



Fourteenth sitting

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President: Mr de Robien

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE RECURRENT DISCUSSION ON EMPLOYMENT: SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL

Original French: The PRESIDENT

We will begin with the consideration of the report of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment, published in *Provisional Record* No. 18. The Officers of the Committee were as follows: Chairperson: Mr Mocanu; Employer Vice-Chairperson: Ms Goldberg; Worker Vice-Chairperson: Ms Burrow; and Reporter: Mr Archer. I invite them to come up to the rostrum, and give the floor to the Reporter to present the report.

Mr ARCHER (Government, Ghana; Reporter of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment)

Throughout our discussion we felt the significance of being the first recurrent discussion committee.

This has been an important responsibility in the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

That responsibility was to consider how the ILO could better understand the needs of its members and respond to them more acceptably.

The next task was already very serious because of the lack of attention given to employment in the agenda of many governments' economic and social planning in the past. But it took on an even greater urgency in the struggle to respond to the impact on employment of the economic and financial crisis that engulfed the world in 2008.

The report documents how we came together as representatives of governments, workers and employers from all over the world to discuss the particular ways these impacts could affect each of our countries, and to strengthen our resolve to create effective partnerships across government ministries and with other international agencies in order to put productive employment and decent work at the heart of national and international policies frameworks.

The report reflects the substance of our discussion. It reflects the areas of agreement and the areas of divergence, and how we found common ground together. It captures the urgency of responding effectively to current employment problems. The report further summarizes our ideals for meaningful and achievable approaches to solving these problems.

The report follows the chronology of our discussions. It begins with a discussion of economic and

employment trends and the challenges posed to all of us. Then it goes on to summarize our discussions on policies to promote full employment, decent and productive work, microeconomic policy frameworks, labour and employment policy, improving employability, productivity, living standards and social progress, and investment policies.

As you know, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization mandated a more integrated approach to achieving strategic objectives. This approach focuses on the inseparable and related and humanly supportive nature of our work on employment: social protection, social dialogue and, of course, labour standards. This concern for coherence is featured prominently throughout this report.

For example, the report documents the presentations by the Executive Directors and the Directors of the Gender Bureau about building coherence across the strategic objectives of the ILO. Our work also included a brief briefing by officers of the Committee on the Application of Standards on the results of their discussion on employment-related standards, so that we could take their conclusions into account in our own deliberations.

Finally, the report accurately captures how we worked together to finalize the conclusions. We accepted draft conclusions that were painstakingly prepared by the drafting group, and then made some important but significant improvements. In that process we exemplified the spirit and good practices of social dialogue.

I am therefore pleased to submit this report of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment to the Plenary of the Conference this morning for your adoption.

Mr WOOLFORD (Employer, Canada; speaking on behalf of the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment)

The Employers' preparations for the discussion started with our firm support for the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. That was the key reference point for the development of our position. Our spokesperson also drew on the International Organisation of Employers' vision for the ILO: a tripartite collective body that provides pragmatic assistance to its constituent partners as they face the challenges before them.

Little did we know how enormous these challenges would be for some countries. Our discussion took place in a context unforeseen by the 2008 Declaration – the financial and jobs crisis addressed last year by the Global Jobs Pact. We were mindful that work related to the crisis and the implementation of

the Global Jobs Pact was an essential component of the ILO's response to Members' needs but we were also mindful that our discussion was setting precedents and priorities beyond the present situation.

We welcomed the focus of the cyclical review on assessing and improving the practical value the Organization gives to its membership – the operational priorities, the programme activities and operations, and the budgetary and governance decisions.

Throughout the discussions, we always encouraged the Committee to zero in on whether existing policy and activities were helpful and adequate, or whether they needed review and further development. We posed a few direct questions that were anchored in the 2008 Declaration – what was the ILO asked to do? What has it done? What was the impact? Which measures were successful, and which were not?

We recognize that in this house policy debates are inevitable. But we wish less of our time had been spent re-discussing existing policies and more had been devoted to looking at their impact. In future cyclical reviews, we will need to be conscious of the balance we strike in this regard. The questions that guided our approach, which I referred to earlier, are a useful tool for all of us in this respect.

Since this was our first attempt to make the cyclical review system work, one of the most important outcomes is what we were taught about the expectations of different parties and how we can improve the process to deliver the expectations of the follow-up we decided on in 2008. We found opportunities for further development and improvement. While we commend the Office report, we hope future reports can push further to provide constituents, as well as the Office, with a more complete impact assessment. We hope that future reports will tell us what difference ILO policies and activities made, rather than just of what they consisted. These are not criticisms. They are constructive lessons to guide us next time.

Make no mistake the Employers' group is largely pleased with the results. The conclusions contain clear recommendations to governments, the social partners and the Office on what to do to improve this Organization's impact with regard to work, which is fundamental to everything else that we address. They recognize the fact that employment comes from enterprise, and enterprise comes from investment, that employment is an essential precondition for the establishment of rights, social protection and social dialogue. It is important for this Organization to think harder about how its work affects investment and how to perfect the balance between economic and social objectives in public policy in order to encourage investment, sustainable enterprise and jobs growth.

Of course, the ILO's role in the investment climate is focused on the labour market aspect. Other international organizations have complementary roles and the Employers' group believes that the best results will be achieved through efforts to accomplish policy coherence among these institutions. We encourage the Office to participate actively in the dialogue among these institutions from the perspective of its mandate.

The conclusions recognize that the ILO does particularly valuable work in areas such as skills development, but that this work remains insufficient. We hope the Director-General and the Governing Body will reallocate more resources to those areas

where the ILO can have a significant impact on job creation.

The conclusions also emphasize the importance of labour market information. Employment policies are most effective when they are based on a sound knowledge of what is actually going on.

The ILO can play a strategic role in producing better employment outcomes in member States by helping them to produce the data and analysis on which reliable policy needs to be based.

We recognize that the ILO must work within the resources available to it. The priorities we have selected in the conclusions, obviously, will require a reallocation of these resources.

Finally, I come to where it all starts: constituent needs. The Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization emphasizes that the ILO should be responsive to constituent needs. This is a critical element in this year's conclusions. The only way this Organization can make a difference to people's lives is if what it says and does has relevance to and takes account of local realities. In this regard, the Decent Work Country Programmes have a vital role to play. We hope that constituents will make good use of them to communicate their real needs and priorities.

Allow me to finish by thanking all those who participated in the Committee. As you can see from the report, we did not always agree with the Workers' group, but that did not get in the way of a constructive and friendly relationship. We very much appreciated the spirit in which the Worker Vice-Chairperson approached the discussions, and her willingness to seek outcomes that all could support.

We valued the contributions of the Government representatives who often introduced useful ideas that are now reflected in the outcome document. The spirit of tripartism worked well between our three groups, and that was thanks to the conductor of the orchestra, our Chairperson. He has an easy manner, which quietly but effectively brought us to our good results. We, on the Employers' side, only learned afterwards that he began life on the Workers' side of the room. We also owe our thanks to the ILO team that supported the Committee in its work. Theirs was a great challenge to prepare and deliver the very first cyclical review in the history of the ILO. It was uncharted territory but with broad consultations and much consideration, they have set a good precedent. We are still in a learning mode as far as this exercise is concerned, of course. As we said earlier, future reports will need to contain more impact information and also more on cross-cutting issues where the focus of one strategic objective could be a significant factor in our ability to achieve another. But this year we had a good start. The secretariat did a superb job, both those who worked directly with us and those behind the scenes. We also thank the interpreters for allowing us to pass seamlessly between our working languages.

The Employers' group commends these conclusions for adoption and looks forward to making the cyclical review exercise one that will increase the value the ILO gives to its Members.

Ms KELLY (Worker, New Zealand; speaking on behalf of the Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment)

Our Committee had the challenge of testing new ground by holding the first Conference debate on the mandate of the ILO Declaration on Social Jus-

tice for a Fair Globalization. The Declaration recognizes that standard-setting and other activities of the ILO need to be based on a good understanding of the diverse realities and needs of its Members. These realities change over time, as do the areas that need to be given priority by governments, employers' and workers' organizations and the Office in their activities. To be relevant in the world means having relevant answers to the most urgent problems.

One of the biggest problems facing the world today is the global financial, economic, employment and social crisis. This crisis did not occur because of labour market protection, or too much social security, or skills deficits, or a lack of entrepreneurial freedom. It occurred because of an over-confidence in the self-regulatory capacities of markets, particularly financial markets, and lack of understanding of and commitment to the importance of employment.

The macroeconomic model based on insufficient financial market controls, unsustainable trade imbalances, debt-filled consumption and a declining wage share has proven to be fundamentally flawed. A world of ever-growing inequality, where the wealthy few refuse to share profits fairly, including those made through productivity gains, with the many working men and women around the world who generate this wealth through their work is unsustainable, immoral and unreasonable.

The conclusions from our discussion call on governments to put employment creation and growth at the heart of all macroeconomic policies, and we request the Governing Body to organize a forum during its session on macroeconomic policy options for rapid, high-quality employment generation and to examine how the ILO is promoting employment objectives through macroeconomic advice to governments and constituents.

We also call on the Office to improve and coordinate its technical and analytical capacity to examine macroeconomic policies from the perspective of employment outcomes and to increase its engagement in international macroeconomic policy dialogues. We seek that it pursue partnerships and dialogue with other relevant international organizations across the multilateral system on integrating employment objectives into macroeconomic advice and policy frameworks. The need for national and international employment-centred macroeconomic policy is overwhelming, as is the need for much more high-quality research on policy advice in this field by the ILO. Our Committee discussed these needs intensely, and we look forward to much more work and evidence-based policy advice by the ILO in this area.

The ILO has been at the forefront in calling for a more inclusive globalization. Years ago now, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization highlighted the deficiencies of the unfair current globalization regime. The Declaration on Social Justice envisaged a development model centred on decent work and social justice. This conceptual thinking and policy guidance from the ILO is much needed and recognized today, and this is strongly expressed in our conclusions.

To quote our conclusions, "the inseparable, inter-related and mutually supportive nature of the four strategic objectives in the Global Jobs Pact is increasingly looked to not only as an effective crisis response and recovery strategy, but as the framework of a new social and economic development

paradigm, characterized by employment-centred and income-led growth with equity".

This new paradigm recognizes, *inter alia*, that "the full economic and social growth potential of a society cannot be realized if people are not benefiting from a social protection floor". It calls on governments to consider combining measures such as minimum wages, income transfers, social protection, employment policies, public investment, and skills and entrepreneurship development, to improve the quality and quantity of jobs.

Other policy areas for workers that are included in our conclusions are to ensure that trade policy is analysed against employment impacts and that trade contributes to employment. The conclusions also note strongly the importance of industrial and sectoral policies that promote decent and productive employment, and seek more work by the Office on multinational enterprises and the social economy. My colleagues will speak briefly on these issues in more detail.

Our conclusions highlight the great importance of both international labour standards, as key instruments to promote social justice, ensure labour rights and prevent a downward pressure on wages and working conditions, and of enabling rights, particularly freedom of association and collective bargaining. They identify a series of standards that governments should ratify and implement, and that should be urgently promoted by the Office.

We must express our disappointment at the fact that the conclusions do not include a proposal for a recommendation on policy coherence, which the Workers promoted and a number of governments supported. It is clear that one of the major challenges we have in the area of employment is lack of coherence among economic, financial, employment and social policies. This lack of coherence was also recognized by the experts in the General Survey.

We believe that a recommendation that would give guidance to governments on how to improve this coherence at national level, so as to maximize the employment outcomes of economic policies, is a must, and that it would add value to the current body of international labour standards.

I am happy, though, that agreement was reached to discuss this issue further at the November 2010 session of the Governing Body, with a document to be submitted that outlines the elements and possible forms of a framework, with the objective of promoting coherence. This framework should give governments and social partners the best possible policy advice on how to put full and productive employment and decent work at the centre of economic and social policies.

We are pleased with our conclusions and hope that governments and social partners will contribute to efforts to implement them at the national level. But we also want to make a strong call on the Office to ensure proper implementation of the proposed work, in line with the most urgent priorities identified by the Committee.

As I said at the beginning, we have undertaken discussion on the recurrent item for the first time. This process has not been easy and could certainly be improved. The mandate from the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization is clear. The Organization will introduce a scheme of recurrent discussions within the International Labour Conference: first, to understand better the diverse realities and needs of its Members with respect to each stra-

tegic objective; and, second, to respond more effectively to them, using all the means of action at its disposal, including standards-related action, technical cooperation and the technical and research capacity of the Office, and adjust its priorities and programmes of action accordingly.

Obviously, the latter cannot be done properly without the former. If we do not have a deep analytical understanding of the realities and needs that member States and employers' and workers' organizations face, we do not have a reference point for developing high-quality, relevant ILO work.

The work of the Organization means not only the work of the Office but also our work here in this Conference, our work in setting standards, and our work to implement ILO standards in our home countries. We can only discuss how to adjust our work if we have discussion and full understanding of the realities and needs that Members face.

The report of the Office did not meet our expectations in this respect, and neither did the draft conclusions of the Office. We expressed this quite frankly during our discussions. Both were very disappointing. It really was a missed opportunity. However, the good thing is that we were able to fix this in the process, including with the support of the Office, and the outcomes reflect this. This gives us an opportunity to show that we are a learning organization and that we will do better next year.

Next year's report must focus on the most important issues our societies are facing in the area of social security. In the light of the Declaration on Social Justice and the Global Jobs Pact, we want this report to identify the most important challenges and possible solutions, using all ILO means of action, including standard setting.

We will have an opportunity to come back to these issues at the November 2010 session of the Governing Body, when we will assess this during the recurrent discussion and draw lessons for the future. We are in a global crisis and we need the policies of the ILO to be focused on responding and prioritizing in this respect. The Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization is designed to use the ILO's capacity, standard-setting role and advisory capacity to achieve social justice. This is the mandate, and that is what the recurrent item discussion needs to achieve.

While there was clearly room for improvement here, this year's work has not been wasted, and the conclusions reached will provide guidance to the Office in preparing a report for next year's discussion that draws the right conclusions from this year's experience.

Let me finish by thanking our Chairperson for leading our Committee so skilfully during the last two weeks. I would also like to thank the Governments and our colleagues from the Employers' benches for the discussions in our Committee, and the staff of the Office for their tireless work during and in preparation for this session of the Conference.

Finally, I would like to thank the Worker Vice-Chairperson, who cannot be here today, and all members of the Workers' group, for their hard work to present their viewpoint in this discussion. We have identified important priorities for governments, employers' and workers' organizations and the Office in order to focus our common ILO work on immediate crisis response and on working towards a new economic paradigm.

We look forward to the Governing Body discussion in November on the follow-up to these conclusions. Let me express the sincere hope that discussions will be followed up with action. That is what the workers of the world expect and need from this Organization.

Mr MOCANU (*Secretary of State, Minister of Labour, the Family and Social Protection, Romania*)

As the representatives of the Workers' and Employers' groups have already noted, the work of this Committee is unprecedented. Two years ago the delegates in this room adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. This Declaration set expectations for improving the work of the Organization in order to realize the promise of decent work for all.

In adopting the Declaration in 2008, the Conference also adopted an implementation agenda. That agenda calls for a systematic review of the work of the Organization in each of the four strategic objectives, including a review of how that work is being carried out in an integrated, interrelated and mutually supportive manner.

In this 99th Session of the International Labour Conference, we have embarked on the first of this planned series of recurrent discussions. Taking up the strategic objective of employment, our Committee had the task of assessing how well we are doing as an Organization in understanding members' needs and in designing and implementing effective employment policies. This was undertaken with the aim of making recommendations for improvement.

Employment needs are growing in all regions, as the Reporter and the representatives of the Employers' and Workers' groups have already eloquently summarized, and as the Director-General stated convincingly in his Report, *Recovery and growth with decent work*, the background reports by the Office documented major employment challenges, including many long-term problems that have been made worse by the financial and economic crisis.

Our discussions and the agreed conclusions acknowledged many areas in which the Organization is making a difference through actions by governments and the social partners, and with the cooperation and sound policy advice of the Office.

Many times, delegates praised the work of the ILO in areas of employment policy, sustainable enterprise and skills development. However, the conclusions adopted by the Committee identify some new priorities and include concrete recommendations for how we can improve the effectiveness of the ILO. Many of these recommendations take on acute urgency in the current economic environment. For example, the conclusions point to the importance of examining macro-economic policies from the perspective of employment outcomes.

As I said, in my remarks to the Conference on Monday during the special event with high-level panels on the Global Jobs Pact and macro-economic policies, the conclusions of our Committee urge governments to assess the design and implementation of a pro-employment macroeconomic policy framework that promotes growth, investment, sustainable enterprise, decent work, employability and skills development and the fair distribution of income in order to place full and productive employment and decent work at the centre of economic and social policies. A similar conclusion was agreed in

terms of the employment impact of trade and investment policies.

The Office is asked to strengthen expertise in evaluating the employment and decent work impact of trade, investment and industrial policies and to assist Members in taking into account research findings and experience in national policy-making.

The Office is particularly requested to strengthen its work on the review and impact assessment of employment policies and programmes. Conclusions in these policy areas, as well as in the area of skills development and sustainable enterprise, call for increased efforts at the national and international levels to improve coherence between employment and economic, social and financial policies.

One of the tasks of this Committee was to look also at coherence within our Organization. We appreciated that the Executive Directors of the four sectors of the Office and the Director of the Bureau for Gender Equality contributed to the work of this Committee. The information they provided in one of our sessions helped us address the issue of inseparable, interrelated and mutually supported work towards achieving employment objectives.

We also appreciate that the Officers of the Committee on the Application of Standards met with us to share the conclusions of their discussion on the employment-related standards. The timing of the work of the two Committees was set specifically to allow the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment to take into account those conclusions. This cooperation between Committees has set a good precedent for future recurrent discussions.

I would like to thank the representative of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director for Employment, and the secretariat team, for their good management and for their long hours of work to produce all the draft documents. I have enjoyed working with all of you.

I have a special word of thanks for the Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee. I hope that their colleagues representing them here today will convey to them our thanks for their exemplary practice of social dialogue. They found many important areas of agreement and explained their views in ways that kept open the channels of communication and created opportunities for finding solutions based on consensus.

I would not want to forget to also thank the Government delegates for their thoughtful interventions and for sharing their experiences. I appreciate the diligence and effective work of the Government representatives from different regions during the work of the Committee's drafting committee.

All of us will have important opportunities to share the conclusions on the recurrent discussion on employment with our colleagues in government ministries, trade unions and employers' organizations, and many of the follow-up actions by the Office will be discussed in the Governing Body in November.

The conclusions set out recommended actions, new priorities and commitments for each of us. I am convinced that, if we act on them, the Committee will have met its challenge to help make this Organization more effective in solving employment problems.

I am pleased now to recommend to you the outcome of our Committee's work for adoption.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

The general discussion of the Report of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment is now open.

Mr GEORGE (*Worker, South Africa*)

I would like to say a few words on trade and investment policies. Our conclusions are clear. Employment and decent work have to be at the centre of trade and investment policies. This requires strengthening investment policies and assessing them on their contribution to employment and decent work. This is an important task for our governments, in which they should be assisted by the International Labour Organization. We also need to ensure that developing countries can diversify their economies and move away from specialization in the low value added agriculture and manufacturing, to which they have been driven by globalization. They need to be able to industrialize, transform their economies and grow richer. The current drive for deep and fast trade liberalization will prevent developing countries from doing so and will keep them poor.

Governments, social partners and the Office need to have a fresh look at industrial policies and sectoral strategies to make industrial development happen. We welcome the announcement by the South African Minister of Finance that the overall allocation for industrial incentives meanwhile will be 2.8 billion rand for the period 2010–11, 2.3 billion rand for 2011–12, and 3.7 billion rand for 2012–13. This will be divided across the automotive and clothing schemes as well as the business process outsourcing incentive, the small and medium-sized enterprises development programme, the film and television production incentive, the small and medium-sized manufacturers development programme, the stable food fortification programme, industrial development zones and the enterprise investment programme, as well as other smaller schemes.

Organized workers and manufacturers in South Africa have signed a cooperation agreement to work together on the factors responsible for the decline in manufacturing competitiveness, including the high cost and limited availability of capital, remote skills and unreliable and expensive boat and rail systems. These challenges have resulted in indications that South Africa's industrial and export competitiveness have declined in comparison with other developing countries. Much remains to be done. We also need to ensure a fair adjustment process for workers who lose their jobs through trade globalization. Such adjustment measures need to be put in place by governments and, again, the ILO can and should assist in this regard. Finally, I cannot repeat enough the need to strengthen the bargaining power of trade unions. If we want to ensure a better distribution of the benefits of globalization, the first step is to ensure that trade union rights and the right to collective bargaining are recognized in export processing zones and that export sectors in general renew their efforts in this respect.

In conclusion, we look forward to the rapid implementation of the Office's mandate in this area and to ensuring not only better distribution of the benefits of globalization, but also a more sustainable growth rate for developing countries.

I would like to start by saying that my delegation will give its full support to the report in *Provisional Record* No. 18. My delegation would also like to thank all those involved in this discussion, which was notable for its spirit of consensus and dialogue, which we also commend.

With your permission, I would like to refer to two specific points in this report that in our view deserve special attention. The first point relates to paragraph 50 of the conclusions, and concerns coherence. We would like to call to mind what was said by the President of the Swiss Confederation on 2 June this year, at the opening of our Conference, when she stressed the fundamental importance of coherence in the multilateral system, and particularly coherence with respect to the ILO's fundamental standards. In the spirit of the 2008 Declaration, we firmly believe that paragraph 50 of our conclusions must ensure that we achieve coherence in economic, financial, social and employment policies, in conjunction with all the institutions mentioned in that paragraph.

The challenge of coherence in respect of employment and decent work is a challenge that we must take up now and not tomorrow or the day after that. This also means that we must promote employment as an ongoing challenge, not just a post-crisis one. The continued action of the ILO in respect of employment and a coherent approach to the promotion of employment and decent work must make the ILO a strong, indispensable organization, and must make work and decent employment the keystone of the new architecture of world governance.

One last comment, in reference to subparagraph 2(c) of our resolution. We have held our first recurrent discussion. It was a start, it was conclusive and positive, but we can do better; there is no reason why not. Therefore my delegation particularly welcomes this subparagraph in our resolution, which asks that the Steering Group evaluate the work of the first recurrent discussion.

Switzerland would like to make a number of points that it considers important for the future of our recurrent discussions. In future, reports for recurrent discussions should be shorter, more succinct and more cross cutting, to demonstrate the genuine interdependence of the strategic objectives that guide our institution. They should also clearly indicate the means used to strengthen the ILO's capacities to serve its constituents. So, short reports – a maximum of 40 pages would be ideal. Then, the report on our recurrent discussions should also be shorter and, if I might say so, more punchy. It should be no more than ten pages long, and should again stress the interdependence of the strategic objectives and the need for coherence among them, and should put all ILO action in the context of the activities of other international institutions. It should also indicate the priority action to be taken by the ILO at all levels, be it technical cooperation, standard-setting activities or any other action that the Conference and the Governing Body might decide upon.

Finally, to adhere to the spirit and the letter of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and to allow the ILO's message to be heard everywhere through credible action, we request that future resolutions accompanying the work

on recurrent discussions be short, operational and accompanied by points for decision that are clear to everyone.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Thank you, Mr Elmiger, for your message advocating greater efficiency. I would like to ask you once again to be the spokesperson for the Conference and convey our respectful and warm thanks to the President of the Swiss Confederation for having opened this 99th Session of the International Labour Conference with a rich, clear and concise message.

Mr DE REGIL GÓMEZ (Employer, Mexico)

As Mr Woolford has already said, the Employers are keen to see the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization given a proper follow-up. We consider this first attempt at the cyclical review process to have been a very positive experience that has given us useful lessons on how to move forward in creating an effective system. Every organization has to constantly reassess the value it gives to its members, adapting to change where necessary and strengthening those things that need a boost.

The 2008 Declaration gives a very special place to one of the Organization's central means of action, namely standard setting. It recognizes that the Organization must promote standard-setting policy as a cornerstone of ILO activities by enhancing their relevance to the world of work, and ensure the role of standards as a useful means of achieving the ILO's constitutional objectives. This needs to be followed through. Standards, by their very nature, are a cross-cutting theme because, as a key means of action, they play a role in achieving all the strategic objectives of the ILO. That is why we need to constantly enhance their relevance to the world of work, taking account of how that world is changing. Today's young people entering the labour market are very different from their counterparts just ten or 20 years ago, let alone when I was their age. Their educational attainment level is generally higher in practically every country now, and their attitude is different because of the very different world in which they have grown up. The world of work they enter is different, not least because of the technological advances they enjoy both at work and outside it.

Today's world of work is a very different place to what it was when the majority of our standards were conceived. This is the reason why we need to constantly review their continuing relevance and improve them where necessary. It is for this reason that the Employers are keen to see the establishment of a regular mechanism for reviewing standards. Obviously, the Conference is not the most appropriate forum in which to establish such a mechanism. Our other governance mechanism, the Governing Body, is a much better place to deal with the detail and extent of the work involved. We therefore made this proposal to the Governing Body, and we raised it again during the standards-related segment of the recurrent discussion on employment, because of its special significance for employment. We were pleased to see recognition of the changes in the world of work in paragraph 28 of the Committee's conclusions, because this is precisely what drives our concern for keeping standards relevant to a changing world of work.

We therefore call once more on the Governing Body to establish a regular mechanism for keeping standards up to date, in a manner similar to the work done in the Cartier Working Group.

We hope this will be followed through. As our spokesperson, Ms Goldberg, said at the start of the Committee's discussions, we attach great importance to an ILO that gives pragmatic assistance to its constituents as they face the enormous challenges before them. Keeping standards up to date is one opportunity to provide such assistance.

Original German: Mr ZACH (Worker, Germany)

On behalf of the Workers' delegation, I, too, welcome the outcome of the Committee's work. I should like to draw attention to the importance of wage trends.

One reason for the financial crisis, and the global economic crisis that has followed, is the fact that we have an unequal distribution of income.

For more than 20 years there has been immense pressure on wages. We have hardly seen any collective wage bargaining in various countries where we have not heard the threat that higher wages could mean job losses. Insecure and precarious employment has put additional pressure on wages, which have been regarded only as an expense that had to be reduced in order to remain competitive.

The result was that the proportion of GDP accounted for by workers' incomes has fallen in many countries, while that of income from profits and capital has risen. Workers' wages no longer generate the demand needed to create a positive impetus for growth.

In some countries, consumption has been financed by credit. Workers have to take out loans from banks in order to safeguard a modest level of comfort. On the other hand, some countries have tried to compensate for low demand at home with aggressive export strategies. The promise here was that moderation in wage demands would safeguard jobs. Now we know that, in both cases, it was the employees who were the losers – by losing their jobs or their homes, or both.

"The world should look different after the crisis", according to the Global Jobs Pact adopted here last year. Quite right – and that is why we need a paradigm shift in the way we view wage policy. Wages are not just costs; they generate demand. They are the fertile soil needed for growth to take place.

In a very forward-looking way, the Social Justice Declaration of 2008 calls for a fair distribution of the benefits of progress. That means quite simply that wages must rise at least in a manner commensurate with increases in productivity and prices. That is a key macroeconomic prerequisite for effective employment policy.

Now if this goes too far for some, I would say this: it was not the wage policies of trade unions that led to global economic and social disaster. The responsibility for that lies with those who engaged in irresponsible speculation with money that did not go into workers' incomes but instead went into speculative investments in the quest for further profit. Recovery of the global economy can only happen if we reinforce wages policy and improve wages.

Mr MDWABA (Employer, South Africa)

In introducing this item during the work of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Em-

ployment, the Employers drew attention to the significantly enhanced global consensus on the importance of skills and employability, brought into very sharp focus by the recent crisis.

In commending the Committee's conclusions for adoption, we reiterate this. Led by the G20 response to the crisis, there is renewed global recognition that skills and employability are a critical component of avoiding and responding to crises. In terms of the first section of the Global Jobs Pact, the world must do better and the world should look different after the crisis. In this regard, by way of example, we need to realize that acts of support by the world change perceptions, levels of confidence and skills transfer, and consequently employability. South Africa is a very good example of this by being trusted to host the biggest and most prestigious sporting event in the world, the FIFA World Cup, in its debut on the African continent. Africa is happy and the world will be happier in its changed perceptions and consequently in its changed form for the better. This bolsters confidence all around, decent jobs, and economic growth.

Skills and employability help keep businesses operating, help keep people in work and help facilitate rapid job transitions. We also reiterate that this requires a scaled-up effort from the ILO.

The lessons of the crisis on the added importance of skills and employability demand that the Office build on its strengths and enhance its services and knowledge dissemination.

Paragraphs 31–33 of the Committee's conclusions outline priorities, roles and considerations for the social partners and the Office in the critical area of improving employability, productivity, living standards and social progress.

On skills and employability, the conclusions emphasize life-long learning, qualitative skills transfer, relevant skills development and better access to training. This includes a welcome emphasis on entrepreneurial and business skills and on providing training in the skills that employers actually need to ensure economic growth that creates jobs and, concomitantly, decent work.

I cannot underline the importance of this last point too much. It unashamedly includes an increased and enhanced role for the Office, building on the conclusions of the G20, as set out in paragraph 33. As Employers, we look forward to playing our role in ensuring that the Office can build on its existing strengths in this area to offer a significantly enhanced service to the global community on training, skills development and life-long learning.

We talk a great deal in this house about enhancing the global relevance of the ILO. The area of education and training provides a genuine opportunity to enhance not only the ILO's relevance, but more importantly its contribution to enhancing employability and employment.

The added importance of skills and employability is underscored by the emphasis on information and technology in the Committee's conclusions, as in paragraph 14, and in particular on bridging the technology gap between the developed and the developing world. This very matter was dealt with exhaustively as part of the sustainable enterprises debate a few years ago, connectivity via, inter alia, the provision of broadband in the developing world, being a critical component in bridging the digital gap. The undersea cables that are currently being installed to serve the African continent are a very

good example of this, but greater urgency is required for more progress. Technology and information needs to be used, and used effectively, if they are to yield real benefits. The key to enhancing the productive and employment potential of new technologies is the skills and capacities of those who will use them.

In conclusion, I would like to add my congratulations to those who have complimented the work of the Committee. This has been the first of these cyclical reviews under the Declaration on Social Justice and we have made a fair start in addressing important issues.

The challenge now falls to the Office and to the Governing Body to effectively implement the Committee's conclusions. The employers of the world, and in particular those most engaged with their employees as partners in their personal skills development, will be looking to the Office to realize the opportunities they are offered to enhance their services and global relevance in the area of skills, education and employability. Let us all be united in creating growth that places priority on the creation of decent jobs and sustainability. Let us adopt the African spirit of *Ubuntu* and acknowledge that, as human beings, we are all interconnected.

Original Spanish: Mr MORANTES (Worker, Colombia)

In the work of our Committee, we have seen from all the tripartite constituents greater commitment to the Decent Work Agenda.

I am pleased to point out that in the area of work on multinational enterprises, here in the ILO today we have a major commitment on all sides to supporting the 1977 Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), which is more relevant than ever in the current context of the globalized economy in which we are living.

Now is the time to build a space through the open door provided by the Helpdesk so that multinational enterprises show that, beyond complying with national laws and national regulations, they can commit themselves to adopting measures, actions and social policies based on the principles set out in the ILO Constitution and in the relevant Conventions and Recommendations, including those listed in the annex to the MNE Declaration, and new ones, such as the Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198).

Hence, we are pleased that the conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment have given a clear mandate to the administration of the ILO to "initiate a review of the follow-up mechanism for the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, to be taken up by the Governing Body's Subcommittee on Multinational Enterprises with a view to developing promotional options". Since the OECD too is rethinking its own Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which were adopted almost at the same time as the ILO MNE Declaration, we have a golden opportunity in the ILO to update our own text by adding a new mechanism on the interpretation of the provisions contained in the MNE Declaration.

Enterprises are trying to cooperate with the ILO, including in areas related to procurement policy, and there is no better way to do that than by applying our own fundamental principles and the strategic objective of social dialogue. This can be done

through a commitment to working together to achieve freedom of association and freedom of collective bargaining throughout the supply chain, which should be transformed into an integral part of business development projects and activities.

Another important area of work of the ILO, which we wish to strengthen, is that of cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy. I am thinking in particular of genuine cooperatives. This very important area of activity was a high profile area of the ILO in the 1960s and 1980s, but at the moment it is somewhat marginalized. The unanimous support for the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193), which deals with management, financing and employment issues as well as the legal and political framework, now needs to be reflected in greater resources and to be integrated into initiatives under the Global Jobs Pact. I am talking in particular of a country in which fake cooperatives, set up with the aim of denying workers' rights, have been a serious problem. The ILO has been stalwart in its support, which has enabled us to make a joint effort to change law and practice in this field, although we still have a long way to go.

We are also pleased that the Office has begun to work seriously on the concept of the social economy, guided by the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, with high-quality public services and a viable private sector as the key provider of employment.

It is important to focus attention, as the ILO Office in Africa has done, on the social economy as "a concept designating enterprises and organizations, in particular cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which have a specific feature of producing goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity".

The huge challenges of the informal economy, of rural employment, of local development, linked to a broader economic vision, make it absolutely imperative for the ILO to develop a universal response using all the means at its disposal to ensure that all workers have access to the four pillars of decent work.

Labour standards, including the fundamental principles and rights at work, the creation of decent employment for women and men, social protection for all, tripartism and social dialogue, formalization of the local development economy linked to global supply chains, and the extension of labour rights and laws, including the minimum wage for workers in the informal sector, are priorities on all continents.

Original German: Mr THORNS (Employer, Germany)

The Global Jobs Pact has already underlined the importance of the private sector in surmounting the crisis. This will be possible only with productive and competitive businesses that create and maintain jobs. We therefore welcome the fact that the conclusions before us call on member States to create the basic conditions needed for the establishment and growth of sustainable enterprises, and call on the Office to support the efforts of member States through its policy work. These joint strategic goals must now be put into practice. The "recurrent item" process is a new one and its credibility will depend very much on whether or not the strategic goals we adopt actually guide the actions of the Office and the member States.

The conclusions call on the Office and the Members to devote more attention to new forms of employment, such as part-time work, temporary work and teleworking. We are very happy to note that the ILO is called on to deal with these new forms of work in an open and positive manner. It is precisely these new forms of work that have developed, in my own country, Germany, into a driving force for employment and created a bridge to employment for groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market. It is important that the ILO should consider this in a positive and open manner in its work.

Original Portuguese: Mr VALADAS DA SILVA (Government, Portugal)

First and foremost, I should like to thank and congratulate all those in the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment for the fact that we were able to adopt our report and conclusions.

The results of the Committee's work and the report and conclusions before us are extremely important, not only with respect to implementing the 2008 Declaration but, above all, as guidance for our future work and for the future work of the ILO.

In this framework, I would like to stress the importance that we attach to promoting the necessary coherence and coordination at all levels, but above all at the international level, between economic, financial, social and employment policies, in order to ensure that full and productive employment and decent work are placed at the heart of these policies.

Original French: Mr PIETTE (Government, Belgium)

In his opening address to the Conference, the Secretary-General asked for clear messages in support of coherence between economic and social policy. The Belgian delegation would like to convey two such messages, based on our analysis and various comments we have received.

First, I wish to stress the importance of the mandate conferred by the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment on the Director-General to embark immediately on consultations with the IMF and the World Bank, and to report to the Governing Body in November 2010. There will be no coherence in national policy unless we have convergence between the recommendations of these institutions and those of the ILO. We should stop talking about convergence and start working on it as a matter of urgency. It is therefore essential for paragraph 50 of the Committee's conclusions to be included in the resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on employment. We have also heard that, in many countries, the IMF has apparently not heeded the ILO's message, even though national employment plans are being formulated on the basis of the Global Jobs Pact. If this misunderstanding persists, we will fail to fulfil our objectives, as this action by governments was intended to facilitate the coordination of activities to support employment plans.

The issue concerns not only ministries of labour, especially in these times of crisis. In this regard, the commitments of the G20 with respect to the Global Jobs Pact are only superficially reassuring. We have to come up with a governance instrument that can overcome this institutional obstacle. This was the aim of the proposals made during the work of the Committee.

The second message concerns the results to be achieved. The ILO and the IMF should cooperate

by setting up joint action teams. If they fulfil their respective mandates and genuinely focus on decent work, they should no longer need to intervene either in succession or separately. The joint teams would use their combined resources and expertise to formulate more balanced budgetary, economic and social policies that would promote public confidence, rather than the current concerns that could lead to social unrest.

Original French: Mr BOISNEL (Government, France)

The work of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment, and more generally of this session of the International Labour Conference has underscored the persistence of the crisis, its impact, and the disparity between the various situations in high-growth regions and other regions where the crisis challenges fundamental models.

There is, however, one common aspect in this diversity, which is a key aspect and a prerequisite for everything: employment.

This is why, in beginning this discussion, the Conference faced the absolute need to succeed. France has found, to its satisfaction, that these expectations have largely been met both with regard to the situations both outside and within the Organization.

Firstly, on the external dimension, the main direction given the conclusions provides structure for member States' employment policies, and could potentially have similar benefits in the multilateral system.

Now is the time for the ILO to be a voice of determination and direction in the international community, and the conclusions reflect this feeling of urgency. The Director-General has been mandated to launch discussions with the main financial and economic institutions to ensure improved coherence between economic, financial, social and job policies at the international level. Coherence has been the key word cited by many previous speakers, and was the main thrust of the messages given by the President of France last year and the President of the Swiss Confederation this year. This is why it is so important that a very specific calendar should be set to build a framework for promoting political coherence. This is a decisive step between organizations, to begin to establish essential coordination in order for the globalization of economies to be beneficial, more equally distributed, job creating and rights protecting. In a word, this social dimension should at long last be confirmed.

Regarding the internal aspects of our Organization, the Committee's conclusions also apply to the Office's work in several essential areas, in particular capacity building for studies and research, in order to improve the advice that our tripartite organization can give to member States, so that it can increase its involvement in international dialogue on macroeconomic policy, and that it can increase its influence and capacity and include them in social targets.

The conclusions of the Committee are also far reaching for the ILO's missions and for the Office's work. In major areas, the capacity for research and study, in order to improve the advice which our tripartite organization brings to member States, so that it is further involved in international dialogue on macroeconomic policy and so that it can increase its influence and involvement in social targets.

These conclusions are also particularly significant, since they are the Conference's first implementation of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization in respect of the analysis of our Organization's strategic objectives. They must harness energy for the Office, for the member States of the ILO and must be the starting point, although with room for improvement, as was pointed out by the Government member of Switzerland, for future strategic discussions.

The French Government would like to convey its warm thanks to the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons, and the respective Employer and Workers representatives for the cooperation, the efficiency and the spirit of dialogue in which the work was conducted, leading to the report and the conclusions which will be adopted with France's full support.

Allow me to finish by thanking my colleagues of the Government delegations for their dedication and support.

Original French: Ms ZAPPIA (Government, Italy)

I have asked for the floor very briefly to say how pleased Italy is with our very fruitful discussions and with the conclusions we reached.

In our opinion, this initial recurrent discussion shows that together – the Workers, the Employers, the Governments, along with the Office of course – we can hold a substantive debate that can help to craft macroeconomic policies with jobs at their heart.

I would just like to quote a passage of the speech made by the Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference a few days ago. Ambassador Mirachian said that “(T)he conclusions adopted as a result of the discussion on employment are the operational bridge, with actions undertaken following the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact last year. They reinforce the capacity of the ILO and stress the need for more coherence with other relevant international organizations and institutions in placing social justice at the core of any governance of globalization.”

Before concluding, I would like to say that Italy associates itself with the remarks made by the Swiss delegation concerning the quality of the reports. It is a very important remark for our future work. We encourage the Office to produce reports which are to the point, analytical and concise.

I would like to express my gratitude to the President for his stewardship of the Conference over the past three weeks. He has led the deliberations in a skilful and effective manner, and has been firm when necessary.

Original Spanish: Ms RODRÍGUEZ-TARDUCHY DÍEZ (Government, Spain)

As highlighted in the conclusions of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment, which have our full support, we are facing the greatest international crisis of the last 70 years. It is a crisis of financial origin which has caused loss of confidence and lack of liquidity, with repercussions for economic activity and consumption, and which has had major consequences for the world of work, resulting in high levels of unemployment.

The crisis has clearly shown the need to ensure that employment is at the centre of strategies for growth and development, which, without a doubt, requires greater coordination of employment policies with economic and financial policies.

In order to promote economic recovery and encourage an increase in productive, high-quality employment, it is essential to have a greater degree of coordination, inter alia, between macroeconomic policies and employment policies, making active employment promotion policies one of the main objectives of macroeconomic policy.

It is essential to look for effective macroeconomic responses, based on the principles enshrined in the Global Jobs Pact, that will make it possible to steer economic growth towards job creation. This will not be in vain: while economic growth is a necessary precondition for growth in employment, it does not guarantee per se that employment will rise, but must be accompanied by other policies, in particular, active employment policies.

In this context, and bearing in mind the complex and necessary implications of macroeconomic policies and employment policies, guidelines should be adopted for the development of a framework for close and ongoing cooperation between the ILO, the IMF and the World Bank, based on the spirit of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

Consequently, as set out in the recommendations of the G20 ministers of labour, which advocate giving priority to employment and alleviating poverty, as this will provide a basis for strong, balanced and sustainable growth that benefits everyone, international institutions should give consideration to ILO standards and the Global Jobs Pact in analysing the crisis and its aftermath and in activities relating to policy decisions.

Joint work between the above three institutions should make it possible to put full and productive employment and decent work at the heart of economic and social policies, as set out in the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, and mitigate the consequences of the crisis through effective fiscal and macroeconomic policies clearly geared towards employment.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

That concludes the discussion of the report. We shall now proceed with the approval of the report, that is, the summary of the Committee's discussions, contained in paragraphs 1–236.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference approves the report?

(The report – paragraphs 1–236 – is approved.)

CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE RECURRENT DISCUSSION ON EMPLOYMENT: ADOPTION

Original French: The PRESIDENT

We will now proceed with the adoption of the conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment, part by part.

(The conclusions – paragraphs 1–58 – are adopted part by part.)

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts the conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment as a whole?

(The conclusions, as a whole, are adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE RECURRENT
DISCUSSION ON EMPLOYMENT: ADOPTION**

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Our last task is to adopt the resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on employment. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts this resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

Having concluded our discussion of the report of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment, I would like to warmly congratulate the members of the Committee, as well as the Officers, on the results of their deliberations. I would also like to thank the secretariat, as they well deserve, because they have worked long and hard to complete our work on time.

CLOSING SPEECHES

Original French: The PRESIDENT

This brings us to the very last part of our work – the closing speeches.

Original French: Ms POWELL (*Employer, Haiti; Employer Vice-President of the Conference*)

We have come to the end of the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to convey my warmest thanks, first of all, to the Employers' group for the trust they have placed in me, and in particular I would like to thank the employers' federations of North America and the Caribbean whose turn it was this year to propose a candidate for the post of Employer Vice-President.

The choice of Haiti at such a difficult time in our country's history was perceived as a gesture of solidarity and fraternity.

I would also like to thank the Chairperson of the Employers' group, Mr Funes de Rioja, and all my colleagues in the group for their support throughout this session. I am also very grateful to the secretary of the group, Mr Peñalosa, and the team from the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), who patiently helped me discharge my tasks.

I would like to thank the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and its Director. Warm thanks also to the Clerk of the Conference and her team.

In short, it has been an immense privilege to carry out my duties under the brilliant presidency of Mr de Robien, assisted by Mr Nakajima, the Worker Vice-President, and Mr Nkili, the Government Vice-President. I would like to thank them all for this wonderful experience.

Among the items discussed at the Conference, I would like to emphasize the importance for the developing world of two discussions in particular: the one on HIV/AIDS and the one on domestic workers. The Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS in the world of work adopted yesterday rests on a genuine consensus between Governments, Employers and Workers. This Recommendation should prove to be an effective response to HIV in the world of work. We hope that this instrument will provide a tool to counter discrimination and stigmatization, which are major obstacles in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, it is important to strike a balance between action taken in enterprises and that which falls within the remit of the state authorities and healthcare services.

As we prepare for the second discussion on a Convention on domestic workers, I would like to recall article 19, paragraph 3, of the ILO Constitution, which stipulates that in framing any Convention or Recommendation of general application the Conference shall have due regard to those countries in which special circumstances make the industrial conditions substantially different.

Of course the fundamental principles and rights should be applicable to all. Nevertheless, we must maintain sufficient flexibility to enable the least developed countries to aspire to ratification of the Conventions adopted by the ILO. It is essential to take the international context into account, otherwise we risk pushing these workers further into clandestine work.

Allow me to deviate somewhat from the traditional closing speech and say a few words about my country, Haiti.

First of all, on behalf of Haitian employers, I would like to express our deep-felt gratitude for the countless acts of generosity to the Haitian people following the earthquake of 12 January.

The IOE, through Mr Peñalosa, immediately contacted our association. The Director-General of the ILO, Mr Juan Somavia – to whom I send my best wishes for a speedy recovery – set up a crisis team with high-level members including international donors, representatives of the Haitian Government, and former United States President Bill Clinton, representing the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon. Together they will define priorities and plan the implementation of the projects identified.

The ILO confirmed this week that a permanent presence of the ILO will be set up in Haiti. It will deal with issues related to vocational training, job creation and social protection, and our social security system in particular. It will have to take into account the increased vulnerability of the many thousands of women who have lost their jobs in the informal sector and the women in the informal sector who have lost absolutely everything. Bear in mind that most Haitian households are single-parent families and these women have to shoulder the full burden of bringing up their children. The disaster on 12 January struck at the very heart of Haiti – 60 per cent of the capital's commercial activities were hit to varying degrees; most of the hospitals were destroyed; and 90 per cent of the public buildings were reduced to rubble. Acts of solidarity followed immediately. In the private sector, the first delivery of urgently needed goods arrived and was stored in our premises. When international aid started coming in, we made our distribution system available to the international organizations. The most urgent task was to restore the production of oxygen, which resumed 18 hours after the earthquake. Bottling companies gave priority to bottling treated water, and three days later, four of the five companies were back in business and milk production had started again.

At the beginning of February, 90 per cent of the industrial sector was up and running. Seven months later, notwithstanding the efforts and heavy sacrifices made by local workers and employers, our economic situation is even more precarious than before the earthquake. The reasons for this lie in the competition brought about by massive and sustained flows of international aid against local industrial and agricultural production and the nationwide dis-

tribution chain. As a result, the social and industrial fabric has been further weakened, with direct repercussions on the Haitian financial system.

Over the last 20 years, Haiti has received massive international development assistance. Well before the earthquake, it was clear that the aid system was dysfunctional and did not lead to real and sustainable development.

The global economic crisis has compelled us to seek new synergies; it is vital that in the area of international aid all the players, including national players, take a bold and honest look at the errors of the past in order to channel the substantial energies and resources towards activities that are more sustainable in the long term. The absolute areas of priority are governance, justice, the education and vocational training system and social security.

It is true that such long-term efforts have less visibility in the short term. It is therefore crucial to strengthen the institutional governance framework, which is the prerequisite for the full participation of employers' and workers' organizations and civil society in the development and reconstruction of Haiti.

Haiti is known throughout the world for its artistic and literary heritage and the achievements of its citizens in every sphere. The Haitian people are a strong, resilient nation. Throughout history the Haitian people have overcome major obstacles with dignity and courage. Their keen sense of being seen in a single figure: on average, families devote 30 per cent of their income to their children's education.

What we want most of all is to be free to fully exercise our rights and to bring up our children in a way that will enable them to become active, productive and fulfilled citizens of their country.

I call on you, drawing on the ILO's tripartite system based on consensus, to pool our resources in Haiti, so that each centime spent will be used wisely for the Haitian people and that every effort has a real impact on the ground. Rest assured that the employers of Haiti will be there.

Mr NAKAJIMA (*Worker, Japan; Worker Vice-President of the Conference*)

Mr President, representative of the Director-General, distinguished delegates, it has been a great pleasure and honour for me on behalf of my organization to be elected Vice-President of the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Workers' delegates and the secretary of the Workers' group, Ms González, and her team, the staff of ACTRAV who supported me and facilitated my work, for the trust they placed in me. I would also like to congratulate the President of the Conference, Mr de Robien, the Government Vice-President, Mr Nkili, and the Employer Vice-President, Ms Powell, for their excellent and fruitful cooperation.

Last year's Conference was marked by the financial, economic and social crisis, with a rapid ILO response through the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact. One year later, we are still facing the serious consequences and challenges caused by the crisis. Although government efforts have mitigated the impact of the crisis on employment, and this is to be welcomed, we also know that much more needs to be done to address unemployment, underemployment, jobless growth, precarious work and poverty. The various signs of exit strategies and fiscal austerity are extremely worrying and may undo much of

the good work done so far. The ILO needs to remain more vigilant than ever to avoid sliding back into recession and further job losses. This must be the highest priority.

We were, and still are today, proud of the Global Jobs Pact but we need to see much more implementation at the national level. Such an implementation has to be based on an integrated approach covering all aspects of the Pact. The implementation at the national level also needs to be based on genuine tripartite social dialogue, and the ILO should have a team of experts across all policy areas covered by the Pact, ready to assist with policy advice and implementation. The Global Jobs Pact should not only be seen as an instrument for crisis response but also as a new model for sustainable social and economic development.

The Committee on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work has concluded the second and final part of two years' discussion on the Recommendation to combat HIV and AIDS as a transnational universal threat to the human race.

I am very pleased that we have adopted this Recommendation, signed for the first time in the presence of the public by the President just a few minutes ago.

The Recommendation contains well-formulated provisions on occupational health and safety and important references to the protection of privacy and measures to combat discrimination. It is applicable to a wide range of workers, working in all forms or arrangements in any employment or occupation, in all sectors of economic activity, including the private and the public sectors and the formal and informal economies, as well as volunteers, job-seekers, job applicants, interns and laid-off workers. It also includes a clause that discrimination on the basis of HIV/AIDS status should be forbidden in national law, like any other motive for discrimination. Very importantly, there is a provision that no mandatory HIV testing or disclosure should take place in the workplace. This is a Recommendation which we now should all take back to our countries and implement. We need to establish tripartite monitoring mechanisms to ensure implementation, but we also have to ensure equal and universal access to treatment.

The Committee on Domestic Workers finished the first part of its work, offering one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of workers, mostly women workers, a proposed instrument that offers them protection of their most basic rights at the core of the ILO mandate. Many domestic workers have died, been seriously injured, or have been trafficked. Unscrupulous employers and labour contractors and agencies make money at their expense and subject them to exploitation. This standard-setting discussion was therefore long overdue. The work was difficult but the shapes of the proposed instruments are becoming clearer. I congratulate the Committee on the first steps that were made and on the decision to work on a Convention accompanied by a Recommendation.

The road to a Convention is still long, but these first steps provide a solid base, and I am hopeful that an excellent result can be achieved next year. We have seen how much these workers need the rights and protection which the proposed Convention will provide them with. We heard their voices and we very much owe them this Convention.

The Committee on the Application of Standards had very difficult deliberations this year, and I want to thank my Worker colleagues for standing up to the task. I welcome the discussions that took place on the General Survey and on the employment-related instruments, as well as a double discussion in both the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment, as mandated by the Social Justice Declaration. I strongly support this process for next year. I welcome the conclusions, which call for a promotion of the standards that were part of the Survey, and in particular the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), which is even more important in the current period of crisis and pressures for fiscal consolidation.

With respect to the specific cases, I welcome the three special paragraphs on Burma and Swaziland, in connection with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Central African Republic, in connection with the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). On the other hand, I regret very much the opposition from employers to discussion of the cases concerning the United Kingdom, Colombia and Guatemala, all three of which present serious violations of trade union rights.

I also deeply regret the attacks by employers on the right to strike, and on the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), as well as attacks on the Committee of Experts. Such attacks are deplorable. I would like to reiterate our strong support to the Committee of Experts as an impartial committee with enormous intellectual value.

I very much welcome the conclusions and the hard work done in the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment. This was the first recurrent item discussion as part of the follow-up to the Social Justice Declaration adopted in 2008. I am very pleased to see that the conclusions of this Committee reflect some of the urgent challenges that we face, namely: to put employment at the centre of macroeconomic policies; to promote industrial development in developing countries through the adoption of trade, industrial and investment policies; and to promote international labour standards related to employment, the standards package in the Global Jobs Pact, and the core labour standards. I regret that there was no agreement reached on a possible recommendation on policy coherence, but I welcome the conclusion to submit to the November meeting of the Governing Body a paper outlining the possible forms of a framework with the objective of promoting coherence between economic, employment and social policies. The Workers' group remains of the opinion that a Recommendation should be adopted. I sincerely hope that the conclusions of our debate will be duly followed up, including through a much more integrated way of working by the Office in the area of employment, and that the areas of macroeconomic policies and trade, investment and industrial policies will get much greater attention over the years to come. This is indeed work that is long overdue and in which the Office has to be the centre of excellence and knowledge.

The Global Report, *Accelerating action against child labour*, shows that there has been only a marginal reduction in child labour since the last Global Report. More needs to be done, and I would like to reiterate the need for a revised strategy, from pro-

ject focus to policy focus, as the current project approach is not delivering in a substantial way to really deal with the elimination of child labour. We owe it to all these working children to make the greatest possible effort to ensure they have a bright future and to allocate our resources in the most effective way.

The Committee on the 1998 Declaration achieved a good outcome, and I am happy with the resolution that was adopted. I cannot emphasize enough that effective follow-up to the Declaration is needed. So many working people are still not covered by Convention No. 87, and many children live in countries that have not ratified the child labour Conventions. Continued efforts need to be made for ratification and implementation of all the core Conventions, especially in those countries with many workers who are currently not covered by these Conventions.

Let me conclude by thanking the Director-General, the staff of the ILO, and the interpreters, who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this Conference.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Now we have the pleasure of hearing a recorded message from the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Juan Somavia.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Dear friends, as this session of our Conference draws to a close, I want to share with you this personal message. Let me begin by thanking the President, the Vice-Presidents, and all the Officers of the Committees and the Governing Body Officers.

(The speaker continues in French.)

Minister de Robien, my dear friend, thank you for your wise stewardship of the work. I have had feedback and I have heard that you have left your mark on this Conference by your presence, your personality and your authority. Thank you so much.

(The speaker continues in English.)

Let me also thank Kari Tapiola, for putting his great capacities and beliefs at the service of the ILO. He has been at the heart of the Office's work for 14 years. His many important duties include the overall management of the Conference. Kari has kept us all calm and focused. Absolutely unflappable, wise, totally reliable, incredibly hard-working, a rock: Kari, thank you for everything!

My friends, our annual meeting here in Geneva enables us all to gain strength from one other. Every year, it reinforces our conviction and belief in tripartism and dialogue as a means of achieving mutual understanding, respect and commitment to action. This year once again it has paid off with a fine new standard to tackle HIV/AIDS in the workplace, and a major step towards better protection for domestic workers. We continue to develop our activities on the application of standards, the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work, and the excellent follow-up to the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. This year, of course, we focused our discussions on employment. These are all very impressive results of two-and-a-half weeks of hard work, and I wish to heartily congratulate you.

Thank you for the very strong support to my Report, *Recovery and growth with decent work*. Allow

me also to thank all ILO colleagues in all parts of the house for their enormous contribution, their time and dedication. Working for the ILO and the Conference is more than just a job. It is a way of fulfilling a commitment to improve the lives of our fellow citizens of the world.

This has been a Conference of incredible vitality and activity. We have set new records for participation, and the number of parallel meetings and side events has reached new heights.

I have absolutely no doubt that this is because our key issues are the key issues for the people of the world today. Everyone wants to see a strong and balanced recovery, and here at the ILO, we have reinforced this concept: the only real recovery is a recovery without a social deficit.

This resonates strongly among the wider public. We hear many other voices beyond the ILO. Everyone is looking for concrete answers and directions for the future. I believe your discussions have made a significant contribution and you have given guidance to the Office. In many ways, your discussions are a real stocktaking of where we find ourselves at the end of this first decade of the twenty-first century. The crisis has put into strong perspective the governance and economic weaknesses of our increasingly globalized world and the need to build a globalization based on decent work and social justice.

As many of you have emphasized, the global jobs crisis is not over. Recovery in many countries is fragile. We must strike the right balance of policies to secure strong, sustainable and balanced growth. But we see that doing this, through political and social dialogue, is proving to be an increasingly difficult task for national and international cooperation and policy coherence. The signs for the future are not all positive.

So I welcome the clarity of your discussions. As ILO constituents, you have committed yourselves to playing an absolutely central role in making sure that action is taken to address the scale of global jobs deficits. And today your voice, the voice of our tripartite ILO, must help shape productive policies that bring balance and fairness to the lives of people at work, their families and communities.

These are not easy tasks, but that is our history. We know our tasks have never been easy. It is the essence of our identity. We persist, we stick to our values, and we do not give up.

So thank you again. I wish you all a safe journey home and look forward to seeing you again next year. You know well that you will always be able to count on my commitment, my engagement, and my belief in the values that bring us together.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Like the passing years which are never alike, our Conference comes back every year without being quite the same. Each Conference has its own special atmosphere, reflecting the passage of time and changing circumstances.

Last year, we were caught up in the momentum and excitement of intense days spent with eminent figures, Heads of State and Government who came to Geneva to give their views on the urgent need for the ILO, at the beginning of the crisis, to play its full role in the recovery, bearing the standard of the ILO's ideals and mandate in the ceaseless task of meeting the challenges of globalization.

But speeches do not exist in a vacuum, or for their own sake. They are but a fleeting sound if they are not followed by the slow, painstaking task – which is sometimes far from glamorous, and often thankless – of translating them into real action in the service of workers around the world, meaning, of course, the voiceless men and women, as they have often been described during this Conference, those working at the coalface of globalization who are relying on the ILO to speak on their behalf.

From this standpoint, this 99th Session of the Conference is a landmark in several respects. It is a landmark because it was held at a time of crisis, as the Director-General has just said, a crisis that has not ended, as the financial and economic crisis is turning into a social crisis, which we have discussed at length and against which we want to take action. At a crucial time, when the world is trying to find itself, when globalization can tip either way: into something better for human beings, for human dignity, or into real danger, if we fail in the task of organizing it together, with global institutional and policy coherence, which was mentioned several times this morning.

This Conference will be a landmark because, at long last, it has set the follow-up of the 2008 Declaration in motion, with all that that implies for the work of our Organization and, I believe, moving towards greater efficiency. The schedule planned two years ago proved to be premonitory in a sense, as this first application of the recurrent discussion covered employment, which is crucial at this time of post-crisis crisis.

It will also be a landmark because it enabled the adoption of a new HIV and AIDS Recommendation, the first legal instrument adopted at the international level to strengthen the contribution of the world of work to universal access to prevention, treatment, support and care.

It will also be a landmark because it dared – and this was a bold move – to start the discussion with a view to the long-awaited adoption of a Convention on domestic workers, yet another sign of our Organization's ability to take up the most pressing issues – often the most controversial – of globalization. Again, we have listened to those without a voice. The enthusiasm of the delegations for the work begun and that completed during this session is the best possible reward. The results achieved are remarkable, and this is the best guarantee for the adoption of a Convention at the next session of the Conference.

This has been no ordinary Conference. Sadly, it has been held in the absence of its Secretary-General, Juan Somavia, who has closely followed our work from afar. This has increased the sense of responsibility of the President of the Conference, who has always enjoyed the strong and friendly support of Juan Somavia and his team. I would like to tell him here that he can be very proud of his Organization, his staff and his secretariat, which has made unstinting efforts to ensure the smooth running of the Conference, despite and perhaps even because of his absence. Our sense of responsibility was heightened.

One of the most famous conductors of the twentieth century once said that the art of conducting is knowing when to put down the baton so as not to disturb the orchestra. Well, I do hope that I have not disturbed the orchestra. Presidents, like conductors, come and go, whereas the orchestra has a life of its

own, and its own rhythm and colour. If a President wants to be everywhere, people will say he is doing too much, and if all he is good at is wielding the gavel then people will say that, frankly, he is no use at all. So it is all a question of balance, and only you can say whether the job has been done properly.

I would like to say that I have the greatest admiration for the orchestra, and that I have learned a great deal, and – this may come as a surprise – I have enjoyed it very much. That was the case when I met the Officers of the main committees or on those occasions when, accompanied by the Vice-Presidents, our dedicated Mr Nakajima and Ms Powell, always smiling but ruthlessly efficient, I paid a visit to the committees to encourage you and to be where the action is – because after all, there is more to the Conference than sitting at the podium.

Those of you who are familiar with the traditions of this Conference may have been surprised to see me signing the authentic text of the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, along with the Director-General. This was not an innovation for innovation's sake; the intention was first of all to pay tribute to those who drafted a far-reaching text which is emotionally charged. What is more, in agreement with the Director-General and the Officers of the Conference, I wanted to heighten the visibility of our work.

At the opening of this Conference, I expressed the desire that together we would achieve results that are concrete, visible and clear. That signature in public was a modest contribution towards that goal.

Before concluding, allow me to pay a well-deserved tribute to someone whom we all hold in great esteem, whom we all admire and appreciate and whom we will miss even more, perhaps. This was his last International Labour Conference; of course, you all know who I mean: Kari Tapiola.

It is only fair for me to commend the dedication and the hard work of all those who have been working behind the scenes – members of the secretariat, translators and interpreters, who work so hard to create the very special alchemy of the Conference, that alchemy which ensures that whatever the difficulties, the Conference always achieves the results it was aiming for.

Since William of Orange, we have known that “One need not hope in order to undertake, nor succeed in order to persevere.” But when we have the hope, confidence and will, no task is insurmountable, and this is where tripartism brings its full force to bear. I witnessed this force over the past three weeks, this commitment, this tireless dialogue among the constituents. This is real tripartism, committed tripartism, which sometimes makes me

think – but this is perhaps a somewhat French remark – that social dialogue almost works better at the Conference than it does at the national level.

Governments, Workers, Employers – let us take away with us the determination to keep alive, in our various tasks as governments, trade unions and employers, this spirit of the 99th Session of the Conference: enriching encounters, understanding through dialogue, the unswerving quest for a peaceful solution and the apparently insurmountable challenges that can be overcome if we have the goodwill.

Let us leave this place with the conviction that human beings are more important than systems, and that the systems only exist to serve human beings. And that when systems seize up, it is men and women of goodwill, and solutions centred on human beings, that are the key to the future of humankind.

If the mission of our Organization is first and foremost a moral one – and I deeply believe that it is – then our Conference bears a very strong resemblance to an exercise in moral renewal.

Before I wish you a good trip back home, I would like to ask you not to forget the spirit and the alchemy of the 99th Session of the Conference. Whenever you face difficulties, when you do not know where to turn, when you are discouraged, think of the spirit of the 99th Session of the Conference, of this hope and this will.

Original French: Mr TAPIOLA (Representative of the Secretary-General of the Conference)

Just before concluding the work of the 99th Conference, we have a small but important tradition to observe, and it is my honour to do so. I would like to present the President of the Conference with a small souvenir of his leadership, which has been so firm and effective: the gavel of the President of the Conference. This gavel confirms that he is one of the illustrious circle of former presidents of the International Labour Conference, our seventh President from France since 1919. I present him with this gavel on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Conference, and in doing so I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to him for his kindness, which has made it a great pleasure for the whole secretariat to work with him as President.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Thank you. So, with this gavel, I now declare the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference closed.

(The Conference adjourned sine die at 12.45 p.m.)

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