especially to programmes aimed at the acquisition of new skills and higher qualifications of workers.

A fast and efficient response is also required in the area of social inclusion. New forms of poverty, housing indebtedness and the growth of the working poor are not acceptable even during times of crisis. The crisis cannot be an excuse for an undue reduction of workers' rights.

In Slovenia, the social security system is responding appropriately to the new circumstances and to more intensive economic pressure. We are about to adopt a special act which will alleviate the situation of the most socially disadvantaged groups of individuals, using exceptional lump sum payments. Over the next year, we intend to increase the minimum income level and thereby increase the efficiency and transparency of the social protection system with the objective of providing social justice for all.

We are all aware that the present crisis leaves a bitter taste when we look at the annual balances of our economies. But we cannot allow the bitter taste to grow into distrust for the future that would affect accepted and established legal and social standards. It is therefore necessary to strengthen even further the social partnership and joint commitment in order to defend the objectives laid down by the International Labour Organization.

Original Russian: Ms DENISOVA (Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Ukraine)

On behalf of the Government of Ukraine, I should like to inform you about what our Government is doing, what issues we are addressing and the most pressing problems of the labour market in the context of the current global economic crisis.

What stage in its development had Ukraine reached when it was hit – as were all countries – by the economic crisis? In the years after independence, it had achieved a certain amount of progress: in 2008 the employment rate was over 59 per cent, while unemployment stood at 6.4 per cent.

The situation reflected that of most European countries. At the end of 2008, under the impact of the crisis, the volume of production and the employment rate dropped. From October 2008 to January 2009, the number of persons employed dropped by 4.4 per cent to reach 10.9 million workers. The number of persons temporarily laid off tripled to reach 1 million, and the number of persons involuntarily working part time increased fourfold to 1.1 million. In order to prevent further deterioration of the situation, in agreement with the social partners and with the support of the Parliament, we have

adopted anti-crisis legislation primarily designed to preserve the jobs potential of enterprises, to prevent unjustified dismissals and to guarantee social protection for workers.

A scheme has been introduced to provide partial unemployment benefits to persons who lose part of their wages as a result of involuntary temporary reductions in working time. Employers are compensated for expenditure on training and skills upgrading of workers who are threatened with redundancy. Subsidies are paid to finance the wages of workers temporarily transferred to other jobs, on condition that the employer preserves their main jobs. A nationwide paid public works programme has been introduced to provide job opportunities to the unemployed.

As a result of these Acts and the measures introduced, since March this year, there has been a slowing of the negative trend and a slight improvement in the labour market situation. The number of workers who are not fully employed has decreased, and the rate of job losses has slowed, there has been an increase in the number of vacancies and the number of unemployed workers registered with the state employment service has fallen. During the period from January to April 2009, 1.3 million persons availed themselves of the state employment services, and 20 per cent of them were placed in jobs.

However, the global economic crisis means that the world will never be the same again.

The global economy and the economies of many countries, including Ukraine, need new approaches. It will be a long time before the volume of industrial production reaches previous levels. Meanwhile, millions of people worldwide are suffering from a lack of food, housing and basic social services. We therefore propose taking advantage of the situation to humanize society. Social services for the population require a considerable amount of human resources and, with the support of the State, private initiatives can provide millions of new jobs throughout the global economy. We in Ukraine see all the advantages of such an approach and will give due attention to developing social services. We will strengthen the powers and broaden the competences of local authorities. We will promote recovery in the agricultural sector by strengthening rural communities and assisting in the establishment of agricultural service cooperatives. The Government has taken a decision to broaden the powers of rural communities, to earmark 100 per cent of certain taxes to tackle the needs of such communities and, of course, to support any private initiative in the agricultural and service sectors. The resources of the Stabilization Fund, part of the State Budget of Ukraine, could be used for this purpose and we are counting on the support of the social partners in this initiative.

For us, the present situation means we need the experience of other countries more than ever before, and this current session is particularly important for us. We value the efforts of the ILO, led by its Director-General, Mr Somavia, to create the opportunity to exchange best experiences worked out and perfected by the international community on the road to overcoming the effects of the global financial crisis.

The Report of the Director-General, by concentrating on the social dimensions of the crisis and detailing the disruptions it has wrought on the lives of everyday people all over the globe, has reminded us all of the ambiguous nature of globalization.

These last ten years have seen development making great strides all around the world. In many countries, growing political stability and expanding democratization have encouraged investment and spurred growth. Poverty has decreased, and workers were beginning to enjoy decent living standards. Quite suddenly, all these hard-won gains are at risk.

The collapse of financial markets, the retreat of foreign direct investment, the fall of currency values, shrinking demands for commodity exports: all of these are adversely affecting output, incomes and employment, particularly in the emerging economies.

Many developing countries – our own included – are hurting from the loss of relatively well-paid jobs in the formal sector, mostly in electronic components, garments, information technology, mining and other export-oriented industries. Those displaced workers are retreating into the shared poverty of the informal economy.

In the Philippines, we acknowledge that if we are to come through this recession without too much harm, there is a great deal we must do in terms of fiscal and monetary policy. Yet we also believe our responses to these problems will be truly meaningful only if and when these responses are able to safeguard people's jobs and livelihoods.

The creation and protection of jobs is the top priority of our Government. Its main goal is to protect jobs and create new ones, while also providing the most vulnerable sectors with all the safety nets the Government can afford. To achieve this goal, our President has issued an executive order directing all government agencies to set aside part of their approved budgets for a Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP).

From maintaining roads to creating green jobs, from building classrooms to improving health delivery services through the hiring of inexperienced, yet licensed nurses to work in rural communities, the Government of the Philippines has taken its role as a job provider very seriously.

Our target this year is to employ 500,000 jobless Filipinos. There are also programmes for our overseas workers and those in the merchandise export sector as these two groups are vulnerable in the global crisis. To prepare for better times, the Philippines has poured billions of pesos into technical and vocational skills training, for an even more competitive Filipino workforce. Filipino workers, despite the economic meltdown, continue to be in demand all over the world. Last year, 8 million Filipinos working overseas sent home more than US\$16.4 billion through banking channels alone, and there are few signs that foreign labour demand is falling.

Still, the effects of the financial crisis on migrant workers should not be ignored. As part of a growing protectionist trend, foreign workers are often the first to be let go, despite numerous years of service or the quality of skills that they possess.

Let me speak of yet another threat, this time one that has become a recurring nightmare for shipping companies all over the world. I refer to the con-

tinued threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden confronting our seafarers: a threat that requires global unity and action. I speak for all Filipino sea-based workers and their families when I refer to the humanitarian dimensions of piracy in the Gulf of Aden. While poverty and lawlessness may have taken hold of that part of the world, that must not infringe the right of maritime workers to earn a living without compromising their lives. I urge the ILO to discuss this problem openly and extensively, as a serious occupational hazard faced by hundreds of seafarers daily.

Meanwhile, we continue both to sharpen and to broaden our overseas workers' range of skills, to maintain our country's lead as the forerunner of tomorrow's distributed economy.

Earlier this year in Manila, the Philippines hosted the ILO High-level Regional Forum on Responding to the Economic Crisis in the Asia-Pacific region. As I did then, I wish to emphasize now that any national response strategies do not detract from our commitment to decent work for all. In fact, we believe that, now more than ever, amidst today's trials facing our economy, our businesses and our jobs, the four pillars of decent work should be at the core of all crisis responses. The Philippines therefore expresses its staunch support for the ILO's Global Jobs Pact that places jobs and labour market issues together with social protection and respect for workers' rights at the heart of stimulus packages and national policies dealing with the global crisis.

At the multilateral level, now is the time to ensure that the wealth of resources flowing into national economic stimulus programmes is used optimally and equitably. For their part, multilateral institutions should recognize the need for national and regional agendas to complement decent work goals.

Lastly, my delegation sees the current situation as the opportune moment for us in the ILO to take a big step forward towards our decent work goal, that of actualizing these principles at the local and national levels.

In the Philippines, we also note that the global crisis appears to be deeper than most of us anticipated. In East Asia, we are dealing with the likelihood that the downturn will be protracted as well as severe through cooperation. We now urge other States to band together similarly in mutual help groups to better survive this threat to all our countries.

Above all else, we continue to draw on the resilience of our people as our primary source of strength.

Original Portuguese: Mr FELICIO (Worker, Brazil)

The workers are not prepared to pay for this crisis. The solution to the crisis is to generate jobs and income. Our Confederation has a particular concept of development, in which the State has a central role to play in organizing the economy, drafting wealth distribution policies and increasing the value attached to work.

Currently, the capitalist economy is facing one of its most serious crises since 1929. It is a structural crisis, affecting a system that exploits male and female workers, reduces incomes and condemns millions of people to hunger and poverty. Since the closing decades of the twentieth century, this system has been guided by financial and commercial liberalization policies. Policies for market deregulation and self-regulation are the cause of the current financial crisis.

The result of this deregulation without any controls is a process of unlimited growth in the financial sector, which points to a gap between the wealth produced in the form of paper and real wealth, which is obtained through production and labour.

Given the number of institutions and companies involved, the values that are at stake and the risk of the rapid spread of the effects of the crisis to investment, production and employment, the governments of developed and developing countries have been adopting a series of measures, including implementing rescue packages for the institutions affected, increasing the liquidity of the economy and changing interest rates and exchange rates. But these measures have not been clearly offset, and there has therefore been a simple transfer of public money into the hands of speculators.

The Government of Brazil has adopted measures to safeguard the credit system in Brazil and to protect the real economy from the crisis. It has released reserves and allowed public banks to incorporate financial and non-financial institutions that are in difficulty. Our Confederation insists that such measures must be offset by benefits for the State and for workers. The Confederation considers that state intervention cannot mean the nationalization of the losses of the financial sector, which would affect society as a whole. During the recent growth period, we saw the privatization of profits, which meant enormous annual profits for banks, totalling tens of billions of dollars in Brazil.

Our Confederation reaffirms that any threat to job losses should be combated through the mobilization of workers. Fighting for jobs and labour is the priority to be able to confront the crisis and we will continue exerting pressure on governments to implement policies aimed at protecting employment and the income of workers.

To that end, it is necessary to implement Conventions Nos 151, 158 and 102.

We have achieved a real increase in the minimum wage for the large majority of occupational categories in Brazil. This is the result of the democratic regime which we have today in Brazil and the good relations which exist between the social partners and the Government.

Furthermore, to make progress in this area we suggest protecting jobs and improving working conditions. Over the next few months we will be preparing historic proposals for initiatives which are compatible with the ITUC and the ILO Decent Work Agenda.

Our Confederation has established a platform for integrated action which aims to implement programmes which are in line with the Decent Work Agenda. We are also trying to establish a national programme which covers the themes which we are always promoting and which deals in particular with enhancing working conditions, which is always at the heart of our strategy.

We are also in favour of strengthening the regulatory role played by the State, and support it in its combat against child labour, slave labour and fraudulent job relations that use intermediaries and certain contracting procedures that violate the rights of workers in rural and urban areas.

The Confederation would like to see inspection and monitoring procedures strengthened and an end to structural weaknesses.

At the international level, the Confederation supports the events and debates promoted by the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (CSA) and the ITUC to help establish a new financial order that, among others, will improve controls of the operations of financial institutions and capital flows between countries, so that we can attenuate the effects of the crisis on our national economies.

Lastly, male and female workers throughout the world should not have to pay for this financial crisis that was created by the neoliberal system and has caused so much harm to all countries.

Mr SUZUKI (*Employer, Japan*)

The global jobs crisis, caused by the financial crisis, provides an opportunity to reconsider a number of factors relevant to the operation of enterprises and whole economies.

The work of the ILO has now proved to be effective and relevant, as we see from the outcome of the Committee of the Whole and the proposed Global Jobs Pact. However, at the national level, the strategic implementation of the Pact now raises an important policy question.

Countries need to ask themselves which industries must be kept from collapsing to maintain a nation's autonomous economic capability. What industries should a country be trading in, and what measures are needed to ensure this occurs, whilst still maintaining a free and open economy?

The answers to these questions are clearly important, but may lend themselves to abuse. But this is not an excuse for avoiding what national stability and security interests dictate must be faced.

The first imperative in dealing with the outcomes at the national level is that the debate about the shortcomings of the process should not degenerate into attacks on the basic conceptual framework of the market economy.

Political leaders must avoid and not encourage protectionism, which led to disaster in the 1930s. With its long memory, the ILO itself is well aware of the dangers of a retreat into protectionism.

The second imperative in dealing with outcomes at the national level is that the policies for national stability and growth should be established on a national basis rather than left to pressure groups, lobbyists and electoral politics.

Highest amongst the priorities must be attention to the educational system, including training, at the national level. This creates human resources for the future; for domestic as well as international communities. This should be a common ground for tripartite constituents at the national as well as the international level, as rightly pointed out by my colleague Ms Ronnie Goldberg of the United States.

The G20 governments made, last April, a large-scale commitment for fiscal and stimulus packages, but without clearly indicating which fiscal resources would meet these new obligations. The possibility of issuing government bonds is not small. Therefore, the credibility of government bonds will be at stake in the near future. The credibility of national financing and governments' abilities to collect tax will become crucial.

At this point, we need to avoid inflation and currency devaluation. All solutions are centred on our capacity to create GDP and increase GDP in the future. Increasing GDP is dependent on increasing the quantity and quality of workers and increasing

labour productivity at the enterprise level, provided that the market is there.

The message is that the real economy is expected to create real GDP growth in order to stabilize the economy, leading to recovery. In fact, the extent to which these new debts must be met will depend on the number of workers and the productivity of enterprises in achieving fruitfulness of human work.

International economic institutions, including the ILO and other United Nations agencies, as well as the G20, or the G8, need to be made more relevant to current economic and social changes, and to devote themselves primarily to issues affecting the long-term health of the global economy.

This should be included in pursuing common ground for recovery, that is to say, the Global Jobs Pact. We need stability in politics, as well as in the economy at the national level. If the gap between the economic and the political orders of the world is not substantially narrowed, the two structures will start to weaken each other and the old dichotomy between capital and labour will soon emerge.

For employers at this point of economic and political disparity, it is important to re-establish and reconfirm their entrepreneurial role within enterprises and within the global market, in order to address common issues in line with the outcomes of the Committee of the Whole of the International Labour Conference this year.

The enterprise is a self-reliant entity, responsible for its survival under any hardship at any time. It is a logical organization, responsible for effective wealth creation, through domestic and global markets in collaboration between capital and labour. It needs not only to be sensitive to market realities and changes, but also proactive in adjusting the organization of work.

The final text of the proposed outcome identifies the importance of well-designed measures at the enterprise level, implemented through social dialogue and collective bargaining. It is important to stress that the capability of workers and employers at the enterprise level should be increased to pursue the common objectives outlined in the Global Jobs Pact.

From the Japanese perspective, we will endeavour to apply the spirit of the Kaizen strategy of innovation to improve the work of wealth creation. We are confident that the joint efforts and ingenuity of workers and employers using Kaizen in the world of work will bear fruit.

We welcome that the Global Jobs Pact arising from the work of the Conference will play its part in assisting our efforts to meet the challenges of the economic crisis and will complement the innovation and with the Kaizen spirit that we bring to a meeting of this calibre.

Let us work together and let us not wait.

Original Arabic: Mr GHOBASH (Minister of Labour, United Arab Emirates)

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my country's commitment to working with the Organization, as well as the deep wish of the Ministry of Labour of the United Arab Emirates to enhance cooperation with the Organization to achieve our common interests and objectives.

I also would like to express thanks to the organizers of this Conference for giving me the chance to speak before you at this ILO Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis.

The integration of the economy of the United Arab Emirates into the global economy has taken place very swiftly. The economic openness advocated by the Government and some favourable external circumstances, such as the increase in the price of oil and the increase in foreign direct investment in our country, are probably the reason for the unprecedented financial health of our country in recent times.

At the same time, these policies of opening up to the global economy and to globalization obviously make our national economy more sensitive and more vulnerable to external crises such as the one we are facing today.

The financial crisis, which began in the real estate credit sector in the United States of America in 2008 and has extended to various sectors of the economy in all countries throughout the world, has impacted significantly on economies in our region, including our own national economy. You will surely know that there are two main factors that have contributed to the expansion of the crisis: firstly, the interdependency of global economies because of world trade and the mobility and transfer of capital; secondly, the financial recession and the loss of liquidity on financial markets worldwide, along with the loss of trust on the part of investors and consumers.

These factors have had direct consequences on the economy and the labour market in our country. Other internal factors have also added to the effects of the global crisis. These include the withdrawal of a large proportion of the foreign deposits in banks in the United Arab Emirates because of rumours of potential depreciation in our national currency and an unprecedented increase in real estate prices in 2007 and 2008. All this has had a negative effect on available liquidities and has led to a lessening of deposits versus credits.

However, from the first signs of the crisis, the Council of Ministers took a number of preventive measures that have enabled us to reduce the consequences of the crisis. The necessary liquidity was injected into the banking sector, \$30 billion, while deposits in national and foreign banks within the country have been guaranteed, with no limits being imposed until 2013.

Despite the direct consequences of the global crisis on the real estate markets and financial and banking services in the United Arab Emirates, its effects still remained limited and contained. The slowdown in recruitment is likely to continue, in particular in comparison with the increase in recruitment rates in the preceding years. However, the situation in our country is different to that in other countries. We are not expecting an increase in unemployment among the labour force in the country, which is largely a foreign labour force. However, we are expecting a slowdown in the influx of this labour force following the departure of workers whose work projects finish, and who will not be replaced.

We are also expecting that it will be more difficult for young people from the United Arab Emirates to enter the labour market and to find jobs in the private sector, due to the lack of growth and reductions in the number of jobs created.

The Ministry of Labour has taken a number of measures to tackle this crisis, including assisting enterprises to overcome the crisis by encouraging and facilitating the mobility of workers within the

labour market; granting protection to certain categories of workers, in particular those who are most threatened by redundancies, by guaranteeing payment of severance pay; and by supporting training for the unemployed.

However, we are aware that we also need to be preparing for the post-crisis period. Despite all the difficulties we face, we see the possibility of improvement in the future, as well as of a re-examination of the priorities of national economies, including our own.

We need to use the crisis as an opportunity to develop different high value added sectors of the economy; strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises; and promote the creation of decent jobs in order to attract skilled foreign labour.

We are also aware that, in order to tackle this crisis, we have to work together with our regional partners: the Gulf Cooperation Council States and

Arab countries in general, as well as the Asian countries that provide our labour force.

We shall also try to make the most of the very important experience of the relevant international organizations, in particular the ILO, and we are looking forward to the publication of the final report of the Committee of the Whole at the end of the Conference in order to take note of the new possibilities for technical cooperation between the ILO and the United Arab Emirates in the future.

I would like to express my country's support for the efforts of reshaping the global financial system and strengthening the regulations and the monitoring measures of the financial sectors, as well as reinforcing international cooperation to ensure transparency in the markets and guarantee the rights of investors and consumers.

(The Conference adjourned at 7.35 p.m.)

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