

Provisional Record

101st Session, Geneva, May–June 2012

7



Fourth sitting

Wednesday, 6 June 2012, 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr Alburquerque de Castro

ADMISSION OF PALAU AS A MEMBER STATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I am honoured to declare open the fourth sitting of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I would like to give the floor to the Clerk to make an important announcement.

Original Spanish: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

In a communication from the Government of Republic of Palau, received by the International Labour Office in May 2012, the Director-General was informed of the formal acceptance by Palau of the obligations of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization under article 1, paragraph 3, of the Constitution. Under these provisions, Palau, as a member of the United Nations, may become a Member of the ILO by communicating to the Director-General of the International Labour Office its formal acceptance of the obligations of the Constitution of the ILO. I am therefore pleased to inform the International Labour Conference that the Republic of Palau is the 185th Member of the ILO as of 29 May 2012.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I extend a formal and warm welcome to the Republic of Palau as a member of our Organization.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

We shall now move on to the second item of our agenda, which is the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body to the International Labour Conference for the year 2011–12. This report is set out in *Provisional Record* No. 1. I therefore give the floor to the Chairperson of the Governing Body to present his report.

Mr VINES (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body for 2011–12. Could I start by just saying that it has been an absolute privilege and pleasure to chair the Governing Body over the last 12 months and I would like to particularly give thanks to the support I have received, particularly, from countries in my region, the Asia and Pacific region, as well as from my two colleagues the Vice-Chairpersons,

Mr Funes de Rioja for the Employers and Mr Cortebееck for the Workers. I should also like to thank the Director-General and all of the Office for the tremendous support that they have given both me and the Governing Body in the work that we have done over the year.

It has been an extraordinarily busy time for the Governing Body this year, as I am sure you are all aware, and as outlined in the report that has been presented to you. The year has been well and truly dominated by significant reforms to the Governing Body, thus implying the governance of the Organization – and, of course, also by a consideration of the early departure of the Director-General. There have also been many other significant developments throughout the year, which are outlined in the report, and I do not intend going into detail on these – but I do encourage you to look at them.

As this is my last opportunity to address the full institution of the ILO, I cannot let this occasion pass without paying tribute to the Director-General, Juan Somavia, who has now been at the helm of the ILO for 13 years. These years have seen the ILO move closer and closer towards the centre of the international stage. Under your guidance and stewardship, Juan, the Organization has acquired new vigour and direction built on the eight fundamental Conventions and articulated through the Decent Work Agenda. The years of your tenure have been marked by the adoption, in this room, of ground-breaking, forward-looking instruments and by actions that have improved the lives of working people and men across the globe. Through the dynamism of your vision you have succeeded in placing labour, employment and social issues at the very heart of the global development debate. The ILO is now present and heard at the G20 summits and at a range of other significant multilateral meetings around the world.

The world of work has also been featuring prominently on the agenda of United Nations summits, the General Assembly, ECOSOC, without talking about the ILO's enhanced visibility and cooperation with key multilateral organizations. Throughout your time at the ILO you have exemplified the call for greater coherence within the international community. Your achievements are those of a statesman of true international stature and you will leave an ILO that is more vibrant, more relevant and better able to face the problems of the twenty-first century than the one you joined 13 years ago. However, if I were to highlight one quality among your many it would be the very human quality of caring. If you

have achieved all of this, it is because you incarnate the values of this Organization and because you care profoundly. You will, therefore, leave behind you, in the very capable hands of your successor, Guy Ryder, an ILO in your image, an ILO that cares. For this you deserve the thanks and praise of the constituents of the ILO, all of those present at this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference and also, I have no doubt at all, the deep gratitude of millions of workers throughout the world whose lives have changed for the better as a result of the action you have led as Director-General. And once again, Juan, on behalf of the Governing Body and before this International Labour Conference I should like to offer you the warmest congratulations and thank you for your period as Director-General of the ILO.

As I indicated before, a great part of this year has been associated with the early departure of the Director-General and the election of his successor. This has taken a great amount of time of the Governing Body and my fellow Officers in preparing and conducting what, we are very proud to say, has probably been the most open and transparent election process in the United Nations or multilateral system. At the same time that other organizations were holding similar elections behind closed doors, we had a full and open process that not only attracted nine very capable candidates, but was also conducted in a format that provided for hearings, formal written applications and vision statements, and an open election process. I have no doubt at all that the support we received from the Governing Body – and indeed from the candidates for this process – has heralded a new start for multilateral organizations with respect to proper and open election transparency.

As I previously indicated, the other area of significant activity this year has been the introduction of reforms of the Governing Body. These reforms have come about as a result of two years' very hard work by the Officers, by the regional coordinators and by the representatives of the Workers' and Employers' groups, leading to a new dynamic approach towards the conduct of the Governing Body. The governance arrangements of the ILO have been approved, and this has moved us forwards, towards the reform of the International Labour Conference as well. Our objective in these endeavours is to make the Organization and the conduct of its business more relevant and open to the constituents of the ILO.

Over the year, as I have indicated in my comments with regard to the Director-General, the ILO has played a very prominent role on the world stage. It has been very closely involved in developments in Europe, in Africa, in Asia and in Latin American countries. We have dealt with divergent, economic, political and social developments and the ILO has been able to make a very significant and constructive contribution.

Another significant area of activity for the ILO over the last 12 months, and which will be the subject of discussion later today, has been the very significant developments that have occurred in Myanmar. We hope that the result of the Mission that the officers conducted, and indeed the change that has happened in Myanmar, will usher in a new era and a new relationship between the ILO and the country and Government of Myanmar – and, of course, the people of Myanmar. We also hope that the example

set by the work that the ILO has done in that country over the last ten years and the results that we are now seeing will serve as an example to many other member States who need to go through a similar change.

Could I just close by indicating that over the past 12 months, with the support of my colleague officers, we have given a high priority to the particular role of the Governing Body in the governance of the Organization. We have sought to strengthen the role that we have – the relationship that we have with the Office – and the relationship, of course, that we have with the Conference. We have received tremendous support not only from the Workers' and Employers' groups, but also from the Government and regional coordinators. The role of the regional coordinators has been considerably expanded and consolidated as a result of these reforms, as the voices of their regional groups and through their participation in the significantly increased consultative mechanisms that we have established and which assist, I have no doubt, in the proper governance of the Organization.

And if I could, finally, pay tribute to the ILO staff. I think that it is often very easy for us to come into meetings like this and pick up our documents and read them, or not read them, and then go home again, but the amount of effort that the individual staff members of the Organization contribute is just outstanding. The work that goes into the reports, the work that goes into the implementation of our decisions, and the work that goes into supporting the Conference, the Governing Body and the other activities, is amazing. And by way of example, I should like to refer to the series of drafting committees that are going on throughout the Organization at the moment in support of the technical committees. The committee that I have been chairing concluded at about 9.30 p.m. last night with a set of draft conclusions; by 6 a.m. this morning we had those conclusions completed by the Office in three languages and distributed, and I think that that level of commitment from the staff – day in, day out – is an indication of the Organization's strength and leadership and most particularly the commitment of the individual staff members.

I should like to commend the report of the Governing Body to you. Thank you all for your support for my period as Chairperson of the Governing Body and I would just again repeat that it has been an absolute privilege and pleasure to hold this role and work with you all.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

Thank you very much for this report. We congratulate you on the enormous amount of activity carried out by the Governing Body this year and also for the implementation of the reform of the work of the Governing Body, which has had an important impact. I would like to thank the members of the Governing Body for their efforts and their support, led by their Chairperson.

OPENING OF THE GENERAL DISCUSSION

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

In accordance with article 14, paragraph 8, of the Standing Orders, I am now honoured to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Somavia, to introduce the general discussion.

Mr President, with your permission, before addressing the Conference on this occasion, I feel obliged to take up the situation that evolved in the Committee on the Application of Standards. And I do this with no pleasure whatsoever. I wish to make three points: first, in the discussions of the Committee, the impartiality, neutrality and balance of the ILO staff servicing the Committee were put into question without any expressed foundation. This, I believe, is improper and unfair. I am saddened at having to recall the long tradition of mutual respect between constituents and the Office. And I want you to know that I express my full support for the staff concerned, who are dedicated, competent and high-quality professionals. Second, it was also said, and I quote, that “civil servants should support the work of the Experts, not the Experts support the work of the Office”. The implication of this statement represents a lack of respect for the competence and integrity of the Committee of Experts. They will of course have an opportunity to react to this comment. Again, it is with a heavy heart that I have to recall that they are a group of distinguished jurists appointed by the Governing Body, not the Office. Their calibre, status and dedication honour us, and among them you have a judge of the Court of Appeal of Belize; a judge of the Labour Superior Court of Brazil; a Justice of the High Court of the United Kingdom; the former President of the Supreme Court of Justice of Panama; the judge of the International Court of Justice from Sierra Leone; the honorary Advocate-General of the Court of Cassation of France; the former judge of the Supreme Court of India; the former Vice-President of the International Court of Justice; and the President of our Conference, who was a member of the Committee of Experts in 2001 and 2003. And you have distinguished professors from Argentina, the United States, South Africa, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Australia, Cameroon and Japan. Third, with respect to the substance, I believe that the manner in which a legitimate issue of interpretation was raised – and opinions may vary – together with the ensuing deadlock between Employers, Workers and Governments, led to a disproportionate and unfortunate consequence for all. Suspending the Committee’s treatment of a list of country situations has led to serious cases of different rights at work unattended. But because I have been a firm believer in the way our social dialogue works in the ILO, I am sure that with a renewed spirit of dialogue this issue is a situation that will be adequately dealt with in the near future – and the normal functioning of the Committee resumed. It is, my dear friends, with great regret that I make this statement.

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With your permission, Mr President, let me address the Conference on the matter for which I have a constitutional responsibility. Mr Rafael Alburquerque de Castro, President of the Conference; Mr Sukayri, Mr Matthey and Mr Atwoli; the Officers of the Governing Body, Mr Greg Vines, Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja, Mr Luc Cortebееck; ministers, ambassadors and delegates – let me thank you very much for the kind words that you pronounced at the beginning. Dear friends, when I inaugurated the Conference last week, I congratulated the Director-General-elect, Guy Ryder, two days

after his election; that was his moment. Today, I want to thank all the other candidates for wanting to put their considerable talents at the service of the ILO.

(The speaker continues in French.)

And I would like to make particular mention of Gilles de Robien, representative of France for many years and former President of the Conference and member of the Governing Body. Gilles de Robien conducted a most effective campaign and I offer him my warm congratulations.

(The speaker continues in English.)

Dear friends, we are now at the halfway point of our Conference. I have participated in the Committees on Youth Employment and on the Social Protection Floor, and in the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Fundamental Principles and Rights. When I was talking to some of the delegates they said “you might have gone a little bit to the Committee on the Application of Standards also” – but that is the way things happen. The Committees are true engine rooms of productive delegates, hard at work, finalizing the policy products that they will bring for your adoption in the plenary. Those products are extremely critical to the challenges we all face in our different situations back home and to the way the global economy must evolve. The issues on our Conference agenda this year show yet again that the ILO is proposing ways forward on issues at the heart of societies’ concerns. And I know that you will be working hard to take the conclusions we adopt here to your unions, your employer organizations and your governments for action and implementation and the Office is at your service, operating under the guidelines of your decisions.

This year, I will go straight from the Conference, with these products, to the G20 Meeting in Mexico and from there to the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. After that I shall be going to New York for a high-level session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on decent work and inclusive growth. As you can see, when I announced that I was advancing my departure I also said, and I promised, that I would keep working hard up to my last days in the Office – and I am doing so. Dear friends, this International Labour Conference is not only a key decision-making moment for the ILO’s tripartism. This hall is also the place in which the world of work that you represent engages through its policy proposals with the world of international cooperation and co-ordination, the multilateral system. And we have seen that what we do here is of importance way beyond the ILO. No other organization has this capacity to connect enterprises, workers and governments – the real economy actors, with their sometimes divergent views and disagreements – to the highest levels of global decision-making. It is a remarkable and invaluable quality of the ILO, which we have successfully promoted in the last decade. There is today recognition that the voice and views of the ILO are not only listened to and welcomed but also considered pertinent and necessary. And why is this? Because work is central to people’s lives everywhere. Elections turn on whether people have confidence in their political leaders’ ability to design and run an economy that delivers decent work. When the world leaders come together to discuss

how to generate strong, sustainable and balanced growth, the litmus test back home of their success in that summit, in the eyes of citizens that send them there, is what this is going to do for jobs. And this is why the ILO is invited to the G20 and other summits. Our global perspective, based on our real economy knowledge, confers on us the responsibility to put our policy proposals on the table of international decision-making. As a result, the Decent Work Agenda, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, the objectives of Working out of Poverty, the Global Jobs Pact, the social protection floor, together with the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, have all been backed internationally. Aside from current realities, the national and international promotion of our policies is a responsibility that was placed on us by our Constitution, especially the Declaration of Philadelphia, and reconfirmed by our 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization which gives us global guidance for the future.

And yet you know how much is still pending; how many workers and small enterprises need the ILO to persist in its task.

Dear friends, you gave me the privilege of leading the Office and together with you taking the ILO into this early part of the twenty-first century.

Thank you for this remarkable experience and, as I take leave of you, allow me to draw on the perspective of these 13 years of experience and share with you some thoughts on the global challenges that the Organization will be confronting in the future. Allow me to begin with the financial crisis of 2008 because it was not just an unfortunate accident on a safe road. It was a pile-up caused by several features of the growth and globalization model whose values were shaped in the 1980s; it picked up increasing speed from the 1990s onwards until it went out of control – and that is where we are today.

Suddenly the beginning of the end of this cycle is abruptly upon us, but a new model for fair sustainable and inclusive growth and globalization has yet to be shaped; and we know that today nobody can safely predict where the global economy is going and who is responsible for guiding it towards a fairer, more stable world. We are coming to an end of the cycle, but it is unclear how long that process will take and no cycle has immediately another ready-made cycle to follow; so yes, we are ending one period and moving into a time of uncertainty, out of which will emerge a new way of looking at these problems. And what this means, I believe, is that in this prolonged period of uncertainty, there is also a potential for creativity, and that is the basic point I want to highlight – the opportunities this opens up for the ILO.

The prospect of several more years of lingering crisis or feeble recovery, and the consequences it would have on our societies and politics, is opening minds. I believe that there is a growing conviction on the need to change course, stimulated by social movements and protests in many countries, themselves fuelled by the growth of inequality and intolerable levels of youth unemployment. So it is a time for a policy rethink and I believe, as I said, that the ILO has a vital contribution to make at this critical turning point.

Dear friends, the risks of inaction are huge; in my report last year I called for a new era of social jus-

tice. I described why present growth patterns were inefficient and how they could be turned around. I pointed to a set of policies that were reasonable and feasible. So let me develop further these ideas. This new cycle, this new era, can be conceived and implemented. Hoping for change is realistic. It requires a redefinition of priorities linking policy agendas with basic standards of fairness, and above all, political conviction to overcome the dogmas of the past and to respond to people's concerns. There has been too much ideology in defining policies and too little human sensitivity for individuals, families and communities. There have been too many single policy solutions and too little understanding for the need for policy coherence and policy integration – too many financial and too few social concerns. Let me say in this context that growth, however indispensable, can no longer be the correct criterion for macroeconomic success, and I suggest the following additional macroeconomic objectives to judge macroeconomic success: quality job creation; an increase in decent work, particularly for youth; reduction of poverty and informal work; growth of the middle classes; and fair access to opportunities. There are of course other more traditional ones, but these symbolize the need for the basic shift in the present mindsets with which policies are being defined.

The ILO's essential values and its multiple instruments, including the Global Jobs Pact, help in this process. They can open the way to a new cycle, putting decent work at the heart of policy convergence as the foundation of a new vision of growth and globalization. Some of those components are: a conducive environment for significant growth of investments in sustainable enterprises; a productive view of a new era of social justice; a fair relationship between productivity and wages, and between higher and lower wages; a better selection of policies to enrich the employment content of growth; coherent trade, investment, social and employment policies, including promotion of start-ups and protection of infant industries; and financial regulations that give priority to the real economy.

I am often asked, "Why is it that you at the ILO are thinking about the financial system?" I say it is because there is a strong relationship between the way the financial system works and the capacity to promote the real economy, and when they say, "Well, what do you propose?" I say, there are financial experts to do that, but let me give you a notion. Financial flows are key to economic development to any society. Banking is absolutely essential: it is part of the history of humanity that a bank is part of the way in which you organize the productive process and financial flows are essential. The image that has come to my mind – and maybe you will laugh at this – is cholesterol. We know that we have in our blood good cholesterol and bad cholesterol, and we know that we want to reduce the bad cholesterol and increase the good cholesterol, so a simple way of asking experts to deal with this matter is: you know what the bad cholesterol is in there, and you know what the good one is; why do you not put together policies that produce good financial cholesterol and reduce the bad one? I think that that is a very simple way of looking at it; separating the two is essential for what we represent, which is the real economy. The real economy has to be at the centre of the way the financial system works.

And there are labour market systems that foster protection, mobility and adaptation on the one side, and competitiveness and productivity on the other: social dialogue and collective bargaining as a regular feature of work relationships and enterprise development; social protection floors that provide a strong footing to step out of poverty and be in the formal economy; just transitions to cleaner and more efficient energy use and a greener economy; respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards.

My friends, the reason why I am putting all of these things together is that all of this is possible; there is nothing impossible about putting together policies that are based on these types of guidance. Yes, it is possible, but it is going to be easier if you have global cooperation. Because today's multipolar world economy means that no one country or region can lead on its own. Countries were affected differently by the crisis and have different priorities in building recovery. Policy coordination is more complicated just at a time when it has become even more important. Yet the Nation State remains the primary source of legitimacy and accountability. It is where laws are adopted and implemented and public finance managed. Yet the crisis makes them more inward-looking, and this is one of the key problems that we have globally. I believe that in this extremely difficult task, global political concern over jobs can be a unifying theme for international cooperation; all countries are concerned by it, and it can help the international system meet the challenges of generating recovery and transition into a sustainable, strong and balanced path of global development.

So we face the challenge of constructing policy consensus in which countries make commitments internationally which both add up to a global strategy and that makes sense nationally. Another way of putting it is to ensure that countries have the policy space to act according to national specific circumstances, but that such actions are mutually supportive with what other countries are doing.

Dear friends, beyond dealing with the crisis, what is the wider context in which all of this will take place?

By 2020, developing Asia will account for one third of global consumption – up from 14 per cent in 2008. Increasingly, most of the growth will come from emerging economies and developing countries. By 2025, half of all goods will be sourced globally – up from one fifth in the year 2000. By 2050, the size of the working-age population will have increased by 30 per cent – nearly all in emerging and developing countries.

Let me also mention some trends under way that I believe will shape the world in which the ILO works and operates in the future.

First, there is what I believe to be an inexorable trend to complement representative democracy with participatory democracy. Increasingly, the diversity of voices in society want to be heard and be part of decision-making from the local to the national level, but also in relation to international organizations. I think that the 46 country consultations we held with youth organizations at the Global Youth Forum in Geneva shows that the ILO understands this evolution.

Second, there is a growing movement towards regionalization; what are the implications? Fewer global trade agreements, more regional and interre-

gional economic cooperation agreements. It is probable that progressive steps towards more financial and monetary cooperation will be taken in the course of the next decade among some Asian countries, and this is not excluded in other regions. So a new global financial design will emerge with a lot of implications for the way the economy works and the work of the ILO.

Third, the role of public-private partnerships will grow. Many of these issues cannot be solved exclusively by the private sector or exclusively by the public sector: for example, in dealing with energy and environmental issues; making the financial systems service the real economy; transport and infrastructure development; education and capacity building; and transition to new forms of growth and globalization.

Fourth, the issue of social justice, fairness and reduction of inequalities will expand as the feeling of disconnects between citizens and governmental and private governance grows. Protest; disquiet linked to unresolved crisis will continue to impact on the political process, with the danger of extremist reactions.

In this process, public policies will be reinforced. Why is all this relevant for the ILO? Because what happens in society is at the heart of the space in which the ILO has to develop its policy. We were born out of the social struggles of the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. The life of the institution follows the heartbeat of real societies, and the changes ahead offer an incredible opportunity for ILO policies to be relevant. In the world to come there will be a premium on creativity, innovation, new policies based on human values and respect for the individual, families, communities and ways of looking at policies through the eyes of people.

We are certainly not there yet, but the crisis has opened the door for the tripartite ILO to be a key actor. We can help define what a more stable, balanced, fair world would be like, on the basis of our mandate and our values.

Let me conclude by recalling passages in our Constitution: “universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”; and “conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required” (1919). The bottom line is this: we are peace workers. What the ILO does is about the peace and harmony of the world, the peace and harmony of societies.

That is our mission. That is the sense of our activities and that is the essence of our identity.

In concluding this address to you, which is the last time I will open the plenary sittings of the Conference, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for your confidence. Thank you for your support. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for the capacity that we have all had together to make the ILO an actor in the situation of today. Thank you for the belief that I could contribute to your decision-making. Thank you for the space you gave me in making proposals for you to decide. Thank you, thank you, thank you very, very much.

Thank you, Secretary-General, for your very interesting and extraordinary words. Before opening the general discussion, I would like to give the floor to the spokespersons of the Employers' and Workers' groups.

**STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE
EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' GROUPS
OF THE CONFERENCE**

Original Spanish: Mr FUNES DE RIOJA (Employer, Argentina,
Chairperson of the Employers' group)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President, as someone from my region. This is our chance, as employers the world over, to admire all that you have done, your profile and your leadership.

Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of this House,

(The speaker continues in English.)

Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General-elect, dear colleagues, Greg Vines, Luc Cortebееck, my fellow colleagues as Officers of the Governing Body, Vice-President, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour and a pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the Employers of this House, who now have the Executive Vice-President of the International Organisation of Employers as their Group spokesperson.

Let me start by saying that this address, today, comes at a watershed in the history of the ILO. This year, we come to the end, technically, of the reform of the Governing Body, and I want to acknowledge the efforts made by our colleagues, Mr Vines and Mr Cortebееck. However, there are many things we need to do together in order to make it perfect and to make it happen. We have also come to the end of the electoral process, which was transparent and excellent; nobody can question that, and I would like to highlight Greg's efforts in that regard.

We are here to discuss the activities of the ILO, for 2010–11, within the ILO strategic framework that will take us through to 2015. But we discuss them taking into account a new reality: we have elected a new Director-General who, from October, will be responsible for guiding ILO activities through to the end of the current strategic framework.

We congratulate Guy Ryder on his election and are honoured by his visit to our General Council, last Tuesday. In that exchange, he recognized what we have long been saying – that the ILO, moving forward, must also engage the interests of business. We welcome that recognition. At the House of tripartism, success lies in the engagement of all three groups in its works and vision. Without that, the ILO cannot succeed. We have expressed our intention to work closely with the Director-General-elect as the reforms of the ILO go forward.

However, I wish to take this opportunity to explain to you all where we see Employer priorities. The ILO needs to increase its capacity to be the global leader in employment and social policy. We see that nowadays, the visibility of the House is higher due to the efforts of Ambassador Somavia. From our point of view, that now needs to be followed up with the internal capacity to deliver.

The ILO must be equipped with the means to give practical advice and assistance based on factual in-

formation to respond to our national needs. We need to inject into the DNA of this Organization the reality of the market economy – that jobs are only created in a sustainable way by private enterprise. We strongly believe that. This realization needs to infuse all the work of the Office. It can no longer be the case that the role we play as Employers is not seen in the outputs of the House because, with the crisis, we need to re-emphasize that view and that perception.

The private sector is the powerhouse of economic and social development, jobs and the very place where rights are realized.

We recognize efforts by governments to address debt reduction. This is the key to creating longer term fiscal stability and giving confidence to investors and employers to invest in growth and jobs.

It is from the private sector that jobs recovery will come. This is not disputed anywhere else in the multilateral system and should certainly not be disputed in the Organization mandated to address the world of work. This means giving impetus to the ILO work on sustainable development, providing answers to address barriers to enterprise development, entrepreneurship and participation in work, and fostering skill development and lifelong learning in its various forms so as to enhance the employability of the largest possible number of people.

It means modernizing ILO policy on labour standards to ensure governments have the means to ratify and implement standards that are fit for the purpose of today's realities. I could go on.

We have been promoting these issues within the work of the ILO for some years. The situation of the world today requires an ILO that has answers to these issues so that people can find work, provide for their families and their future, give young people hope and believe in society and provide a basis for the realization of rights.

These are issues which should guide the future work activities of the ILO. We firmly believe that by doing so, the ILO would better serve the interests and needs of all constituents. We do not seek preferential treatment; we seek equity in the working methods and philosophy of this House.

Let me mention the question of the occupied Arab territories. I lend my voice to that of the Director-General for peace initiatives to be re-engaged to realize a viable two-State solution to the issues between the parties so as to enable peace to provide a platform for economic and social development. We stand with the business community of the territories in calling for the removal of barriers to trade. We call on the international donor community to reaffirm its commitment to support the ILO and other UN programmes in the occupied Arab territories to enable all people to participate in the economy when peace finally comes to this region, as it surely must.

Let me now turn to Spanish to say a few words about the Director-General's mention of the Committee on the Application of Standards. I will do this in Spanish in order to say it in my own words.

(The speaker continues in Spanish.)

President, Director-General, in the Committee on the Application of Standards we raised an objective issue. For legal reasons, we raised the fact that we felt and continue to feel that the authority of the Committee of Experts to interpret standards is not

duly established, and even less so with regard to **the right to strike**. This is a right we fully recognize, but its interpretation and scope remain not only within national spheres but also within the mandate of other enforcement bodies that have interpreted it on a case by case basis.

The mandate of the Committee of Experts, established in 1926 by the Conference, provides that the Committee would, I quote, have “no judicial capacity nor would it be competent to give interpretations of the provisions of the Conventions nor to decide in favour of one interpretation rather than of another”.

We have our vision; we have our conviction. We respect tripartism and tripartism is conviction, action and sometimes it can also be emotion or passion. If at any time anyone from this House or from the tripartite constituents has been affected by our participation or intervention, I would apologize; that would not have been our intention, but we are not going to abandon our convictions. We feel this is a delicate issue, and one that needs to be built on from solid foundations. We do not believe that we are being opportunistic, but rather we believe that we are using the right conferred on us by this House to be part of the House and to be proud of that fact.

If errors of form have been made, I apologize on behalf of the Group. As for the substance, we shall defend our vision and our values because it is only by remaining true to this vision, these values and these convictions that we can build a tripartite dialogue which is sustainable and solid and respects the interests of everyone.

Mr CORTEBEECK (*Worker, Belgium, Chairperson of the Workers' group*)

First, I want to thank the Chairperson of the Governing Body, Greg Vines, and also my colleague, Mr Funes de Rioja, and the Office too, for the good cooperation that we have had this year. And we will also have the opportunity in the coming days to thank Mr Juan Somavia.

I address this august assembly at a time when the world and the ILO are at a critical point in their history. Since 2008 most of the advanced economies have experienced the worst economic and employment crisis since the Great Depression, and we are now entering a truly global crisis in which past progress with poverty reduction will be reversed and a new race to the bottom with regard to labour standards will emerge.

In 2008–09 many countries implemented fiscal stimulus packages to offset declining spending by households and enterprises. However, the magnitude of these measures was inadequate to restart growth and restore prosperity. Moreover, the modest attempts at fiscal expansion were brought to an abrupt and premature end in 2010. They were replaced by fiscal austerity that cut spending on essential services and abolished jobs.

Since then, austerity has been accompanied by massive attacks on labour institutions. Institutions, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Central Bank and the European Commission, have forced countries to dramatically weaken labour legislation, labour market institutions and social protection. Many of my colleagues in the Workers' benches live in countries where collective bargaining, freedom of association, employment protection legislation, so-

cial security and minimum wages have been severely attacked in blatant contradiction of the commitments we all undertook in 2008–09 when we adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact.

It is clear that austerity and attacks on labour institutions have failed to restore growth. In countries across Europe these measures have generated social tension, strikes and protests. We risk repeating mistakes of history, past mistakes that the ILO was created in order to prevent from happening again.

To reverse these trends, the ILO needs to fully implement its constitutional mandate set out in Philadelphia in 1944 and reasserted in the 2008 Social Justice Declaration. The ILO has a clear mandate to review all international, economic and financial policies to assess whether they promote or hinder social justice. The ILO must be more assertive at both international and national levels in the future to promote an alternative response to the crisis based on its Decent Work Agenda.

The ILO needs to strongly promote economic and social policies that will accelerate growth, jobs and fairness. We welcome the fact that the Office report to the Conference for the discussion on youth employment recognizes that more weight needs to be given to these policies, and we look forward to the conclusions from this discussion that adjust Office priorities and resource allocation to reflect this commitment.

Promoting equitable growth also requires comprehensive social security systems. Our group therefore welcomes the Conference discussion on the Recommendation on the social protection floor. We are confident that next week the Conference will adopt the Recommendation that will provide valuable guidance to member States on the extension of a social protection floor to the millions of people around the world who still lack this basic protection.

We also need to ensure that workers can exercise their rights at work. We need member States to ratify and implement international labour standards. And we need the ILO to continue to adopt new standards to address new patterns of work and existing gaps in protection. There is therefore a need in this year and in the coming years to strengthen the ILO mandate in respect of labour standards. We must urgently realize the commitments of the 2008 Social Justice Declaration to promote ILO standard-setting policy as a cornerstone of ILO activities and ensure the role of standards as an important means of achieving the constitutional objectives of the Organization.

This year the recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work is especially important for the future of the Organization, as it comes at a time when these rights are under intense attack. We expect the discussion to produce a roadmap for the next three years, which must include ways to redress the current imbalances between the eight Conventions, with a focus on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), which remain the least ratified.

I must express the deep disappointment of the Workers' group at what happened in the Committee on the Application of Standards. I know many Governments share this frustration. The Workers deplore the fact that the Committee was not able to

adopt a list of cases and that the reason for this is the questioning by the Employers of some 50 years of jurisprudence by the Committee of Experts and the Committee on Freedom of Association on the right to strike and its linkage to Convention No. 87. The Workers, until the very last moment, tried to reach an agreement with the Employers on the list, regrettably with no success. Many workers who are victims of serious rights abuses in their home countries came to Geneva to have their cases heard and discussed. They will go back home feeling that they have been unjustly hijacked by a political manoeuvre of some of the Employers' group. But some of the Workers will also go home fearing for their lives, for their family and their colleagues. But all of us deeply fear for the future of the supervisory machinery. And I thank the Secretary-General, the Director-General, for his appeal for a renewed spirit of dialogue, and I think we as Workers are ready for it.

Let me also thank the Director-General for his excellent Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. But we deeply regret that we remain unable to tackle what we all know is the principal cause of this chronic suffering: "the longest military occupation in modern history". We therefore fully endorse the call for the ILO to continue to make resources and capacities available to the Palestinian Authority and the social partners. This is very much needed in order to fight against the unacceptable high levels of poverty and unemployment of workers in these territories.

I started my intervention by saying that this was also an historical moment for the ILO. On 28 May, the Governing Body elected Guy Ryder as its tenth Director-General. Guy Ryder will be your Director-General, the Director-General of Employers, Governments and Workers. Having known Guy Ryder for many years and having worked closely with him, I am fully confident that he will be able to work with all constituents and lead the Office in the difficult times that we are facing to promote the necessary reforms in consultation with all constituents. We need to break out of the silos that prevent the Office from working together in an integrated manner as called for by the Social Justice Declaration, at the service of its constituents.

In the past our Organization responded creatively and gained strength when the world faced its most pressing challenges. In 2012, we need to again be bold and deliver on our mandate to create a more equitable and rights-based growth model for all women and men in the developing and developed world. Let us not miss this opportunity.

**REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING
BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL:
DISCUSSION**

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

Before starting the general discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General, I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Officers of the Conference to recall the principles which will guide our debate.

These principles were established by the Working Party of the Governing Body on the Programme and Structure of the ILO, and approved by the Governing Body and communicated to the Conference in 1967. They are set out in paragraphs 54–58 of the

fourth report of the Working Party and recalled in section 4 of the Conference Guide, of which you should all have received a copy.

I would like, in particular, to point out that in periods of acute political tension, the International Labour Organization has a responsibility to uphold the values of freedom and human dignity enshrined in its Constitution, and to circumscribe rather than extend the area of international tension. To that end, the ILO must strive towards the fullest possible co-operation in the pursuit of its objectives.

I would also recall that the debates of the International Labour Conference must not encroach on action proper to the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, bodies entrusted by the Charter with responsibility for political decisions in the United Nations system.

I therefore rely on all of you to ensure that our discussions take place with the dignity and openness that are appropriate to the responsibilities of the highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters.

Freedom of speech is a pillar of the International Labour Organization. However, in order to exercise that right in a spirit of mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates use parliamentary language, respect the accepted procedure, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising questions alien to the debate. All speakers must accept that discipline to ensure a successful conclusion to our work.

All delegates may exercise the right of reply to any remark which they may consider offensive. In these cases, before the end of the sitting, the person concerned should approach the podium and inform the Clerk of the Conference that he or she wishes to exercise the right of reply. The request will be transmitted to the President of the sitting, who will agree with the delegation concerned on the timing of the reply. The reply must refer only to the matter under discussion. It must be brief, must not exceed two minutes and must be expressed in parliamentary language. So as to avoid interminable debates, it is not customary in the ILO to allow a right of reply concerning a previous reply.

I would also remind you that the time limit for speeches is five minutes, as set out in the Standing Orders. As we have a very limited amount of time to conclude our work programme, delegates and ministers must bear the time limits in mind when delivering their speeches. Beyond that time limit, the President of the sitting will unfortunately be obliged to call speakers to order or even withdraw the floor from them before they have finished their speeches. The Officers and I hope that this will not be necessary.

My fellow Officers and I urge all delegates to observe these principles. For our part, the Vice-Presidents and I are certainly committed to ensuring that they are applied.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference approves of these arrangements?

(It is so approved.)

Original Arabic: Mr ODEIBAT (Minister of Labour, Jordan)

First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr Rafael Francisco Alburquerque de Castro, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic, upon his election as President of this session of the Conference and I would like to wish him every success in his work. I would also like to congratulate the Vice-Presidents

upon their election and hope that they succeed in attaining the objectives of this Conference. I would also like to express a word of gratitude to the Director-General of this Organization, Mr Juan Somavia, for his efforts over the course of his mandate to bolster the role of the ILO and to respect the interests of the three constituent parties. I also take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Mr Guy Ryder, the new Director-General-elect. I wish him every success in his new mandate and hope that the Organization will continue to fulfil its noble mission at the service of the peoples of this world.

Today's world faces a large number of economic, social and political challenges. These are merely the continuation of the global credit crunch that battered the world financial system in the second half of 2008 and the result of successive programme and policy failures in most countries of the world during the past four years. We are confronted with major challenges and difficulties, obliging us to step up our efforts to increase coordination, cooperation, dialogue, an exchange of information and knowledge with a view to building up the production capacity of local and world economies, restoring their growth and increasing their ability to create job opportunities liable to absorb vast numbers of workers – both young and old.

In reference to the Director-General's Report on the ILO's achievements submitted to this 101th Session of the Conference, I should like to state that, thanks to the ILO, Jordan has integrated a number of employment objectives, policies and programmes into its national development strategies. Similarly, the Global Jobs Pact has provided a real opportunity to implement the policies required to adopt social protection strategies to attain employment objectives and to promote international labour standards aimed at the strengthening of social dialogue, the realization of decent work and sustainable social protection. In addition to the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, the Decent Work Agenda sets out to create opportunities for the social partners to take up the challenges inherent in development, as stated in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, especially with respect to trade union rights.

We have therefore stated that the realization of decent work for Jordanian workers is a priority. Last March, we signed an agreement with the ILO to implement a Decent Work Country Programme for 2012–15, defining the conditions that might guarantee decent work to workers. A steering committee has been set up to monitor the programme, which is designed to guarantee decent work to all Jordanians and non-Jordanians, with no discrimination whatsoever.

Establishing a universal social system has become a necessity in all countries and no one can underestimate the importance of this. A social security system is the cornerstone of any sound society and should be exempt from any deviations. The lack of such a system can encourage criminality and curtail the productivity of individuals; it is key to civilization, as well as to social, economic and cultural prosperity. Jordan has therefore made further efforts to increase social security protection by broadening relevant programmes to ensure that all workers in the formal economy of Jordan are covered. We also have an optional social security programme which aims to help housewives and Jordanians working abroad because we believe that we need to provide

social security and medical protection to all citizens, particularly to women during pregnancy and following childbirth.

In order to close the wage gap between men and women, considered one of the major obstacles to policies increasing Jordanian women's participation in the workforce, Jordan has embarked upon a programme – in cooperation with the ILO which is providing technical and financial assistance – to further gender equality at work. This will allow us to bridge the salary gap between men and women, and it will also allow us to encourage women to be involved in all productive and service providing sectors. A steering committee on wage equality has been set up and includes representatives of the three social partners.

Considering Jordan's commitment to the Global Jobs Pact, my country has forged ahead in this domain by implementing policies and strategies and offering social security protection to all members of the population. We are also striving to attain employment objectives and to promote international labour standards based on social dialogue, as well as legislation focusing on domestic workers. Furthermore, we are encouraging the role of social dialogue in the implementation of significant social security reforms.

Attempts to combat poverty and unemployment have always been a priority in our country. In 2011, Jordan succeeded in reducing the unemployment level by 1 per cent – from 12.5 per cent to 11.25 per cent. His Majesty King Abdullah is also planning to launch in the near future a national jobs strategy to coordinate efforts among all stakeholders to ensure greater job opportunities to all Jordanians to boost the country's economic prosperity.

In Jordan we believe firmly in the human values championed by this Organization, and we also applaud the neutrality of the mission sent to the occupied Arab territories. We acknowledge that the situation there is of great concern and that trade union rights are fundamental for workers. We support the right of the Palestinian people to create their own independent State and to live in peace in a free economy with the free circulation of goods.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Jordan, therefore, I hope that this Conference will attain its objectives and that it will result in recommendations and resolutions enabling this Organization and all peoples and workers in the world to achieve greater progress.

Original Spanish: Mr BARANDA (Government, Chile)

It is a matter of great pride for someone from Latin America to chair this Assembly. I also bring you greetings from the Government of Chile and from our President of the Republic, Dr Sebastián Piñera and the Minister of Employment, Ms Evelyn Matthei.

I would first like to express our thanks to the Director-General, our compatriot, Juan Somavia, who after 13 years has decided to bring forward his departure. During that period, the ILO has become a body with a real ability to contribute to global governance by having decent work as the centre of our focus and political definitions.

We would like to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Chile to generate better public policies which allow the country to create sufficient and decent jobs, making it possible to move out of poverty and into greater development, inclusion and

social equity. Despite the fact that we still have a great deal to learn from organizations such as this one and from the countries you represent, and that we still have innumerable shortcomings and deficiencies, Chile is meeting its challenges in the labour sector. In a context of international uncertainty, Chile has achieved growth rates of 6 per cent and has created jobs, chiefly for salaried employees and for women, and has reduced unemployment to 6.5 per cent.

In terms of the quality of the jobs generated, we can first highlight stability. In the last two years, the average length of open-ended contracts has increased by more than six months, while the proportion of jobs with written and signed contracts has risen to 82 per cent.

Also, since 2002 we managed to achieve an increase in wages, with an adjusted wage growth rate of 8.5 per cent of nominal increase in the last 12 months.

As I have said, there is still a great deal to do, and we need the assistance of everyone to continue improving our public policies and the quality of our employment relationships. We need to increase salaries and productivity, to find quality jobs for those who are still unemployed and to further increase labour force participation by women, young people and our adults.

There are 75 million unemployed young people in the world, 4 million more than in 2007, which poses a threat to any society. It is urgent that we reverse that trend. The cost of that is unrest and a frustrated generation. The ILO must continue to make a contribution to fighting that challenge, which is not only economic but also political and ethical.

In terms of occupational safety, last year Chile made the protection of life and the health and safety of workers a priority.

In 2011, Chile ratified the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187). We are setting up a new institutional framework and we have sent three proposals to experts, heads of trade unions, employers and parliamentarians, hoping to receive support from all of them. We have technical tripartite committees set up for reviewing standards on occupational safety, we have added these subjects to the curricula of trade union training courses, we have set up an advisory council for occupational safety and we have set up a committee of ministers. We are implementing a change to the system for training and employment intermediation, refocusing on more relevant programmes, improving employability conditions and access to work. We need training to improve both the wages and productivity.

We have also taken steps in modernizing labour inspection processes and systems to ensure that people meet their labour obligations and respect workers' rights. We have introduced special standards to promote social dialogue and to consider the current situation facing SMEs.

For the first time, pensions have increased in real terms, removing the 7 per cent reduction from the monthly pension of each retired worker, which was made to fund health-care schemes. More than 700,000 retired people are benefitting from this initiative.

In 2011, the Government of Chile introduced perhaps the most significant reform for the last 30 years benefitting working women, extending

post-natal maternity leave from three to six months and extending coverage to temporary employees.

At the conference last year, Chile voted in favour of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and following work undertaken by the Government in conjunction with the local ILO office, unions and senators and deputies we have agreed on a project for reducing the length of the working week to 45 hours and making it a general standard.

Lastly, in our policy in order to improve the social protection floor promoted by the ILO, the Government of Chile has established a procedure for conditional cash transfers that will make it possible to establish a basic income for each family, so as to complement the insufficient wages that they receive.

I would like to highlight the significant contribution that has been made by Chilean members of Parliament, particularly those who work on the Labour Committees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, who are here today. Their contributions to these government initiatives have made it possible to improve the initial proposals and the quality of life of our citizens.

I should like to close by reiterating the commitment of the Government of Chile to international labour standards concerning quality employment, social dialogue and fundamental rights. We congratulate the Director-General-elect, Mr Guy Ryder. You can count on the support of Chile.

Mr LEE (*Minister of Employment and Labour, Republic of Korea*)

I would like to share with you today a few key points related to the Korean Government's efforts to address structural problems within the labour market.

Employment issues have complex causes and thus need to be dealt with in a comprehensive and systematic way.

In this regard, the Korean Government introduced the 2020 National Employment Strategy as a framework for macro-level long-term employment policies. And, in order to effectively implement the strategy, the Government holds the National Employment Strategy Meeting led by the President. Also, the Minister of Employment and Labour chairs Employment Policy Coordination Meetings that involve relevant ministries and local government. This is done in addition to holding the Public-Private Forum on Job Creation with major business organizations.

Under this policy framework and governance system, the President is taking the lead and both central and local governments are working in mutual cooperation.

Youth unemployment is indeed a common challenge that touches many countries around the world.

With the aim of creating a society that values a broad range of abilities more than academic credentials, the Korean Government has been implementing the Plan for Realizing an Open Employment Society since last September.

As part of the Plan, we are reshaping school curriculums to help students get the right skills required on the job. Meanwhile, we are facilitating the employment of high-school graduates through close partnerships among schools, businesses and job centres. Also, we are encouraging young people to

start up businesses or create jobs through various supportive measures.

As a result, throughout Korean society we are beginning to see a growing climate of valuing diverse ranges of abilities.

The gap among workers must be addressed to realize social justice in the workplace. The Korean Government is keen to address unfair discrimination against non-regular workers and to increase social safety nets for vulnerable groups.

First, the Government provides subsidies for employment insurance and national pension contributions to low-income workers in small businesses. Also, the coverage of social insurances has been expanded. Now, self-employed people enjoy employment insurance benefits, and courier service personnel and express delivery servicemen can benefit from industrial accident compensation insurance.

On 28 May 28, the ILO held a historic election.

Before welcoming the newly elected Director-General, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Director-General, Mr Somavia. Without his outstanding leadership, the ILO would not have been able to achieve the visibility that it enjoys today. He made “decent work” an everyday term. It is clear that his strong and positive legacy will be carried on for many years to come.

Having said that, let me now congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election. In framing the vision of the ILO, I would like to make a comparison between the ILO’s principle of tripartism and a musical triangle. When employers, workers and governments put their heads together, they can resonate throughout society with clarity and a distinct voice just as a triangle does. As you know, all three sides of the triangle are equal in length and width. Likewise, the voices of the employers, workers and governments should be equally heard and put forth. I believe Mr Ryder will lead the ILO in this way.

An Eastern philosopher once said, “What worries the people most is not poverty but unfairness.” Indeed, at the bottom of most problems is unfairness or extreme disparity. Without dissolving them, we cannot move forward.

Therefore, we need to renew our efforts to create a sound business ecosystem where large and small companies, as well as primary contractors and sub-contractors, can live and grow together with maximum shared value. Likewise, we have to create a “symbiotic employment ecosystem” by eliminating the gap between workers in large companies and those in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), between regular and non-regular workers, and between unionized and non-unionized workers.

In the same context, balanced international development is a prerequisite for shared prosperity and sustainable development of the global community. With a view to closing the gap between regions and nations, the Korean Government plans to double the level of official development assistance (ODA) in four years. Korea is ready and willing to share our experience gained and lessons learned over the course of economic development. A report on Korea’s job-centred economic and social policy will soon be published by the ILO Employment Policy Department. I believe it will be a useful reference for many countries grappling with the common challenge of jobs.

Mr KHARGE (*Union Minister of Labour and Employment, India*)

The journey of the ILO over more than the past nine decades has been eventful and full of important milestones. The last 13 years have been particularly effectual under the stewardship of Mr Juan Somavia, and India wishes to place on record its deep appreciation of his contribution to the world of work. We are also confident that under the experienced leadership of Mr Guy Ryder the ILO will achieve a new height of excellence in the years to come.

The primary function of the ILO is standard-setting and the application of standards. Many of the ILO Conventions are outdated and need to be revised, as identified by the Cartier Working Party. Even the core Conventions have failed to achieve universal ratification owing to lack of flexibility and enforcement. The ILO should undertake an in-depth analysis to put in place a standards strategy which encourages steps like progressive ratification of a Convention. The choice of topics for future standard-setting should be widened according to the requirements of all the ILO member States having diverse socio-economic conditions.

In the years to come, the ILO must maintain its leadership in subjects related to labour since it has the unique advantage of tripartite structure, transparency and the ability to obtain inputs from the real economy. In recent years we have seen moves made by various organizations to enter into the area of labour standards. The mushrooming of various types of voluntary standards and corporate social responsibility (CSR) standards are a clear indication of attempts made to marginalize the role of the ILO. Moreover, in the area of labour inspection, several accreditation agencies and third-party inspections are being encouraged, whereas the ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), clearly states that labour inspection is the responsibility of governments. The ILO should be very watchful of this situation.

While we welcome coordination of the ILO with other international organizations for the protection of workers’ rights, the ILO should keep away from areas of operation which are the principal mandate of other international organizations. The international labour scenario is facing new challenges in the form of reduced job opportunities on account of the financial crisis coupled with jobless growth. We urge the ILO to concentrate its limited resources on these challenges and its core areas of operation.

For technical cooperation projects to be sustainable and effective they must be planned and executed by recipient countries reflecting their priorities.

The ILO should continue to make labour markets work better by assisting in improving information and analysis, provide technical advice on skills and employability, promote freedom of association, collective bargaining, social dialogue and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. India has always encouraged the policy of live and let live and believed in furthering the interests of both workers and employers through a healthy tripartite mechanism. I take this opportunity to firmly reiterate India’s commitment to the ideals of the ILO and assure you of our full cooperation in this partnership, and I hope that in future all the stakeholders will take an interest in assuring the ILO of their full cooperation.

On behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, I would like to begin by extending our heartfelt and warmest congratulations to Mr Rafael Francisco Albuquerque de Castro on his outstanding election to the presidency of this Conference, and my congratulations also go to the other elected Officers. My country assures them that they will enjoy our full support to make their work a success.

The theme of this Conference is “building a future with decent work”. The importance of such a topic is self-evident. It is something that speaks directly to all member States and challenges them to adopt innovative strategies as they seek to implement the Decent Work Agenda.

Accordingly, Burkina Faso wholeheartedly supports the agenda for this Conference and the particular emphasis laid on the youth employment crisis and social protection. Youth employment is a major challenge for the development of all of our countries, especially at this time of global economic crisis. However, despite the scale and the depth of the crisis, it does remain in itself an opportunity for us to bring about qualitative change. This involves, first and foremost, reshaping our structures and institutions so that they are based on social values and can buttress strong and competitive economies. With that in mind, our States must tackle without delay the issue of the upsurge in youth unemployment which is having an adverse effect on the implementation of development policies.

For its part, in view of its patchy success in seeking to curb unemployment, Burkina Faso understood that it had to take a persistent approach and invest more in young people if it was to fight the scourge of unemployment.

In September 2004 in Ougadougou, President Blaise Compaoré invited his peers and the international community to come together to think about solutions to the problem of youth unemployment and the fight against poverty. Our President made it clear that youth was at the heart of our country’s economic and social policies. Constantly reaffirming the need to focus on developing human capital, which is a key part of his political programme, he is committed to supporting all relevant strategies and initiatives that can provide young people real opportunities of obtaining productive jobs.

With that in mind, a number of initiatives have been taken by our Government that focus on youth employment. For instance, we have created an institution: the Youth Forum. This is a framework enabling direct dialogue with young people and gain a better understanding of their main concerns. This has allowed us to empower young people in seeking to meet the challenges of sustainable development. It involves the implementation of policies and mechanisms to create secure, decent and competitive jobs, as well as education and vocational training in line with market needs.

Similarly, a specific programme for job creation, which costs more than 11 billion CFA francs a year and is entirely funded by the state budget, has been adopted by our Government. The purpose of this is to further empower young people and women. This particular programme will make it possible for us to create more than 50,000 jobs per year for young people in rural areas, young graduates, young people with only partial schooling or no schooling at

all, and women. It will also focus on enhancing the capacity of SMEs, which are the very bedrock of socio-economic inclusion for young people and women, developing the skills of young people and women and strengthening the economic fabric of our society in order to take significant steps towards reducing unemployment and underemployment.

Social protection policies reflect the magnitude of the global economic crisis today and also testify to growing recognition of calls for greater social justice. Putting in place appropriate mechanisms and a whole package of social measures are clearly prerequisites in order to support sustainable efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and to overcome increasing income disparities.

Mindful of that, with the support of its development partners, our Government has adopted a national policy for social protection, which is at present being put into practice.

It is my hope then that at the conclusion of our work at this Conference, we will adopt the autonomous Recommendation on the social protection floor which is before us for consideration, which will open up the prospect of a better future for all our people.

I would like to take this opportunity of turning to Mr Guy Ryder and on behalf of the Government of Burkina Faso, I would like to extend to him our heartfelt congratulations on his election to the leadership of our Organization. I would like to assure him that Burkina Faso will support him as he seeks to undertake his responsibilities successfully.

Before I close, however, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the gentleman who has had such an impact on the life of our Organization over the last 20 years. I am of course talking about Mr Juan Somavia, the outgoing Director-General of the ILO. His foresight, his resolute action, his self-sacrifice and the strength of his convictions have enhanced the leadership of our Organization and contributed towards significant reforms, with a view to building a world that is secure and that is moving steadily towards fair and just globalization.

My country, Burkina Faso, believes that we are able to meet all of the challenges thrown up by the crisis we face today in youth employment and in social protection.

The Government and the social partners of Mozambique warmly acknowledge the role played by the Director-General, his Excellency Ambassador Juan Somavia over the last 13 years at the helm of the ILO and the ILO family. The impact of his wise leadership has inspired our countries, which have increasingly worked together for more proactive, articulate and responsible labour administration. It was during his term of office that the ILO started to make its presence felt in the multilateral system, that the G20 was urged to reflect on the quality of employment, including the Global Jobs Pact, and the fact that youth employment should not be looked at solely on financial terms, which brought Labour Ministers into this forum. Today, our challenges have a common platform, such as social partnership and mechanisms for resolving labour conflicts. Once implemented, these instruments have the potential to ensure social peace.

The Government of Mozambique, thanks to its efforts and inspired by the discussion at the Interna-

tional Labour Conference in 2005, approved its Strategy for Employment and Vocational Training for the period 2006–15, which set the target of creating a million jobs. Fortunately, by 2011, we had achieved this by a 120 per cent. The Government's activities in both areas have been successful, combined with the increased investment in our country in different areas of the economy, especially mining and hydrocarbons. In fact, the exploitation of these resources has made it possible to take new approaches to training, ensuring that the national labour force can be included in these sectors, which are characterized by their use of modern technologies. The Government has built on this by modernizing training institutions and centres, in close cooperation with the production sectors, with a view to ensuring a supply of national workers who meet the technical and professional requirements of these sectors.

Youth employment is a cause of great concern at different levels of society. Therefore, my delegation includes six young people who are representing organizations which work in the area of youth and youth entrepreneurship. The participation of His Excellency Mr Armando Emílio Guebuza, President of Mozambique, at the ILO Global Jobs Crisis Summit, which culminated in the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact, spurred on the implementation of programmes aimed at providing jobs for young people.

When speaking of investment in Mozambique, President Guebuza has emphasized the need to comply with labour law and maintain social peace through dialogue between the different stakeholders in the market.

The recent financial crisis confirmed our conviction that social protection should be the focus of our attention. This is why we are continuing to take steps to improve the social security system and schemes by expanding and modernizing the system, pursuing those who owe taxes and extending the system to cover mining workers outside the country and the self-employed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for its support of the actuarial study which is currently being carried out in our country.

To conclude, I would like to share with you, the ILO family, that the growth in job creation in Mozambique and the improvements in the standard of living are extremely encouraging and highly visible. Together we can do much more to promote a work culture and decent work.

Mr NGATJIZEKO (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Namibia*)

This Conference puts at centre stage the challenge to find effective and integrated solutions to the increased poverty, deprivation and inequalities that plague so many of our countries.

Unprecedented changes throughout the world, especially in the area of social protection, call for vigorous paradigm shifts for revisiting our policies, strategies, legal and regulatory frameworks and redesigning our delivery and monitoring mechanisms to meet the needs of our peoples.

I am therefore of the opinion that the single discussion on an autonomous Recommendation on the social protection floor comes at a time when it is desperately needed.

While we support the adoption of a Recommendation on the social protection floor, we are disap-

pointed that no reference was made to the informal economy in the Office draft. It is my conviction that special attention should be given to extend social protection benefits to those vulnerable workers in the informal sector.

Namibia has several successful social protection programmes, including basic state grants for the elderly, disabled and vulnerable children, as well as compulsory funds providing maternity, sick leave and workers' compensation benefits. However, we are challenged by the fragmentation of the programmes across different government ministries. Furthermore, Namibia has yet to achieve a comprehensive social protection floor. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has therefore approached the ILO to assist in an audit of both the delivery and adequacy of current social protection programmes. Namibia is also presently reviewing its laws concerning state grants and is finalizing the policy framework and design for contributory national pension and medical benefit funds mandated by the Social Security Act.

For Namibia, this Conference's thematic discussion of Youth Employment could not come at a better time.

Unemployment in Namibia has increased dramatically over the past four years, especially among the age group 15–35 years.

Our Government has introduced short- and medium- to long-term strategies to tackle youth unemployment. The Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth introduced in 2011 is intended to reduce youth unemployment significantly by 2014. It focuses on economic sectors with high potential for sustainable employment and is designed to ensure speedy implementation. The programme includes a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that corrective measures can be quickly introduced where necessary.

Our Ministry is preparing to operationalize the new Employment Services Act, which will strengthen employment promotion and vocational training. We intend to introduce this year the Employment Creation Commission Bill, which should ultimately play a big role in reducing employment. In addition, programmes for support for small and medium enterprises proliferate in both the public and private sectors.

We therefore have high hopes of benefiting from both the global exchange of experiences and strategies, and the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Committee on Youth Employment.

I thank the Director-General for his Report on *ILO Programme Implementation 2010–11* – the first performance report under the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15. I note with appreciation that 46 of the 50 targets set for the biennium have been met.

Namibia can report good progress in implementing our Decent Work Country Programme.

Allow me to share with member States three factors that I consider to be critical for the successful implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes.

First is the availability of sufficient funding for the country priorities, identified by the tripartite partners at national level. I urge the ILO to upscale the mobilization of financial resources to implement country priorities.

The second is capacity building of the social partners. It is crucial that governments be able to engage in social dialogue with employers' and workers' organizations.

Third is the inclusion of the informal sector in implementing the Decent Work Country Programme. Since the majority of workers in developing countries are in the informal sector, we must take decisive action to protect these workers and to address their needs.

Namibia wishes to remind this House of the unfinished business of democratizing the governance of the ILO, in which developing countries, particularly African States, do not have an equal voice in decision-making. We urge member States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the 1986 Constitutional amendments.

Before closing, I wish to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as Director-General. We look forward to a productive collaboration with him.

Finally, I wish to express our profound appreciation for the seminal contribution of outgoing Director-General Juan Somavia over the past 13 years or so. He leaves a vision and legacy that will ensure that the voice of the world of work will be listened to and will influence the course of global economic and social developments. We salute Mr Somavia, and wish him well.

Original Arabic: Mr HAMADEH (Employer, Lebanon)

On my personal behalf and on behalf of the Lebanese Industrialists' Association and all employers in Lebanon, we welcome you and wish you every success in your work during this session.

I would like to begin by congratulating the President on his election to preside over this session. We would like to thank the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for all his efforts over the course of his mandate, and we commend him for his Report presented at this session. We are very proud of this work, which is professional, as usual.

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to say that we, as employers, have not received the attention that we have been expecting and hoping for for quite some time. Furthermore, the Organization has not achieved its objective to promote and support cooperation between the public and private sectors.

The Employers' group did not support the candidacy of the Director-General-elect, Mr Guy Ryder, during the elections. However, since we believe in democracy we congratulate him on his election and are willing to cooperate with him in order to achieve our objectives and promote the role of the Employers in this Organization and all its activities so that this hope does not fade over time.

Lebanon is a land shaped by the Holy Books and human values, and is thus able to play a pivotal role in launching initiatives, be it at the national, regional or global level. One of the most important initiatives concerns dialogue between cultures to prevent conflict between civilizations. In light of these common values, which give human beings an intrinsic value and divine nature, we are gathered here today at this Conference to discuss social responsibility. And we hope that, in spite of all the suffering that we face in our region, these common values will lead to the creation of genuine democracies in order to ensure greater protection of individual and community rights and effective social justice. Experience has taught us that serious financial

and social crises arise when capitalism becomes rampant and the economy is built at the expense of humankind and not for it.

In the Lebanese Industrialists' Association, we believe – as our President has said – that it is our duty to prevent such abusive practices. We want to be led by our consciences and the faith that we draw from the teachings and values of our societies, which stress the value of each individual as a human being and not just a number, by focusing on their intrinsic value and divine nature.

Our values teach us that at birth God endows human beings with a potential that they must develop. Society must help us to achieve this objective, based on the principle of a community that serves individuals and individuals who serve their community.

This should not overshadow the social and economic responsibility of the nation. Government institutions should cooperate with the private sector to alleviate human suffering by building a network and that ensures social stability as part of a global social protection system that should support economic development. This is why we need to involve young people, and why they need to be represented in our institutions and involved in policy dialogues. Social dialogue is one of the fundamental principles of democracy, which we hope to achieve in our region and throughout the world in order to ensure equality and justice. I also hope that the Palestinian people will be able to achieve its goal of establishing a democratic independent State that is recognized internationally, with Al-Quds as its capital.

Original French: Mr OWONA (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Cameroon)

Cameroon would like to thank the ILO and all its members for giving our country the honour and privilege of chairing the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I am particularly grateful to the outgoing Director-General (Mr Juan Somavia) for the work he has done to bring about a more effective performance of the Office so as to produce better rights at work for so many. And my heartfelt congratulations to the Director-General-elect on his election; I wish him every success in his new office and assure him of the support of Cameroon.

Congratulations to the President on his election to this high office and for the way in which he has steered our work. Congratulations, finally, to the Chairperson of the Governing Body for the job he has done and our thanks for an excellent report.

Cameroon has been a member of the ILO since achieving independence in 1960 and we have always supported the noble ideals defended by this Organization in its fight for a better world for all workers. We have ratified all the fundamental ILO Conventions.

It has always been clear to the ILO and its Members that, since the class wars of the nineteenth century, social progress is the means to happiness for everyone; my country understood this very early. In Cameroon we link social progress with growth, that is, with the need for all of us to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

However, we must recognize that good intentions are not enough. Wanting to work is all very well, but finding work is not always easy. Often the jobs we seek are more and more rare. We think nonetheless that it is possible in Cameroon to build our fu-

ture on decent work despite the problems we are going to have to face.

The African continent has had a number of important symposia, particularly those in Ouagadougou and Yaoundé on decent work related to a social protection floor, and we have stood alongside the States who are trying to achieve that.

In Cameroon the President of the Republic, Paul Biya, is fighting for the development, welfare, dignity and serenity of our people. He has therefore launched a far-reaching programme to fight unemployment, particularly among young people, by implementing our National Jobs Pact. The purpose of this is also to set up a system of social security which will benefit everyone; this requires recasting our economy on the basis of what we call "a social protection floor for all". It is clear that social security systems which are properly run improve the standard of living of our workers by providing them with the moral and physical well-being they need to be more productive in order to bring about fairer economic growth.

The President of the Republic, Paul Biya, is conducting a social dialogue to facilitate management and governance and to establish lasting social cohesion in the world of work.

It is in the light of the requirements of modern times that the Government of Cameroon has begun a process of sweeping reform to overhaul its social security, employment and training system. This reform goes hand in hand with the adoption of a culture of good governance and a permanent social dialogue at all levels of society.

In conclusion, I think we can say that all of this is not possible without a global response of the kind proposed by the ILO, which calls for an approach based on solidarity between all countries and from the international community as a whole, which will be closely involved in those activities. It is against that background that Cameroon intends to make its modest contribution to promoting decent work in a fairer world of globalization.

Mr GAT LUAK (*Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, South Sudan*)

On behalf of the Government of the people and the people of the Republic of South Sudan and on my own behalf, allow me to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation on the admission of the Republic of South Sudan into the ILO. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder, the incoming Director-General of the ILO. We trust his competency to run this Organization effectively. We commend Mr Juan Somavia, the outgoing Director-General of the ILO. During his tenure, the ILO has achieved a lot and he has discharged his duties satisfactorily.

The Republic of South Sudan, in its new position as full Member No. 184 of the ILO, would like to express its commitment to work actively and to comply with ILO objectives and obligations. We wish to recognize that at this session that the country is represented in a tripartite delegation of government, workers and employers. We are aware and concerned about the challenges of the member States. We have come to learn the process of developing strategies on how to mitigate them. The challenges are enormous in terms of social protection, youth employment, fundamental principles and rights at work.

As a child we need to crawl, walk and talk. We are not shy to say that South Sudan is among the worst countries in terms of child labour. At age 5 you are asked to tend to goats and calves if you come from the pastoralist communities or join farming activities if you come from a farming community.

As a new country we are confronted with putting in place enabling laws or a legal framework. We are moving slowly to meet the target, considering the tedious and the demanding nature of law enactment.

To ensure this, decent retirement pension bills have been put in place by the Council of Ministers and are on their way to the other house of Parliament for enactment. All the stakeholders were involved in the process, and consultations have been under way to establish an independent pension fund.

The labour bill and employment policy, which we have developed through technical assistance from the ILO offices in Cairo and Geneva, is currently undergoing constitutional procedures to be enacted into law. Health insurance has been developed and is in the process of enactment into law by the Parliament. Social security is yet to be developed. In order to respond effectively to the needs of the private sector's employees, nonetheless, the Government has given instruction for contributions to be deducted from both employees and employers at a percentage of 8 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively. The Government has proposed in that regard that the concerned institution set up trust accounts where such contributions should be remitted pending the establishment of proper social security systems.

For South Sudan to catch up with the rest of the world, the African Union initiated a programme called IGAD Initiative, that is the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Up to 200 civil servants from Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana have been deployed at the national and regional levels to coach and mentor their counterparts in the Republic of South Sudan.

Of course, you cannot have a credible production force without the necessary skills. That is being imparted through generous contribution by these countries. We commend and appreciate them and urge the other countries to chip in their support.

As you all know, South Sudan has gone through a long civil war. Achieving peace and independence does not mean that all is over. The hardest work is nation building. Coupled with local conflicts on the ground which are causing unrest and mental suffering, that led to displacement and disruption of livelihoods of the civil population. The Government is trying its best to find solutions to these problems. One of the methods is peace and reconciliation among the communities, supplemented by peaceful disarmament in Jonglei State, which had been a hot-spot in regard to violence. Progress has been made to stop that violence.

Owing to unresolved issues between the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan, the months of March and April 2012 witnessed the outbreak of fighting between the two neighbours. This is unfortunate. As we speak, our two delegations are in Addis Ababa to sit down and listen to one another with the aim of reaching a peaceful settlement to post-referendum issues. South Sudan cannot find peace if the north is unstable. The opposite is true for the north. We want two viable States living side by side to cater for the welfare of the people in

terms of economic development. This is possible with political will.

The competent authority of the Republic of South Sudan would appreciate technical assistance in the drafting of the Decent Work Country Programme and a mission of technical experts and projects to ensure that a full-fledged, functional ILO country office is maintained in the Republic of South Sudan.

As I conclude, the Republic of South Sudan is convinced that social dialogue is the cornerstone to achieve the Decent Work Agenda. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan would like to acknowledge and express appreciation for the assistance rendered to it by the Organization, particularly the Director of the ILO office in Cairo and his staff, who tirelessly worked with the ILO liaison office in Juba to meet the needs of the new country. We acknowledge and appreciate the ongoing cooperation from various ILO offices in Geneva, Pretoria, Addis Ababa and Dar es Salaam, through the coordination of the Cairo and Juba offices. Last but not least, once again, we would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to all well-wishers who continue to stand with us today.

Original Spanish: Mr AURIS MELGAR (Workers' delegate, Peru)

I extend a cordial greeting from the General Confederation of Workers of Peru, an organization which is a member of the World Federation of Trade Unions, which fights for workers and against capitalist barbarism.

As the Director-General has pointed out, we must recognize the enormous efforts which have been made worldwide to promote the Decent Work Programme. The Report sets out the results obtained between 2010 and 2011. It shows how countries have advanced towards achieving the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Programme. Since the Decent Work Agenda was adopted by the ILO in 1999, not much progress has been made in Peru as regards the implementation of this tool.

Although many countries, both developed and developing, were affected by the global crisis in 2008, Peru's strong economy was strong enough, but was not put to good use by the governments in power to push forward this process.

The fundamental principles and rights at work enshrined in freedom of association in Peru have taken an enormous step backwards. This applies to the right to organize and collective bargaining, which are enjoyed by only 4.1 and 4.2 per cent of the 15 million people who make up the economically active population.

The governments in power, incapable of meeting social demands, have criminalized and penalized the right to strike. Now, in my country, we have social conflict in the region of Cajamarca against a mining company, and in the region of Cuzco the mayor of the Province of Espinar has been arrested and sentenced to six months in prison.

Consequently, today in Peru it is a crime to organize trade unions, collective bargaining is a fraud and those exercising their legitimate right to strike are threatened with imprisonment. Therefore, I call the ILO to send a preliminary committee to visit Peru.

In this context, the presence of the Peruvian President at this Conference will be unfortunate. Despite the fact that the current Government of Peru is trying to increase the purchasing power of the minimum wage, Peru has one of the highest levels

of inequality and social injustice. Effectively, wages as a share of GDP have fallen from 25 per cent in 2002 to 20.9 per cent in 2009.

We believe that what is happening in regard to labour in Peru is not an isolated case. Rather, it is part of a general trend which is occurring in the majority of countries across the whole world. Therefore, we call for a new way of governing; we call for respect of rights, and for productive and dignified work. In short, we call for a new social contract, in which politics, ethics, solidarity, culture, diligence, the scientific and technological revolution and social justice are all combined and thereby dignify humankind.

In light of this very sombre situation for workers, the ILO must play a stronger and more engaged role with those who are exploited and oppressed throughout the world. Conventions and Recommendations should be binding in nature, so that governments respect and ensure compliance with these Conventions.

Lastly, we would like to express our solidarity with the workers of the world, particularly with the Palestinian workers and their beloved country. We therefore support their just and legitimate aspiration for Palestine to be a free sovereign country and a member of the United Nations.

Original Arabic: Mr LUQMAN (Representative, Arab Labour Organization)

I would like to renew my thanks to Mr Somavia, who has been at the helm of the International Labour Organization during one of the most difficult times in its history. The Organization has been marginalized, and globalization has underlined a significant number of problems. The ILO is a ground-breaking Organization, and has laid the foundations of decent work, social justice and the criteria for the protection of marginalized persons. We wish Mr Somavia every success for the future. We would also like to congratulate Mr Guy Rider, the Director-General-elect, who we are sure will enjoy support from all three constituents.

For 18 months now we have seen revolutions throughout the Arab world as people demand respect for their legitimate rights. We are talking about the Arab Spring, which has become a symbol of peaceful change which enriches human history and is inspiring people in more than 1,000 cities in 82 countries throughout the world. As mentioned in one of the reports, there is a huge movement of people demanding social justice, real fundamental freedoms, equal opportunities for young people and workers – the very principles of the ILO and the Arab Labour Organization. These are legitimate demands that are being made, they should be understood. There are real dangers ahead if they are not respected.

The Arab Spring has shown a new way of bringing about peaceful change, but in spite of that, economic problems remain and we also know that political and economic identities are manipulated to hinder the achievement that goal. We must support development and freedoms and promote all types of partnership. If all of this does not result in real change on the ground, then it is no more than words. Employment and social justice are priorities for all people throughout the world, but are our economies capable of turning them into realities? At the outset of these movements, everyone was demanding more employment opportunities, but now,

time is going by and hope is beginning to fade. To resolve this situation, we must turn to item 5 on our agenda, the youth employment crisis; it is time to act. It is time to provide young people with decent work. We must all work together to craft a new vision of what we mean by fair and decent work, work that does not marginalize young people. We must not allow ourselves to fall into the trap of ideological confrontation.

The International Labour Organization has been discussing the problem of Palestinian workers for more than 40 sessions. It has even taken equitable decisions that have been flagrantly overlooked and dozens of United Nations resolutions have been set aside. Palestinian workers and employers are suffering all forms of injustice. Even the simplest decisions concerning the end of settlements with a view to opening negotiations have been ignored. Furthermore, we are witnessing a movement that confers legitimacy on settlements that have been considered illegal by Israel since the 1990s. The military occupation forces have denied the Palestinian people their rights, but the winds of freedom will one day blow through Palestine and make it an independent State, with Al-Quds as its capital.

Mr PATWARDHAN (*Worker, India*)

Respected Chair, brothers and sisters, 460 million Indian workers, represented by this delegate, bring you all their hearty well wishes. They would like to convey their congratulations to the new Director-General-elect.

India and Indian workers are all ancient campaigners for inclusive growth and prosperity for the globe and universe. For thousands of years, this ancient civilization has been transmitting the message of peace, prosperity and parity for the world. Traditionally, we are believers in the universe being one family.

Indian labour therefore advocates inclusive global development and a well-protected workforce worldwide, with zero tolerance for exploitation. From this standpoint, Indian workers express their gratitude and indebtedness for the historical role of ILO. From day one, the ILO has left no stone unturned to secure a better life for workers. Its first step was to promote minimum wages and limited working hours.

But in India, millions of contract labourers are forced to work for 12 hours per day, with no minimum wage, and are waiting for relief. The Indian labour movement hopes that the new Director-General and the ILO will continue to focus on India and strengthen ILO strategies to do away with the imbalances in Indian development.

The latest Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), has been a historic achievement in the world of work. India is proud to have been at the forefront in organizing domestic workers and claims to have started the first trade union of domestic workers in the world, way back in 1965. Millions of Indian domestic workers extend their wholehearted thanks to the ILO.

In the era of globalization, economies have grown faster – but the growth is lopsided and exploitative. Now, balance must be restored. The discussions on recommendations for social protection floors at this International Conference are timely and precious. The Indian labour movement wholeheartedly supports them all.

However, the sticky wicket of politics globally is a threat for politicians in power and they must mend the situation. The governance with respect to labour law implementation has been poor. Many governments have lost their appetite for implementation, coupled with the serious neglect of a tripartite mechanism. The world needs to restore checks and balances between the economic forces within societies. Voting out governments is no solution.

From this standpoint, the need to promote Conventions Nos 87 and 98 assume great importance. If the right to investment and business profits and market manipulations continues unabated, workers will be exposed to endless exploitation. The labour movement can only protect their interests if they are given an opportunity to organize.

We, the 460 million-strong Indian workers, perceive the urgent need for the implementation of labour laws and trade union protection and look to the ILO for guidance and help. The right to organize must be a cornerstone of future industrial relations in developing countries like India.

From this standpoint, the Indian labour movement appreciates the timely recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work.

The timely concern and action of the ILO in Egypt and Myanmar are of immense help to labour. The services rendered by the ILO in developing and creating employment-generating, social security and skills development projects have been outstanding. The keen efforts of the Committee of Experts to understand labour problems reveal the ILO's high quality acumen. Indian workers appreciate the ILO on these counts.

The new enthusiasm, together with democratization in Myanmar, is a welcome change in South Asia. It will help create a friendly environment to ensure inclusive prosperity in South Asia. The Indian labour movement believes that the cultural homogeneity inherent in South Asian States is most conducive to securing collective development as a region. Afghanistan in the west, and Myanmar in the east, are an integral part of ancient Akhand Bharat (undivided Bharat) from time immemorial. The terrorism and hostilities going on unabated have created an aura of no confidence among States. The united efforts of workers in the region can bring people and societies close again. Here, the labour movement of India is hoping for a lot of initiatives from the ILO and believes that these will help sort out problems in the region.

We trust that the ILO Director-General will be at the forefront of the regional unification movement.

Original Arabic: Ms MINT HAMADY (Minister of the Civil Service, Labour and Administrative Reform, Mauritania)

I would like to begin by congratulating the President on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on presidency of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. I am certain that his leadership will contribute to the success of this Conference. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Juan Samovia and to congratulate him on the quality of his Report to this Conference on *ILO Programme Implementation 2010–11*. I would also like to commend him for all the Reports he has presented during his term of office, particularly his 2011 Report entitled *A new era of social justice*. We believe that this Report describes an outstanding vision in our progress towards a better future. I would also like to commend his Report on the diffi-

cult working conditions for Palestinian workers suffering from the occupation of their territories, in which he states that, "underpinning this Report is my deep personal respect and admiration for the struggle of the Palestinian people. I am certain that soon the tide of history will turn in their favour and they will realize their legitimate aspiration to which they are entitled: to live and work in dignity and security in a viable and fully functioning Palestinian State."

Our country has ratified around 40 Conventions, including the fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organization. This has led us to adopt the necessary legislation, such as the Labour Code, and prepare instruments with which to implement their provisions. This legal framework has allowed us to consolidate trade union pluralism in our country. There are more than 20 trade union federations in our country, in addition to the professional associations which are not affiliated with those federations. On International Labour Day, we announced to Mauritanian workers that next year, we will be organizing elections for union representatives, in cooperation with the ILO.

The Government of Mauritania makes social dialogue a key pillar of all its development strategies. To that end, we began a round of collective bargaining in April last year, bringing together the three social partners. The bargaining took four months, at the end of which the social partners had achieved significant results, such as a 43 per cent increase in the minimum wage, which will now be reviewed every two years. The Government has also made a commitment to involve trade unions and employers in the preparation of housing policy, land reform and all reforms relating to the social and economic development of the country. Furthermore, the labour and social protection sector has been strengthened. Some 40 labour inspectors who graduated this year have been assigned to the ten inspectorates we have across our territory. Our country is striving to promote the labour sector and to offer its workers a decent standard of living, in spite of the major economic challenges we face.

In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the ILO for its significant efforts to improve the situation of workers in general and for its technical assistance to workers in my country in particular. I wish the new Director-General every success.

Original French: Mr SAINT-CYR (Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Haiti)

As head of the delegation of Haiti, it is a great honour for me to address this distinguished body on the occasion of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference on the topic of building a future with decent work. Allow me to bring you greetings from the President of the Republic of Haiti, His Excellency Mr Michel Joseph Martelly, and the Prime Minister Laurent Salvador Lamothe.

I would like to thank Mr Somavia, the outgoing Director-General, for the work he has done and his willingness to engage in dialogue. My congratulations go also to the Director-General-elect, Guy Ryder. He is a member of this House and, like a good father, he will do an excellent job of fostering the tripartism which is so important to us.

This event is a truly pivotal one. We need to strengthen the legal framework on labour established by the International Labour Organization, of

which Haiti is a member. Haiti is proud of that fact and promises to accompany its fraternal States in their development, within the limitations of its action plan.

Two years ago the people of Haiti suffered a devastating earthquake. As a great people and a great nation, and thanks to your assistance, for which we are grateful, we are recovering. With our wounds still open, we went to the polls to elect to the highest position of the State President Michel Martelly, who is responding to the people's aspirations.

No government can single-handedly find a solution to the issue of creating work and decent work. This President and this Government have already initiated a frank dialogue in order to achieve more relevant social policies. The country is open to investment. We are now in the process of building two industrial parks, one in the north and one in the south of the country, in order to create 60,000 jobs in less than three years.

For the first time in Haiti, the Government has started providing free education. To date, 900,000 children have benefited from this programme. There are other programmes for pregnant women and those living in rural areas. There is an innovative programme – a social charter on health protection. These programmes all support families. Children will have free education and several vocational training centres are being set up. With this level of support, people working in the informal sector will be able to transform themselves into veritable advocates of the Haitian economy who can also benefit the formal labour market.

Haiti is building bridges between the social partners, the employers and the trade unions. The bridge will be strengthened, because we are all aware that we have to move forward to achieve a more fair and equitable Haiti.

The Government undertakes to implement the Conventions we have already signed and ratified and to ratify the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

We plan to set up a tripartite commission responsible for monitoring the implementation of these Conventions. As Minister of Social Affairs, I undertake to organize a general conference on social protection next month and this month, before 30 June, we will submit the proposed budget to Parliament. I also guarantee that all these social programmes will be included in the Government's proposed budget. The Haitian Government and I, as Minister of Social Affairs, are listening to the ILO. Together, we will work for a more equitable world. It is our duty and also our pleasure.

Original French: Ms KORA ZAKI LEADI (Minister of Labour and Public Services, Benin)

It is with great pleasure, once again, that I am taking the floor at this moment on behalf of the Government of my country, Benin, in order to address your august assembly at this, the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference.

First of all I would like to thank you for the excellent organization on the election of a new Director-General to head our institution. Mr Guy Ryder, we congratulate you.

This duty done, I would now like to tell you about some of the progress made by Benin relating to the

main thrust of the Report just presented to us by the Director-General of the ILO.

Now, in the field of social protection for all, Benin, through the ministerial department which I head, has undertaken the following actions:

- strengthening and extending the activities of social security mutual funds for a better protection of social strata, in particular in the informal sector. Just as an example, from 4,399 members noted in 2009 – members of the Mutual Social Security Association (MSS) – the number of members increased to 6,997 at the end of 2011. Those benefiting from this social security regime have gone from 9,232 in 2009 to 15,075 in 2011;
- concluding the setting up of the Social Security Mutual Fund for Civil Servants (MSAE);
- the elaboration and launching of the Universal Health Insurance Scheme (RAMU) on 29 December 2011;
- the improvement of working conditions for men and women thanks to:
 - awareness raising among the social partners on the fundamental principles and rights at work;
 - strengthening staffing levels of the labour inspection services, in particular through the recruitment of 20 labour inspectors who are already working in labour administration, soon to be reinforced by 25 labour inspectors;
 - the frequency of monitoring visits to inspect conditions of work through the labour inspection services;
- the development and adoption of the list of hazardous work prohibited to children;
- promoting the fight against sexually-transmitted illnesses (STIs) in the field of work through the dissemination of a document on the control strategy against STI in the field of work and the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200);
- elaboration and study in the tripartite committee on the preliminary draft decree on health and safety in agriculture;
- training labour inspectors in health and safety in the production and processing of cotton, as well as in industries relating to metal processing;
- organizing training workshops for confederations of trade unions dealing with health and safety at work.

In the field of application of labour standards, labour administrations apply up-to-date legislation which provides effective services. Activities that have been successful in the last few years are as follows:

- a draft revision of the Labour Code in order to update it;
- a study on the conformity of national legislation to international labour standards, such as the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181);
- a study on temporary work, in order to adopt a text which should enable us to legislate or to regulate adequately this type of activity;
- activities for capacity building of labour inspectors;
- organizing inspection visits in some workplaces involving children, such as in quarries, has enabled employers as well as parents to be made aware of the dangerous nature of this situation for their children, and the need to safeguard them from this and to send them to school;

- collaboration with NGOs and other international structures has enabled us to withdraw and save a number of children from their labour situations.

I solemnly undertake on behalf of my country, Benin, to start as of now, together with employers' and workers' organizations and with the assistance of the ILO, the procedure which would lead to the ratification of Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). This has already been submitted to the National Assembly.

Now, when it comes to social dialogue in Benin, employers' organizations as well as workers' organizations are very active in the field of social policies and labour. This has been demonstrated in the National Employers' Council and in confederations of trade unions.

Tripartite consultations are strengthened through the organization of regular sessions at the tripartite level, which involves, for instance, the National Labour Council. In Benin, freedom of association and collective bargaining are very much recognized and exercised. Unions are freely created and free to exercise their right to strike. Moreover we have noted that an eighth union has recently been established.

A number of measures have been taken by the Government of Benin in order to promote access of both men and women to better work. This has been reflected through :

- setting up a National Fund for Youth Employment Protection;
- setting up a National Agency for Employment;
- developing the National Employment Policy and a national action plan for employment.

We are convinced that the development of skills improves the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and leads to growth. With this in mind, over the last few years Benin has made every effort to improve vocational training and to promote various jobs which would enable the young to have a broader field when seeking employment.

Original Spanish: Mr TORRES (Worker, Panama)

In 2011, the Committee on the Application of Standards of this Conference included Panama in a list of 25 cases to be examined for serious violations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). The reasons for this were the following: serious cases of persecution and violence against trade unionists, which in 2010, resulted in ten deaths, half of which were of children, according to a report by the Ombudsman, and hundreds of injuries, 72 of which left people completely or partially blind; the denial or excessive regulation of the right to strike; and the denial of the right to organize of public and private sector workers by means of serious legal restrictions.

The Committee recalled that freedom of association can only be exercised in a climate devoid of violence in which fundamental human rights are respected and guaranteed. To do this we need to establish an effective social dialogue, which is a prerequisite that the trade union movement believes to be crucial as a mechanism for solving conflicts.

Panamanians were not pleased to form part of this list, but it did give reason to hope that after many years of struggling, workers in Panama might exercise true freedom of association allowing for a balance with the employers, who have historically enjoyed the support and protection of the various gov-

ernments. However, a year later, we express our great disappointment because the conditions of freedom of association in Panama have not improved; on the contrary, they have worsened.

The serious cases of police violence against the population of Changuinola which led to deaths and injuries were not investigated and have gone completely unpunished; added to this are the murders of Jerónimo Rodríguez Tugrí and Mauricio Méndez by the police at the beginning of this year, in addition to reported cases of the rape of indigenous women, including minors. These have not been investigated despite the evidence that has been presented, although there are still legal proceedings against various trade union leaders.

Anti-union persecution has also been visible in recent dismissals of trade union leaders from the public sector, without taking into consideration their trade union immunity. It is also visible in the dismissal of port workers, which violates agreements for ending strikes, the harassment of workers in the aviation sector and also at a bottling plant, just to give some examples.

Faced with this persecution by some employers, the Ministry of Labour does not intervene to guarantee workers' rights, while coercion against unions continues. Excessive strike regulation impedes people's ability to actually exercise it. The situation has led to workers actually stopping work.

Furthermore, this right continues to be denied to a major group of workers, among others, the workers of the Panama Canal, not just through regulation but also because of the attitude of the Ministry of Labour.

With regard to the right to organize, no steps have been taken to acknowledge and recognize this right for educators, banking workers, workers at the Colón Free Trade Zone and workers from other public sectors. The Panamanian Government, ignoring recommendations from the ILO, has continued to persecute and coerce leaders in the public sector, as demonstrated by new unjustified dismissals of trade union leaders.

In addition to the recommendations of the Committee on the Application of Standards in 2011, the persecution against trade unionists has been seen in the recent dismissal of workers of the Social Security Fund. The serious limitation of freedom of association enables transnational companies to breach agreements such as those on wage rates, they refuse to allow negotiation and they violate health and safety standards in the workplace, which has resulted in the death of workers of the construction sector.

The limitation on the exercise of freedom of association in Panama, although not as serious as in Honduras, Colombia, Mexico and Guatemala, requires solidarity in this plenary with regard to the difficult situation in Panama and in these neighbouring countries, which affects social peace. We hope that you understand the iniquity of a country which has a sustained 7 per cent economic growth, but which has the fifth worst form of wealth distribution in the world.

Finally, we express our desire that these proceedings contribute to a fairer world in regard to labour, because we still believe that a fairer and mutually supportive world is possible.

Mr DEVENDRA (*Worker, Sri Lanka*)

At the outset I would like to brief this Assembly on the precise situation in my country. On 19 May this year, the country celebrated the third anniversary of the ending of the civil war and the defeat of one of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world. During these three years, much work has been done in rebuilding the infrastructure and resettling internal refugees in their original places of residence. As working people, we appreciate the steps taken by the Government in this regard. However the biggest challenge faced by the Government is to find a meaningful and lasting solution to the grievances of the minority communities. In this respect, it is our view that the authorities should move more swiftly to initiate consultations and arrive at a consensus acceptable to all communities.

In the past, we have witnessed politicians on all sides raising communal hatred for their own political benefit. This must not be allowed to happen again, and we – as powerful civil society organizations – are conscious of our role in influencing those in authority to take all decisions that are necessary at this vital moment.

The items placed on the agenda of this Conference are of particular interest to us. The recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work is most timely, as experience has shown that laws enacted to strengthen Sri Lankan labour law and bring it in line with ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98 have now proved successful; but there is an urgent need to examine the reasons for the failure of these laws to provide the desired results in the areas of labour inspection and the prosecution of offenders.

Last year, the Government attempted to bring in legislation for a contributory pension scheme for employees in the private sector, but unfortunately it was undermined by certain extreme elements and foreign-funded NGOs who misled some workers on purely false grounds. There are certain flaws in the proposed legislation, but certainly no grounds to reject the entire bill. Our union, as the most representative workers' organization in the country, will continue to pressurize the Government to reintroduce this bill with suitable elements which, if successful, will make Sri Lanka the most advanced country in the region on social security protection.

Youth employment continues to be a serious issue in our country and this matter needs the urgent attention of all stakeholders. Although the official national unemployment rate decreased from 15.9 per cent in 1990 to 4.9 per cent in 2011, youth employment remains at a very high 19 per cent. This situation has contributed to several youth uprisings and insurrections during the past three decades. There are several contributory factors responsible for this situation, such as the outdated educational system, but successive governments have failed to turn their attention to finding a lasting solution to this issue. As the workers' organization, it is our firm view that there are no piecemeal solutions to this problem. On a national level, there is a need to start taking into account all socio-economic factors that are specific to our country's requirements.

In conclusion, I consider it my duty to recall my statement to this Assembly in 2009, when I expressed optimism regarding the proposed legislation being prepared against labour subcontracting; how-

ever, it is with much regret that I have to report that, despite tripartite agreement being reached at the level of the Government and at the level of the National Labour Advisory Council, certain officials in the State have opposed the proposed legislation on spurious grounds. This we consider as a fragrant

violation of the principles of tripartism which this organization upholds. Our union, with the support of other unions in Sri Lanka, will continue to fight to make this proposed legislation a reality.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.30 p.m.)

Fifth sitting

Wednesday, 6 June 2012, at 2.30 p.m.

Presidents: Mr Matthey and Mr Atwoli

REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION (CONT.)

Original Spanish: (The President)

We shall now continue with our general discussion on the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Original Azeri: Mr ALAKBAROV (Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Azerbaijan)

Let me first of all express my thanks to the Director-General for the Report he has submitted for discussion at the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, which reflects the need to halt inefficient economic trends in a global economic situation that grows ever worse and restore social justice as an issue of growing concern to the modern world.

The annual Conferences organized by the ILO support the establishment of social justice both nationally and internationally. However, this Report can also be seen as a call to devote attention to this problem, which is becoming more acute in the globalized world, and to mobilize the efforts of all countries of the world to eliminate it.

The serious social consequences of the unfair distribution of incomes and the use of inefficient models of economic growth in the world over the past 30 years can be clearly seen and are reaching a critical point. This shows that our modern age is vitally important in the transformation to a new era of social justice and in directing efforts to benefit people excluded by stereotyping that runs counter to the criteria of social well-being within the system of economic management. Today, the main tasks are, in particular, to develop well thought out, purposeful macroeconomic policies in different countries and orientate the financial system towards the real economy, creating viable enterprises and decent jobs, and shaping the labour market to meet fair, international labour standards. We are sure that the ILO, acting as a locomotive for efforts in this direction, will meet these goals by 2019, as a valuable contribution to its centenary. In this sense, guided by the values and mandate of the ILO, which are based on tripartism, the next seven years can become a new historical era in ensuring social justice and sustainable social development as social and labour rights continue to develop around the world. The results of the economic recession have caused large changes and have had a significant impact on

economic growth, social development and the political structure in certain countries, bringing about significant changes.

In the context of uneven development trends that exist and the decay of social cohesion, the Republic of Azerbaijan is successfully implementing a modern, thoughtful, fair social and economic model. As a result of its well thought through macroeconomic policy, the social and economic dynamic of Azerbaijan has become stable. In the last eight years alone, GDP and industrial production have increased threefold. In 2009, when the global economy was suffering a severe crisis, Azerbaijan achieved economic growth of 9.3 per cent. Another important achievement has been reaching the end of the economic transition and entering a period of modernizing reforms. The country's main targets for 2020 are now to double GDP, become a high-income country and enter the ranks of the developed countries.

With a share of more than 80 per cent in the economy of the South Caucasus, we have an investment policy targeting the real economy and promoting a transparent and favourable business environment. In 2010 alone, US\$17.6 billion was invested in the nation's economy, while in 2011 the figure was US\$20 billion. This means that, in the last two years, US\$37 billion has been invested in the economy of Azerbaijan. The private sector share of the national economy is now around 83 per cent.

Minimizing economic dependence on oil and achieving harmonization and diversification in economic development is one of the main targets, and also plays an important role in creating decent jobs and in overall social development. Suffice to say that the oil sector grew by 10 per cent last year and has grown by 7.7 per cent over the first three months of this year.

In Azerbaijan, where we are building a modern economy, activities are being undertaken to expand information and communication technologies and begin energy production from alternative sources. Macroeconomic policy is focused on social aims, including developing human capital, matching labour resources to economic progress, and creating a labour market that meets international labour standards.

In other words, the policy of the Government of Azerbaijan is centred entirely on the human dimension and the development of human capital. To this end, specific programmes with permanent State funding are yielding positive results. In the last eight years, modern infrastructure has been estab-

lished, over one million new jobs have been created and unemployment has gone down to 5.4 per cent, while poverty levels have fallen fivefold, to 7.6 per cent. Traditional trends in income growth have been maintained and inflation has been constantly kept at bay.

Original Spanish: Mr NAVARRO (Worker, Cuba)

Once again we are gathered in this House to discuss the most pressing issues which have wreaked havoc on our people for more than three years now, at a time when the working classes are fighting several battles in various countries to defend breached rights, while the economic centres of power carry the strongholds of banks and financial institutions and have led the world to the serious crisis that today is denying resources that have been stolen from workers and their families.

It is frightening to think of the uncertain future that awaits millions of young people in a world lacking jobs, with youth unemployment rates exceeding 40 per cent in some countries, as this was one of the most vulnerable sectors prior to the crisis.

Poverty is on the rise in many developing countries, and the so-called welfare state is disappearing in the countries of Europe, and with it, social rights and public services are collapsing, and if workers raise their voice in protest, they are brutally repressed, which undermines the image of democracy that so many have sold us.

For this reason, we reiterate our support for the analyses and efforts of the ILO in the defence of social security for the very high percentage of the world population that lacks it and for the employment and future of young people.

However, we are convinced that the serious problems of inequalities, abuse, security, unemployment, repression, pillage, wars and crime that are being committed today in the name of democracy and human rights in the current capitalist system will never be resolved. The crisis that we are facing and all of its consequences are not temporary, but systemic, and the system must be changed.

Cuban unions will continue to work in a constructive manner, as we have said on other occasions at the ILO. However, we will continue to call for more democracy in the mechanisms of this House and to make the ILO a genuinely pluralistic and representative Organization of all philosophies.

The monopoly and marginalization that appear in an evident manner within this House must stop and be replaced by proportional participation so that this institution is truly pluralistic.

We also denounce the irresponsible attitude of the Employers in the Committee on the Application of Standards, which has brought the Committee to a standstill, demonstrating that in times of crisis of the capitalist system, there is an attempt by employers to dominate to the detriment of workers.

Cuban workers are facing economic difficulties because of the consequences of the multiple crisis that humanity is suffering, and the consequences of measures imposed for many years from the exterior whose stated objective has been to produce hunger, supply shortages, lack of medicine and other needs and to organize media campaigns to motivate social revolutions that lead to a change in the system and the government.

However, as we pointed out last year, we are introducing the changes that we believe necessary in a very organized manner and, above all, with the par-

ticipation of the majority of our population, in a democratic and broad process of consultation and exchange in every workplace, centre of study or neighbourhood, so that the support and social programmes achieved with the revolution are preserved and perfected and so that we may continue to provide support for other communities that need it.

We will also continue to work in a constructive manner in the ILO, cooperating with its laudable objectives and fighting for its ongoing improvement.

Mr DHINGRA (Employer, India)

The Conference is taking place at a time when the global economy is once again heading for greater uncertainty.

The eurozone crisis is severely threatening the economic recovery from the last recession. Asia, Africa and Latin America, the beacon lights of this growth, are also displaying symptoms of nervousness due to slackened demand, while the unemployment and poverty syndrome is all set to create situations that might be difficult to reverse.

The employment situation is already grim. More than 200 million people are unemployed. Nearly 1.52 billion people, half of the total workforce, have vulnerable job conditions and 75–80 per cent of the workforce do not have any form of social security coverage. A prolonged crisis could therefore result in many people joining the ranks of vulnerable workers, giving rise to social strains and economic exclusion.

A timely action is therefore called for. We feel that an additional focus on the youth employment crisis and the social protection floor will adequately address the situation, and also hope that this Conference will adopt some pragmatic solutions to salvage member States from the crisis.

Social protection measures encompass access to health services, basic income and social security. They play a crucial role as a crisis response to prevent the poor from being further marginalized and eventually joining the anti-social groups.

A strong social security system helps to ensure social cohesion, reduces inequality and promotes growth-oriented policies. Creating productive and decent employment opportunities is therefore the only panacea.

With global unemployment standing at 205 million in 2010, according to ILO estimates, adequate employment generation should be considered an integral part of the strategy for establishing a social protection floor.

India has a sizeable population, with 93 per cent of the workforce working in the informal sector – where income is meagre, working conditions are hazardous and social security is almost non-existent.

A number of schemes have been introduced over the years to provide an adequate social protection floor for these workers. These schemes include: the introduction of a national floor level minimum wage; the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act; and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which ensures a minimum of 100 days employment per year to the adult member of every family. There is also a scheme to provide medical treatment to any poor family up to 30,000 rupees for a token insurance premium.

India has also sought to address the skills development needs of poor and marginalized sections of

society by devising demand-driven social and short-term vocational training courses called Modular Employable Schemes, where the training is provided in a flexible manner and through modules. This is a fast-track skills development mechanism, whereby the expenses of both training and assessment are met by the Government.

We are aware that many such useful schemes are also operating in other countries, and the ILO can and should disseminate information on these among its member States.

Youth is a balancing force in the dependency ratio and young workers are at their prime working age; a focus on youth employment is therefore essential. The global youth unemployment rate is 12.7 per cent, and in developing countries youth are disproportionately unemployed among the working poor. As the number and share of unemployed youth is on the rise throughout the world, and the share of young people withdrawing from the labour market altogether continues to grow, there is little hope for a substantial improvement in young people's employment prospects unless strong and concerted measures are taken at the global level.

The Global Jobs Pact is of major relevance for the future. The ILO should monitor its implementation by member States and urge national governments to fully comply with it. The ILO should make available all technical support in this context.

These are challenging times and the ILO has both the capability and credibility. A proactive approach is called for to deal with these issues.

Original French: Mr GUEDON (Vice-Minister, Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development, Gabon)

On behalf of the delegation that I lead, and on my own behalf, I would like to join those who have spoken before me in order to address the President and the whole of the Office and to offer my heartiest congratulations on his election and the way in which he is leading our work.

This is also an opportunity for me to pay well-merited tribute to Mr Juan Somavia at a time when you are leaving the ILO. We will keep a very vivid memory of your prestigious contribution to the influence of our institution.

You also ensure an exemplary transition with Mr Guy Ryder, your successor, who has our full confidence. We know that he will lead the work of our tripartite institution in a pragmatic manner to increase its influence in the global forum.

Given the disquiet in the world of labour, we need to take crucial decisions, in order to curb the global youth employment crisis, effectively deal with the social protection floor, and promote basic labour principles and rights in the spirit of tripartism and social dialogue.

Here the ILO needs to remain proactive and therefore it needs now more than ever to be the solid basis which justifies its role as leader in order to promote social standards, which are prerequisites of social justice, which in itself is a source of social peace.

These are particularly difficult and uncertain times for many of us, which is why we need to avoid hasty and inept solutions such as the dismantling of the productive area, or the real economy, which would benefit the financial markets, which are the source of workers', enterprises' and even States' difficulties.

And here, I agree with analysis of Mr Somavia who said last 30 May, and I quote: "Giving confidence exclusively to financial operators while losing the trust of people not only deepens the vicious downward economic spiral but also opens the way to extreme solutions".

Distinguished delegates, my country remains firmly attached to the ideals of the ILO and, on a daily basis, we are trying to implement them.

In the field of strengthening social dialogue and tripartism, we have had a National Charter for Social Dialogue for six months now. This is a major step forward for those involved in tripartism, striving for social cohesion and primacy of our common values.

The President of our Republic, H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba, said at the ceremony of signing this Charter that the social dialogue is based on values of solidarity and mutual respect, which we all have to promote in all circumstances, since they contribute to peace and coherence in our nation.

At a time when our President has decided to re-draft our social contract and to strengthen the image of Gabon as an emerging state, we like many of the countries represented here have been very concerned about the youth employment crisis.

The global Youth Employment Forum, which was held here a few days ago, has enabled our youth to make their voices heard, to air their legitimate grievances aimed at political leaders, the world of business, civil society, and international organizations, so that they may come to an agreement on measures and policies that would give everyone an equal opportunity to find decent work.

We need to join our efforts in order to define a global strategy. The way we deal with the youth employment crisis will largely depend on credibility, if not the survival of the foundations of democracy and global governance.

I support, therefore, unreservedly the conclusions adopted by our Conference on the Youth Forum. This is an innovative step towards making youth employment is a concrete universal objective.

Nationally speaking, we are committed to implementing a decent and productive work policy as a target of the Millennium Development Goals in order to eradicate poverty among a large stratum of our population.

This commitment, hand in hand with the ideals of the ILO, involves social partners and the youth themselves searching for innovative solutions.

Other major fields are also open, particularly the amendment of provisions in the Labour Code, in order to respond to the developing needs of the world of labour, the revision of the Social Security Code and the determination of a credible system of union representation.

And here our cooperation with the ILO needs to be strengthened. We are also confident on the outcome of the negotiations that we are carrying out with the ILO with a view to adopting our Decent Work Country Programmes.

I would conclude my statement on the crucial aspect of the social protection floor, a matter where my country very much supports the adoption of a recommendation which would constitute a commitment for building a universal social security platform. At this time, the Government of Gabon is facing a significant challenge, which is to guarantee universal social coverage and access to healthcare for all. Our challenge also involves restructuring the

National Social Security Fund and the National Fund for Health Insurance and Social Guarantees in order to strengthen them.

Mr YIMER (*Employer, Ethiopia*)

As you know, over the past few years the international economic and financial situation has experienced an unprecedented crisis that has exacerbated the employment problems of nations. The agenda items of this Session clearly indicate that social protection and youth employment are prerequisites for the realization of growth and development.

The problem of unemployment has created a chain of effects on the income generation of the breadwinners of individual families. In order to alleviate the existing problem of unemployment, we have actively sought to provide new job opportunities for young people in urban centres by establishing micro- and small cooperatives and employers' associations. We are also committed to increasing the number of small business enterprises on a large scale so as to tackle the challenge of unemployment. Ongoing mechanized farming and small farmers' family holdings have become the fulcrum of economic development and employment creation in rural Ethiopia.

The improved health services have, through the extension programme, helped investors to ensure a healthy workforce in the labour market.

The Ethiopian Employers' Federation understands the pain of unemployment and the lack of social protection in society. In order to reverse this situation, the Ethiopian Government has taken strong measures to increase job opportunities in the areas of agriculture, construction, manufacturing and others. It has also created favourable conditions for the informal sector by setting up a financial credit scheme. This income-generating project has stimulated saving and investment in the country.

The existing policies and strategies have emulated the private sector's saving and investment in different economic sectors. The strong support given to the private sector has increased the job opportunities of young people in Ethiopia.

In this connection, the Ethiopian Employers' Federation has promoted the concept of decent work among the tripartite social partners. We believe in the dignity of work and in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda at the workplace – which is incorporated in our development policies and strategies. This is in the cause of industrial peace, productivity and the efficiency of enterprises.

The Ethiopian Government has put in place the necessary pro-poor policies and strategies to ensure social protection of all citizens of our country. At present, civil servants and private employees have equal opportunity in the area of social security under the legal framework. Ethiopia's five-year Growth and Transformation Plan deals with the alleviation of unemployment and social protection. The prevention of HIV/AIDS at the workplace has brought about changes in productivity and the efficiency of enterprises.

In addition, the "green jobs plan" has contributed to the livelihood of farmers' households in the country. The improvement in employment creation and social security has brought about peace and security – even at the grass-roots level of the community.

As the voice of private enterprises, we call for further involvement and a favourable environment in

the private sector, so that it may develop and expand. At this juncture of globalization, the Ethiopian Employers' Federation has established strong tripartite relations with the Norwegian Employers' Federation and Chinese business enterprises – to our mutual benefit. We also have good relations with the Netherlands Employers' Federation and other African employers' associations, enabling us to share our experiences for our common benefit.

Finally, I would like to invite all investors to my country and to engage in any profitable business activity they might choose.

Original Portuguese: Mr PITRA NETO (Minister of Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola)

Firstly, allow me to offer the greetings of the Government of Angola to all the participants in the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference and to present our best wishes that the results meet the expectations of the main players in the world of work. In particular, I should like to congratulate the new Director-General of the ILO and wish him every success in leading this important organization within the UN system.

Among the topics selected for this session of the Conference, I think it is worth stressing the situation of unemployment which seriously affects many citizens in our countries, and primarily young people. This is one of the main consequences of the economic and financial crisis which has been affecting all countries in the world since 2006.

In Angola, the Government and our social partners are committed to meeting the challenges of reconstructing our country after the achievement of peace in 2002, and to laying the foundations for a modern growing society. Accordingly, one of the main objectives is to create conditions to increase employment and employability in our economy with a major stress on access to employment for young people.

To this end, we are implementing various essential programmes for sustainable increase in job offers, chiefly in vocational training and entrepreneurship. We are developing various initiatives to expand and consolidate the system of vocational training which, today, has at its disposal centres of vocational training, rural schools for the arts and official centres for entrepreneurship and business incubators. All the bodies within the system function in coordination with one another with the aim of increasing employability for workers and particularly young people.

The application of the programmes in peaceful conditions throughout our national territory has allowed us to increase the employment rate and gradually to reduce the unemployment rate. We see also an increase in entrepreneurial initiatives, with various projects geared to the promotion of entrepreneurship. A prime example is the functioning of a microcredit financing system called "My business, my life", and this is aimed at small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly young people and women in the rural and semi-urban areas.

As far as the improvement of the legal system is concerned, it is important to note that the General Labour Act which has been in force since 2000 establishes the legal system for domestic work. In this area, a public discussion is in progress concerning a bill which will establish regulations in line with the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and its related Recommendation.

Angola will continue to create conditions to speed up the growth rate for job opportunities because we believe that this is an essential condition for the implementation of many of the recommendations made at this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, especially regarding the need for promoting employment and employability for young people in our countries. Moreover, we believe that without sustainable growth in job opportunities, our countries will not be able to create a basic social protection floor capable of promoting greater equality and social justice.

In conclusion, we would like on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Angola to express our firm willingness to continue to work in cooperation with our social partners on the implementation of realistic policies and programmes which will enable a progressive improvement in working conditions and an increase in job creation and income and, consequently, an improvement in the quality of life with social justice for all our citizens.

Original Japanese: Mr KOGA (Worker, Japan)

As the Director-General states in his Report *A new era of social justice*, governments, employers and workers all share an awareness of the issues surrounding the realization of a fair, environmentally friendly and sustainable society where everyone can enjoy social justice and a decent life. However, faced with the realities of the continuing and increasing prevalence of precarious work, which affects young people and women particularly, and with the inadequacy of social protection for vulnerable groups, can we really say that the world has made a policy shift towards building a new social model.

What I would like to emphasize is that a strong commitment is needed to ratify and implement fully the ILO's core labour standards, especially Conventions Nos 87 and 98, by promoting social dialogue in order to raise the quality of all forms of employment. In this connection we must pay serious attention to the situation that has arisen in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. We must make every effort to solve this disagreement so that the supervision of the application of standards, which is the ILO's fundamental mission, can continue to function in a spirit of tripartism and social dialogue.

I am happy to report that the outlook for the future in Japan is promising. A tripartite dialogue has been established on Japan's employment strategy, and the minimum wage and employment measures agreed upon in the course of this dialogue will be incorporated into the Government's new growth strategy.

Discussion has been proceeding on recent measures to promote youth employment with a view to the formulation of a unified employment strategy by concerned ministries across the board. We are applying all our wisdom and ingenuity to resolving the issues involved.

I would now like to touch on the issue of the fundamental labour rights in the public sector of Japan. A year ago a series of civil service reform bills enabling civil servants to engage in collective bargaining was submitted to Parliament, which started discussing them on 1 June. We are doing our utmost to pass these bills during the current session of Parliament.

Another bill, on the fundamental labour right of local public service employees, including firefighters, to establish trade unions, is also under consideration, but there are moves afoot to delay the introduction of this bill. The bill will in any case be submitted to Parliament at the earliest possible date.

As this will be the last session of the Conference under Director-General Juan Somavia, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and respect for all the work he has done. Thanks to the measures advocated by the Director-General in the Decent Work Agenda, our labour movement has been able to make great strides, and the concept of decent work is now well rooted in Japan.

The enhancement of social justice is known to be an important mission of the ILO, and we look forward to new international labour standards in this regard, along with the strengthening of the ILO's supervisory machinery, under the leadership of the new Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder.

Despite the challenges before us, it remains the ILO's vocation to foster social justice and peace in the world under its mandate. It is important that every party recognize its responsibility and obligations. We, the Japanese workers, are ready to cooperate fully in the efforts to support and strengthen the ILO.

Original Spanish: Mr DIAZ (Worker, Chile)

From this podium, we commend Mr Guy Ryder on his election as the new Director-General of the ILO. We know well of his abilities and are confident that he will strengthen this institution in the future as the forum for social dialogue.

Dialogue is the key instrument for social peace, and mutual recognition among partners gives it strength.

Chile's economy has experienced sustained growth and many areas have been modernized. However, there is still a lack of freedom of association as laid down in Conventions Nos 87 and 98, and this is not just because of a lack of appropriate legislation. One of the main reasons is that political culture among some employers still runs counter to the creation of trade unions and the instinct is still not to recognize the immunity of union leaders if there is no agreement to the contrary. There are many Chilean delegates in this room who can vouch for that.

Chilean legislation only allows for collective bargaining at the enterprise level, and these are split into many different businesses so as to prevent workers from joining organizations in order to increase their bargaining power. Collective bargaining is an instrument for the distribution of wealth, and its absence is one of the reasons why Chile is one of the countries with the greatest social inequality, with the biggest wage gaps and with the least social protection. As the ILO says, employability does not necessarily mean decent work. In 2011, there was a series of social protests in Chile, including workers, students and environmentalists. During the protests, some of which were theme-based and others organized by region, people took to the streets en masse to voice their frustration and to demand more democracy, more participation and more social justice.

The fact that there are few forums in which people can make their views known, that public, private and political organizations have little credibility and that the market sectors are corrupt, constitutes a real threat to democratic institutions trying to promote

social peace. This social peace has, over the years, become a form of investment capital, and this is good, but in Chile there is a great deal of discontent and those whose job it is respond to these demands, namely the Government and Parliament, fall back on dogma and economic cant and leave it to the market to regulate everything. The way forward is thus likely to be difficult and uncertain.

Against this backdrop it is difficult for workers to exercise their fundamental labour rights and engage in dialogue. Bucking this trend, however, in January of this year we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the big companies in the CPC group, which basically acknowledges the need to strengthen unions and instruments for collective bargaining. We also signed an agreement with small enterprises with a view to strengthening the trade union movement.

The CUT of Chile is open to social dialogue in which employers and workers can agree on policies that benefit the economic growth of both the country and of enterprises, but with clear mechanisms for distributing wealth and with adequate labour standards.

We call on the Government to note the content of these agreements, and convert them into laws and initiate a discussion of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), so as to guarantee all Chilean workers at least a minimum level of social security, particularly in the private administration of pension funds, where, in the last few years, workers have lost a great deal of money from their private accounts.

This is an opportunity for all of us, and it is the responsibility of the Government and Parliament to take up this challenge. We firmly believe that the development of countries must be accompanied by social protection based on decent work, freedom of association and full collective bargaining rights.

At this 101st Session of the Conference we take the opportunity to thank our compatriot, Juan Somavia, who has led this Organization with such wisdom and who has played a leadership role in formulating world policy. We are proud to be Chilean and to be represented in international organizations such as the United Nations.

Original Vietnamese: Ms NGUYEN (Worker, Viet Nam)

This session is taking place at a time when the world, especially the workers and the employees, are facing the negative impact of a global crisis. We share the observations made by the ILO Director-General in his Report to the Conference and totally agree with the vision of sustainable development for social justice proposed by the Director-General.

The Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) is an organization representing and protecting the legal and legitimate rights and interests of workers with a membership of more than 7.5 million in more than 110,000 unions, which always actively participates in developing policy and legislation, education, inspection, monitoring and launching many activities to promote the industrialization and modernization of the country and strategies for sustainable development, and to ensure democracy, equality and social justice. We actively work together with the Government and with employers' organizations to promote tripartism and fair, stable and progressive industrial relations at workplaces, and to strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining. The VGCL has seen the ini-

tial success of the pilot collective bargaining agreements in the textile and garment industry and is evaluating and drawing lessons in order to extend them to other industries. For these efforts, the VGCL has successfully implemented the programme for the recruitment of more than 1.5 million new members in the period 2008–13. The VGCL has actively participated and initiated several recommendations and proposals to ensure social security for workers, such as: an increased minimum wage, improved working conditions, social insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance and building houses for workers. In addition, the VGCL has run many programmes, initiatives and specific activities to assist workers and their families to overcome difficulties and has implemented various activities to promote gender equality, control HIV/AIDS and child labour, and provide support for migrant workers and disadvantaged groups. At present, the VGCL has 21 vocational training colleges, 13 vocational training centres and eight employment service centres for jobs. Between 2009 and 2011, the VGCL provided vocational training for 150,000 people, provided consultations for 250,000 persons and found jobs for 53,000 people.

Currently, Viet Nam's National Assembly is discussing the revised and amended Labour Code and Trade Union Law. We believe that these two important laws, when adopted, will be the legal basis to better ensure the rights of workers and trade unions.

Over the past years, Vietnamese trade unions have benefited from assistance from the ILO, as well as from other trade union organizations, and I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the ILO for its cooperation and for the efficient support extended to Vietnamese trade unions so far, and the hope to receive further support from the ILO and other international organizations in the future.

Original French: Mr BAHATI LUKWEO (Minister of Employment, Labour and Social Welfare, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

May I first of all, on behalf of the Government headed by His Excellency Mr Joseph Kabila Kambagé, President of the Republic, on behalf of our tripartite delegation and on my own behalf, present my sincere congratulations to the new Director-General-elect, Mr Guy Ryder. I would also like to pay tribute to the excellent work done by Mr Juan Somavia during his term of office which is now ending.

I feel I must praise the calm climate in which this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference is being held, which clearly reflects a readiness and determination to bring our discussion of the theme of this session, "Building a future with decent work" to a satisfactory conclusion.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the ILO on its defence of the cause of Decent Work internationally.

I must also mention the Report entitled *ILO programme implementation 2010–11*, which is most timely in these times of economic and financial crisis, climate change and cross-border crime. The many negative effects of the situation on unemployment are obvious.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo shares the ILO's concern with the jobs crisis, particularly as it relates to the employment of young people, wages,

social protection and the fight against poverty. We support all the efforts being made to remedy the situation, which in developing countries in particular is getting worse and threatening the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As regards the critical employment situation of young people, our Head of State, Mr Kabila Kambagé, and the whole Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is fully committed to the fight against youth unemployment and to making the improvement of the employability of young people the focus of our action.

The implementation of the 2009 national programme to promote the employment of young people is one of the Government's major decisions on this matter. The world employment crisis demands the mobilization of vast resources and worldwide consultation, as the multiple consequences of this scourge are even more dangerous than the AIDS pandemic.

The references in the Director-General's Report to the results achieved in 2010–11 by country and by region and to the fact that 46 of the 50 goals set for the two-year period have been achieved have had my full attention. Our tripartite delegation is pleased with the work done and encourage the ILO to continue its efforts to promote the fundamental principles and rights at work.

The theme of this session, "Building a future with decent work", is more than a challenge for countries where unemployment is reaching alarming proportions. It is particularly appropriate in the context of the Decent Work Country Programme, which is a framework for planning and financing targeted action in partnership with the ILO. My delegation is actively participating in the strategic committees on fundamental principles and rights at work as part of the follow-up of the ILO Declaration.

I would like to conclude by informing this assembly that the National Social Security Institute of my country, which has been a member of the Inter-African Social Security Conference since 2009, is currently being reformed. The aim of the reform is to improve the management of the Institute so as to achieve the goals of extending social security and improving social services.

Original Portuguese: Mr MAZOIO (Worker, Mozambique)

At this moment, when Juan Somavia is stepping down from his role as Director-General, we would like to stress the great legacy he has left: know-how, dedication and engagement for promoting labour rights based on social dialogue, decent work and respect for human and trade union rights.

We would also like to welcome the Director-General-elect, Guy Ryder, who has stood out in trade union leadership and in other international organizations as a person who is committed to defending the interests of workers.

The reports not only clearly reflect the activities carried out in the general context of the objectives laid out in the general programme of this Organization, they also offer a clear vision of the challenges that the whole world has to face to promote more fair labour relations, particularly in the present context of the world economic and financial crisis in which all of humanity is faced with unemployment, poverty, social inequality as the main challenges of the present time.

The Mozambican trade union movement has taken up with great interest its fight against unem-

ployment, particularly among young people, who, on the one hand, are losing their jobs because of the negative impact of the present international economic context and, on the other hand, are coming out of school and are unable to find jobs because there are not enough jobs available or because they do not have the necessary skills required by the business sector and there is a limited amount of investment in job creation.

In the context the tripartite social dialogue, the social partners are deeply involved in defining and implementing measures to promote vocational training with its priority on young people, encouraging the business sector to invest in vocational training and creating internships and making use of the human potential of the country.

The recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among the social partners for the promotion of vocational training, and the agreements signed with businesses with the same objective, indicate the commitment to promote jobs and skills among young people so that they may compete on the labour market.

The Mozambican trade union movement is increasingly involved not only in improving wage levels throughout the country, but also in allowing better human development within the labour force, promoting decent work, gender balance and a peaceful resolution to conflicts.

The unions have pledged to work together with the social partners to tackle the challenges imposed by precarious work, low wages and social protection, which are far from responding to the needs and expectations of our workers.

The debate at the moment in this Conference on the social floor is a stimulus for this collective effort.

In our country, this partnership has led to the approval of legislation which establishes a legal framework for mandatory social protection for needy and disabled persons, and an improvement of the quality of services within the social service system. All this is to be seen within a context of participation of workers, employers and the Government.

We have to face significant challenges to make decent work a reality and to overcome the difficulties which result from the dynamics of a market economy which is based on competition and which sometimes acts to the detriment of social and human factors.

We support the adaptation of employment policies and vocational training to respond to the needs for improving employability of our young people and to meet the needs of the business sector in terms of setting standards for vocational skills.

We are in favour of joining efforts to promote reliable, sustainable and long-lasting employment with all the rights inherent therein.

It is therefore important to stress the relevance of the technical assistance offered by the ILO in enabling trade unions to participate effectively in the collective bargaining process, defining a real social floor, developing unemployment initiatives, making equal rights for men and women a reality and developing social dialogue.

We would reaffirm the need for greater commitment on the part of all countries through the use of relevant and all-encompassing social dialogue to promote the recommendation of the social floor and

the implementation of employment policies which are more focused on young people.

We wish the Director-General and all the staff of the ILO every success in implementing the programmes with regard to achieving more fair and equitable labour relations.

Mr MITUMITU (*Worker, Kenya*)

I congratulate the Director-General for submitting a candid, objective and comprehensive Report of the work of the Office on the programme implementation for the biennium 2010–11 using the results-based management model. This has made it easy for constituents to evaluate the achievements made so far and the challenges faced and the lessons to be learned in the future.

The Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) (COTU-Kenya) is happy to note that substantial progress has been made towards achieving the targets set for the Office, entrenchment of the decent work programmes in member States in the economic, social and political policies, as well as a general acceptance and integration of the decent work concept into the policy agendas of the regional and multilateral institutions.

The Report correctly reminds us that the world of work is still reeling from the negative effects of the global economic crisis, which has had a monumental impact on employment for young people, wages, social protection and poverty. A number of governments, in both developing and developed countries, have lost power as a result of people's hunger, with their inability to have decent livelihoods. These events clearly reinforce the need for member States to formally anchor the widely-held aspirations for decent work that respects human dignity by putting in place policies and programmes that balance economic growth and social progress.

In the biennium under review, Kenyan workers, on a general basis, continue to experience acute decent work deficits, including escalating unemployment and employment informality and poverty. This is despite the adoption and gradual implementation of a new Constitution which guarantees all citizens food, water, decent housing, education, health and social security among other economic and political rights.

While COTU-Kenya appreciates the challenges that the Government has faced in the management of the economy in the last two years, characterized by the loss in value of the shilling against the major currencies, high fuel prices, adverse weather conditions, all of which led to high inflation and the consequent rise in the cost of living, COTU-Kenya still believes that much more could have been done to alleviate these problems. The failure by the Government to adequately consult and engage the key constituencies, including the social partners, has constrained the smooth implementation of key decent work initiatives like the civil servants' insurance schemes and the recently shelved introduction of universal outpatient cover for all working employees.

As predicted by ourselves, the hurried implementation of the massive outpatient civil servants' scheme under the management of the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), without consultation with the workers, has resulted in the loss of colossal amounts of money for workers and is now the subject of parliamentary and possible criminal investigation into money paid out to non-existing clinics.

COTU opposes the naked theft and plundering of workers' resources by politically corrupt individuals with an eye to raising funds for the upcoming general election and welcomes the Government's commitment to thoroughly investigate this scandal with a view to recovering the lost funds and prosecuting the culprits.

We also welcome the suspension of the proposed increase of the workers' contributions to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) the NHIF, which was aimed at funding the new outpatient cover for all employees until the adequate investigation is done. COTU still believes that health provision is the responsibility of the Government and if workers are to be brought on board, structural consultations must be done with these workers. We call on the ILO to institute and give programmes that include visibility standards before eventual implementation.

Mr DIMITROV (*Worker, Bulgaria*)

The economic and social challenges confronting Bulgaria are substantial. Bulgarian employees continue to pay the high social price of the crisis. In Bulgaria, as elsewhere, the global economic crisis was reflected in a dramatic shock to domestic demand and investment expenditure and, in line with the Government's austerity measures, wages and social payments have been frozen in a context of increasing prices.

After five years in which labour market indicators improved significantly, Bulgaria lost over 15 per cent of jobs during the recession. As a result, the employment rate declined, and the unemployment rate more than doubled and is now above 12.5 per cent.

In the framework of the Global Jobs Pact, in March of last year, the Bulgarian constituents of the ILO endorsed the Global Jobs Pact Country Scan which set out a comprehensive analysis of the economic and labour market developments and provided recommendations for future policies, which have been further developed at the March 2012 conference on jobs and incomes held by the International Trade Union Confederation and the two national trade union confederations. Both the ILO and the IMF actively participated in this conference and are going to take the lead in mid-July organizing a policy-formulating round table together with the Bulgarian Government and the social partners.

Young workers in Bulgaria have long faced many difficulties in their transition into the labour market and particularly in finding secure employment. The financial crisis of 2008 has worsened this situation significantly. As in most countries, youth in Bulgaria are the hardest hit by the recent crisis. Unemployment has constantly increased to reach about 30 per cent recently, from 12 per cent at the end of 2008. Within the EU-27 Bulgaria has among the highest level of youth that are not in employment or education.

In this respect, I would like to point out the urgency of the issue of the youth employment crisis and the need for us to act now on a pro-employment macroeconomic policy mix while securing the rights of youth.

Despite the crisis, the Bulgarian Government and social partners have managed to agree on some measures related to part-time work with a view to preserving jobs, increasing the minimum wage and unemployment benefits, and extending collective

agreements, etc. Labour Code amendments related to ensuring labour rights for workers and distant and temporary agency workers have also been adopted. However, social dialogue development is uneven. The environment for social dialogue deteriorated after the onset of the global economic crisis, namely when several tripartite agreements were not fully implemented and provoked industrial actions at the national and branch levels.

The violation of workers' and trade union rights is a common occurrence in many Bulgarian enterprises, mainly small and medium-sized, and in the informal economy. Both trade union confederations continue to stand in defence of workers' rights through their campaigns for decent work and the promotion of workers' rights for all.

We believe that the study of the fundamental principles and rights at work entitled *Giving globalization a human face* will help us to argue our request for legislative amendments to fully guarantee freedom of association, trade union protection, the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike. In this respect, we support the adoption of the plan of action on fundamental principles and rights at work (2012–16). Social protection is a fundamental instrument to absorb shocks and to guarantee better and more robust economies. The adoption of the ILO Recommendation on the social protection floor is an important step towards greater social justice and fair globalization.

The proposed Recommendation builds and enriches the spirit and content of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and engages ILO member States in an ambitious effort to ensure quality, comprehensive and decent social protection for their citizens. I would thus like to express our full support for the adoption of the Recommendation. It will provide flexible but meaningful guidance to the member States in building social protection floors within comprehensive social security systems tailored to national circumstances and levels of development.

In conclusion, Bulgarian trade unions have joined efforts against the austerity measures within the European and international trade union movement under the slogan "Enough is enough". Our position is clear: we need economic growth policies that create quality jobs and will not tolerate restrictions bearing misery and social unrest.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for its assistance and to express my own and the Bulgarian workers' hope that our beneficial co-operation will develop further.

Original Russian: Mr KOZIK (Worker, Belarus)

On behalf of the 4 million trade union members in Belarus, I would like to welcome the work of our Conference and thank the Officers of this Session for the work that they have been doing.

Of course, it is a pleasure for us to have studied the new Report by the Director-General. Taken together with the reports which have been presented in the past years, we can say that they have correctly defined the tasks before us in implementing the main strategic objectives of the ILO.

Many States and national social partners have already achieved a certain amount of progress on all or some of the strategic objectives of the decent work programme: employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work.

Other global initiatives which were born within these walls have continued to spread throughout the world and are being implemented in practice. I refer to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the Global Jobs Pact, working out of poverty, and other long-term initiatives.

Today, from this rostrum, I would like to say a few words to commend Mr Juan Somavia, the Director-General, for his sound identification of priorities during his long-standing efforts to develop our Organization and strengthen its position in the international community.

Certainly, in Belarus much of what was set out in the programme has already been implemented, and is being implemented, in a fairly equitable manner. There is collective bargaining, in which any trade union, any employer, any representative of the Government, may participate – this is true partnership within the tripartite system.

There are jobs, wages, support for young people, and I would like to say that thanks to the work that has been done by the Head of State, President Lukashenko, the trade unions and the Government have succeeded, within the framework of social dialogue, in achieving a situation in which there are no poor people in Belarus. Anybody who wants to find a job to secure their subsistence can find one and will earn remuneration from it.

Of course, as trade unions, we would like to see a constant increase in such remuneration and to see workers receive higher pay. To some extent we have succeeded, and to some extent there is still a great deal of work to be done.

I would like to say that there is a certain misunderstanding between the ILO, and the International Labour Office, and our country. It seems to me that silent rejection of one another is not conducive to good results. There is always a lack of dialogue, or there is bad dialogue, or a biased attitude which leads to an impasse.

I would like these problems to be eliminated, taking into account the events at this session. I would like the Office to take an understanding approach to the processes taking place in my country and to look at the results of this work, which merit being perceived as effective.

Many are still working to achieve what we have accomplished in the Republic, although there are still very many problems, and the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, which, as I said, has 4 million members, is constantly continuing its dialogue with the Government, asking for better working conditions, an increase in wages, earnings, pensions and benefits – all of this taking into account the documents developed by the ILO. I am convinced that we will be able to reach a solution.

Original Russian: Mr SHCHERBAKOV (Representative, General Confederation of Trade Unions)

We are very grateful to the Director-General of the ILO for the interesting and informative Report, for the detailed and objective analysis of the work carried out by the ILO over the last two years. Thanks to support from the ILO, many countries, including the States in our region, have noted progress in all four strategic pillars of the Decent Work Programme, which includes employment, social protection, social dialogue and labour rights.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) shares the point of view expressed by the Director-General that the fight to ensure decent

work all over the world must remain one of the main objectives of the Organization. However, any work can be carried out in conditions of employment, but decent work can only be carried out in conditions of full, reliable, productive, socially protected employment.

We also believe that it is very timely to adopt the initiative by the ILO, the Recommendation on social protection floors, at this Session. This document has long been awaited by unions because strong international guidance is required for the fight for social justice, a decent standard of living and decent work for trade unionists.

On behalf of the member organizations of the GCTU, I would like to express our gratitude to the outgoing Director-General of the ILO, Juan Somavia, for his invaluable, selfless and innovative contribution in developing and consolidating the International Labour Organization. During his time at this post, the ILO has always been at the frontline of world social policy.

The ILO was the first to sense the threat to labour relations and social policy by globalization and called for giving it a human face. The conclusions and proposals of the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted in 2008, served as a great impetus for a global campaign for socially just globalization, which was eagerly supported by the trade unions of our region as well as by all trade unions the world over.

The unprecedented rise in unemployment around the world has led the ILO to develop the Global Jobs Pact. It coped valiantly with the height of the economic crisis, openly standing up against attempts to save the economic situation at the expense of the rights of wage workers, and was in favour of root and branch restructuring of the post-crisis economic world order by reviving the real sector of the economy.

However, one of the main ILO successes over these years was its trademark programme of the Decent Work Agenda adopted in 1999, which obtained unprecedented support throughout the world. It would not be an overstatement to say that implementing the idea of decent work has become today one of the most popular of all global objectives. For unions, it is of paramount importance. For example, through decent work the General Confederation of Trade Unions for several years has been conducting a campaign to ensure that the minimum wage is not lower than the country's established minimum subsistence level.

We would like to express our gratitude to the outgoing Director-General for his work and to welcome his successor, Mr Guy Ryder, on his election to such a high and responsible position. We are convinced that his experience, his knowledge and his competence will enable us not only to maintain the successes of the past but to creatively develop it in the future.

The GCTU and its member organizations expect the ILO to step up its standard-setting activity, to renew and expand its instrument base in accordance with the needs of our times. There are several problems that have not been resolved or have been insufficiently dealt with by international labour standards. This includes the position of new categories of workers with specific labour conditions, the increase in wage work and the problems of the infor-

mal economy, as well as the problem of labour relations in transnational corporations. The fact that these are prevalent problems means that the ILO needs to consolidate its tripartite work in future and to develop respectful dialogue between partners and strengthen supervisory mechanisms. In other words, it needs to develop everything on which the authority and influence of the Organization depend.

Mr FARRUGIA (*Employer, Malta*)

The International Labour Conference is taking place at a time of general disillusionment with the global state of affairs. The hopes of recovery following the recession caused by the collapse of financial markets in 2008 have been dashed as many developed economies are still in recession and others are experiencing sluggish growth with a slower job recovery than expected as a result of the prevailing fiscal recession.

During the course of this Conference, I have heard Mr Juan Somavia rightly state that extreme policies produce extreme reactions. However, it must also be said that these are often the direct result of extreme negligence, and we have witnessed this from governments which have for decades opted to finance unsustainable welfare systems, which have acted as employers of last resort, which have succumbed to trade union pressure and introduced rigid labour market legislation, and which have disregarded economic realities and market forces in favour of political convenience.

The detachment of the younger generation, which has been one of the topics discussed during this Conference, should not come as a surprise as they look up to the rest of society and institutions, such as the ILO, and ask why they are the ones to carry the burdens of the excesses of their fathers.

We are expecting them to study harder, to have more children, to be more productive when jobs are scarce, to work longer and to pay the debts incurred by the older generation. Any global strategy for youth and unemployment, as contemplated by the recent G20 resolution, must be sensitive to these concerns.

We seem to have come to our senses, after years of denial, to discover a link between macroeconomic policies and job creation and the merits of responsible fiscal consolidation. If, by responsible fiscal consolidation, one means postponing addressing the unsustainable state of finances, one has to ask to what extent this is possible following decades of fiscal neglect by many governments.

Macroeconomic instruments that allow fiscal space for short-term counter-cyclical interventions have been clearly misused to distort economic realities and the longer term consequences of such misuse have been deliberately ignored. This is what has brought many European economies to their current state and why austerity measures are inevitable in some countries.

It is not the control of public debt that raises the danger of a downward recession spiral and increased unemployment as much as restrictive labour markets. We should not be contemplating the introduction of single contracts; we should not be using the terms "precarious work" and "atypical employment" interchangeably; we should not detach wage levels from productivity; we should not be suspicious of flexible labour market practices. By this, I am not advocating laissez-faire practices in the labour market.

The need for labour standards to promote decent work is appreciated and should be supported by all social partners. Yet, generalizations can be dangerous and it is unfortunate that documents like the Director-General's Report to the Ninth European Regional Meeting include proposals for a new macroeconomic approach which fail to factor in the variances between labour markets.

The way to job-rich recovery lies in jump-starting economies towards a virtuous circuit of incentivizing sustainable enterprises, which in turn leads to increased employment, work generation and economic growth.

In the labour market, we have to leave flexible work options open within established legal parameters and to simplify labour legislation to incentivize firms – SMEs in particular – to offer more productive jobs and reduce the informal economy. Public funds need to be rechanneled from non-productive and inefficient areas into incentives for SMEs, and to facilitate economic transformation to growth areas such as the generation of green jobs.

In some respects, the Maltese economy is faring better than most within the eurozone and the EU. Youth unemployment is relatively low, both as a percentage of youth seeking employment, and as a ratio of total unemployment, although there is still a problematic rate of school leavers. However, investment in vocational education and close collaboration with the employers has provided many with opportunities to learn skills that match the requirements of industry. The aircraft maintenance industry is a classic case of a partnership between investors and educational authorities to channel human resources into productive jobs.

The availability of flexible work options, together with fiscal incentives, are resulting in a higher female participation rate and also more retired persons who opt to work beyond retirement age. Malta has a lower rate of employees on part-time definite-period contracts and temping workers than the EU average. The situation is far removed from the impression given by a lot of experts and some unions that are equating atypical employment with precarious work.

In conclusion, I congratulate the newly elected Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, on his appointment. In his address during this Conference, Mr Ryder stated that these are times of change in the world of work and must also be times of change in this Organization, and that the ILO is relevant to business, is useful to business and reaches out to business.

The changing and more challenging global environment is setting the course for novel ideas and a proactive approach in approaching issues that fall within the ILO's mandate of the world of work through a social dialogue framework, which is based on trust and the ability of sustainable enterprise to generate decent jobs within the parameters of reasonable regulation enforcement and sustainable social protection.

Mr ZVEKIĆ (*Government, Serbia*)

At the outset, let me congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election to the position of Director-General of the ILO and to wish him well.

Allow me, on behalf of my Government, to express our most profound gratitude to Mr Juan Somavia, the outgoing Director-General for his

global leadership and vision to prevent and develop rather than to react and shrink.

The ILO's guidance and support in overcoming the crisis could and should play a significant role within and outside the UN system. In this regard, we commend the decision taken by the Governing Body to place on this year's Conference agenda, inter alia, two very important topics: the social protection floor and youth employment.

The financial and economic crises have aggravated decent employment for youth and increased the number of unemployed young women and men. Therefore policies should be identified and strategies developed that will enable the creation of decent jobs with development security for youth.

In 2011, Serbia submitted, in accordance with its obligations, 21 reports on the implementation of the ILO Conventions and 20 replies to direct requests of the ILO Committee of Experts. It also submitted the report on the application of unratified ILO Conventions and Recommendations.

In October 2011, the National Assembly of Serbia ratified the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

Currently in preparation is the ratification of the Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (No. 149), the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), as well as the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154). In addition, the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201), as well as the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200), were submitted to the competent authorities in Serbia for ratification.

Last year, through its field office in Serbia, the ILO assisted with some US\$600,000 in the realization of the following activities, inter alia:

- technical assistance in drafting the law on strikes;
- technical assistance in developing an employment strategy for 2011–12;
- youth employment and migration projects;
- assistance in conducting the workforce survey on the most appreciated professions at the local level;
- support of social dialogue through the organization of training for social partners; and
- capacity building.

The Republic of Serbia will remain a reliable and dedicated partner to the ILO in the future, as it has been in the past.

Original Arabic: Mr ESHRAH (Employer, Egypt)

We meet today while several regions in the world are witnessing winds of change led by our Arab nations. These winds of change have been called the Arab Spring. They consequently placed our nations, especially Egypt, at the forefront of events, at the global level, in the wake of successive changes and developments related to work, to investment and to humans in general.

More than ever before, we and the entire world may need to focus on work and on production, which are the responsibility of the three social partners, especially workers and employers, who are part of the tripartite structure of this Organization, together with governments.

We call upon all those involved in production to work together, through labour, capital and organization, under the auspices of governments in order to overcome such crises, and go beyond such winds of change.

I speak on behalf of the employers of Egypt, who are organized within a number of organizations, the most important of which are the Chambers of Commerce and its Confederation; the Federation of Egyptian Industries; the Federation of Tourism Chambers; the Federation of Banks; the Egyptian Federation of Construction Entrepreneurs; the Co-operative Production Union, and the associations of investors, and new industrial cities, as well as their federations, which can be found in any economic grouping. They all seek to promote trade, industry and investment, and to create job opportunities for the largest number of people, as the private sector is the driving force of development. This is due to the fact that it works in unison with our hard-working workers, because without workers, there are no employers, and without employers, there are no workers or job opportunities.

This requires the unification of workers' organizations and movements, as well as employers' organizations, or at least the attainment of a measure of coordination and consensus and not repulsion within their ranks.

Freedom of association and trade union rights are guaranteed in law and in practice in Egypt. Since 1957, Egypt has ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), which has become part of our national legislation. We therefore do not need to enact new legislation in this area. Suffice to mention Egypt's insistence on observing freedom of association and the right to organize, which is reflected in the Constitutional Declaration issued in March 2011, whose article 4 specifies that citizens have the right to form associations and establish unions, federations, and parties, as specified in the law. The establishment of associations whose activities are opposed to society, or are secret, or are military in nature, is prohibited. Engaging in any political activity or establishing political parties on the basis of religion, race or origin may not be authorized. The Constitution is the supreme authority of all legislation. It annuls any legal text or regulation which is contrary to the articles of the Constitution.

At present, a number of international labour Conventions are over-interpreted or are not correctly interpreted, which could cause dire consequences, and could result in the withdrawal of some parties from such Conventions.

One last point: I would like to remind the social partners in all parts of the world, of colonization which is still being exercised against a cherished region, close to the hearts and souls of all believers (Muslims and Christians alike), which is the Palestinian territories, in which the worst forms of oppression and injustice are practised, in the very birthplace of Jesus, and that of the prophet Mohamed.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Mr Juan Somavia for his great efforts exerted throughout his mandate. I would also like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General-elect, and wish him every success.

Original Spanish: Mr ALVEAR (Employer, Chile)

I would like to start by recognizing the work done by our compatriot, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Mr Juan Somavia. It is, and has been, a source of great pride and satisfaction for us to see how a Chilean, with the valuable team which makes up this Organization, has

been able to bring to life so many important ideas which will surely continue to contribute to the analysis of the issues of the world of work. We sincerely hope that his next professional and personal steps are just as successful or even more so.

We would also like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder, who will begin work as the new Director-General of the International Labour Office this coming October. We wish him every success, and we are ready to work together to contribute to better compliance with the Conventions ratified by Chile and to the spread of the fundamental principles and rights at work.

Regarding our country, this year we would like to highlight the implementation, at the business and employer level, of one of the fundamental pillars which has always been promoted by the ILO, that of inclusive and constructive social dialogue. I am going to dedicate the few minutes that remain to sharing with this assembly, from the perspective of the Employers, our vision of the effort to develop social dialogue during a large part of last year which we continue to develop still.

I am referring the declaration of intent which we signed with the country's principal workers' federation, the Single Confederation of Workers (CUT), in our capacity as a popular organization of Chilean business. We did so believing that the eight points in the declaration are highly relevant to national stakeholders. I want to give some context and highlight the conditions that make the world of work possible.

Chile is a small country in the far south of the American continent, we have about 17 million inhabitants and, because of climatic and natural circumstances, every few years we have to cope with natural disasters, such as the most recent earthquake which struck in February 2010.

Recognizing that human losses, of course, will always be the most painful and difficult, I would like to emphasize the persistence of the whole country that, regardless of difficult circumstances, always works together to right itself and continue forward.

Our country has followed a policy for opening the national economy to the world that was first unilateral and then bilateral and also multilateral, which has required and still requires that we try to be more and more innovative and competitive. The progress of this cross-cutting policy has been accompanied by strict fiscal responsibility, which has transcended political trends of our various governments, becoming the cornerstones of our path towards development, the specific results of which are reflected in the reduction of poverty, the spread of education and increased access to basic services and goods, among other things.

The path to development continues to bring new demands for a civil society which is increasingly empowered by its rights and desire to enjoy the fruits of economic growth as soon as possible, and this is the framework which has led to the large number of social protests in our country last year. You probably heard from the media about these protests which were formed mainly by a group of students demanding improvements to the education system.

Far from being a problem, we viewed it as a reason for hope and an opportunity because it was a protest based on the desire of a significant number of young people to improve their abilities and op-

portunities so that they can compete and have a real chance to become successful in the country.

However, there were also small groups that tried to violently push through their extreme demands. It is in this context that our agreement with the workers came about. Now this space for dialogue is very active, and we are proud of and hopeful for its results, because we still meet often to reinforce our declaration of intent. We hope that the Government of Chile and the National Congress welcome the proposals by national stakeholders.

Original Russian: Mr MOHBALIYEV (Worker, Azerbaijan)

The 101st Session of the Conference has examined one of the most important current problems: increasing the level of employment of the population and in particular that of one of its driving forces – youth.

In the Republic of Azerbaijan significant reforms aimed at improving the standard of living of the population are under way. The success of the Republic in setting up a market economy, developing entrepreneurship and establishing good working conditions are the basis for providing jobs for the population, especially for young people.

Azerbaijan has joined the lead countries under the Youth Employment Network and our initiative has been supported by the UN through the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization.

The results of the analysis on youth employment and the national action plan for supporting young people have set out the main priorities as follows: employment policy and reducing unemployment amongst youth; supporting entrepreneurial activity; and creating vocational training for young people.

Azerbaijan is a country with a growing young population. From this standpoint the issue of youth employment is particularly important. The youth of our country represent 27 per cent of the working population and 25 per cent of young people are employed.

At present the growing economic potential of Azerbaijan and the implementation of new technologies require a certain amount of specially qualified personnel. This gives rise to one of the most important tasks – the training of qualified personnel.

The trade unions of the Republic are concerned with the growing number of young people who do not have an education and who remain unemployed. The main causes for unemployment within this category of the population are the amount of family responsibilities, the absence of decent work, job rejections, and a lack of information about available jobs and how to find them.

It is also a well-known fact that in accordance with the instruction of the President of the Republic to resolve the problems of unemployment, over the past eight years more than 1 million jobs have been created. As a result of this, unemployment in the country has fallen from 28 to 5.6 per cent.

Efforts continue to be made in this area, and it is heartening that a large part of the jobs that have been created are not in the oil sector and concern rural areas of the Republic.

As a result of additions and amendments being made to labour legislation on the pensions of civil servants who have retired at 65, opportunities for youth employment have increased. In the education system alone 20,000 jobs have been freed up.

The Confederation of Trade Unions of Azerbaijan has also been active with regard to the work of the

Republic in this area. Based on the principle of tripartism, a collective agreement is signed every two years between the Government, confederations of trade unions and employers, containing a separate section on measures on employment. It also refers to measures on decreasing youth unemployment and helping young people find jobs. These measures include:

- continuing dialogue with social partners in line with the requirements of the developing economy and in order to conduct the required reforms in vocational technical education and specialized secondary education;
- holding consultations on strengthening the system for stimulating the geographical mobility of labour;
- working harder to improve qualifications and teach young people new professions, especially young women aged between 20 and 30.

To protect workers' rights and young people's socio-economic rights, and to make young people actively involved in trade unions, youth councils are in place in Azeri trade unions.

In addition, it is important to point out that the issue of youth employment has to be first settled through the development of a private sector in the economy. By the same token, great significance is vested in measures regarding the professional orientation of young people to meet the requirements of the labour market. In particular:

- systematically upgrading the facilities in secondary and vocational schools and providing them with modern equipment;
- providing staff who are in charge of training young people with financial incentives;
- taking into account the fact that maintaining vocational schools is 20 to 30 per cent more expensive than maintaining secondary schools, to improve the social responsibility of employers and encourage them to finance these costs.

Original Russian: Mr SAIDOV (Government, Uzbekistan)

First of all I would like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder, the ILO Director-General-elect on his appointment. We pin our hopes on continued cooperation with the ILO secretariat.

The Director-General's Report shows the results of the implementation of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Programme in employment, social protection and labour rights.

The measures taken in Uzbekistan in these fields are fully consistent with the strategies and principles of the ILO.

In 2012 alone, the Uzbek Parliament adopted a law on family entrepreneurship, and there have been laws on social partnership, and revised draft laws on trade unions, and the Government has adopted a decree on additional measures for the implementation in 2012–13 of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), ratified by Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan is implementing the state programme "The year of the family", as well as a programme for developing services over the next five years. The resolution of these social problems is based on sustainable economic development.

According to the most recent assessment mission of the IMF, which took place in 2011, Uzbekistan has achieved dynamic growth and has successfully dealt with the global financial crisis.

Over the past five years, the growth rate in Uzbekistan have reached 8.5 per cent, which is higher than the average for all of Central Asia.

Even before the ILO Global Jobs Pact, a special anti-crisis programme of measures was adopted in Uzbekistan in 2008 for 2009–12 which included specific measures for job recovery and creation.

In 2012, under a programme approved by Parliament for creating jobs and securing employment, around 1 million jobs are to be created, of which approximately 600,000 will be in the rural areas.

Great significance is attached to the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular to the increase in the quality of education, reduction of child mortality and the improvement of maternal health. Through a decree of the Government, a series of additional measures have been approved for implementing the Millennium Development Goals over the next five years.

According to a Save the Children ranking, out of 161 States in 2011 Uzbekistan was ranked ninth in caring for the health of minors.

Per capita government spending on social protection has increased more than fivefold, and every year over 60 per cent of the Government budget is devoted to healthcare development, education and other areas related to the social protection of children.

Uzbekistan gives particular attention to combating forced labour and the worst forms of child labour.

Uzbekistan has set up an institutional system for protecting children's rights in terms of labour, and the Government has created a special government committee on issues concerning minors. The Ministry of Labour carries out state labour inspections. Non-governmental organizations and civil society institutions are working actively in cooperation with international organizations to prevent children from being involved in the worst forms of child labour. In addition, an interdepartmental group has been set up for preparing and presenting information on Uzbekistan's implementation of the ILO Conventions.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that this May an international seminar was held in Uzbekistan, together with the secretariat of the ILO and experts from the European Commission.

The seminar participants recommended the following: developing cooperation with the ILO on the development and implementation of specific programmes; submitting information to the ILO and to other international organizations on the work performed by Uzbekistan; following up on the implementation of the requirements of the Conventions of the ILO, including in the area of child labour; and suggesting that other member States of the ILO benefit from the positive experience of Uzbekistan in resolving social and labour issues, including the implementation of anti-crisis measures and job creation and employment programmes.

Mr FOLLO (*Worker, Ethiopia*)

First of all, I would like to express my grateful thanks to the ILO, on behalf of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) and myself, for this opportunity to make a speech at the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions is functioning in an ever-changing domestic situation, which is part and parcel of an international system where globalization becomes a defining feature. In my country, Ethiopia, the new promising five-year

Growth and Transformation Plan and the Government's commitment to support micro- and small-scale industries in the aggregate create a conducive environment to achieve industrialization in the near future. The accelerated and sustainable economic growth Ethiopia has experienced for the last successive years is also generating millions of new jobs across sectors.

The Government is also investing billions of dollars to execute massive infrastructure building projects like roads and railway construction, telecommunications and electricity generation and distribution line installations. In this regard, the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance hydroelectric generation dam is worth mentioning. The dam is expected to generate over 6,000 megawatts of power upon its completion. Most interestingly, the construction project is fully funded by the Ethiopian Government and the people of Ethiopia. Moreover, the Government is constructing labour-intensive industrial plants, like sugar factories, which are a prerequisite to accelerated economic growth and industrialization.

As a whole, to sustain this accelerated growth, the Ethiopian Government pays due attention to productivity enhancement in each and every sector of the economy. We are also motivating workers to contribute their share for the realization of this goal.

The Ethiopian Government has recently introduced a new social protection scheme that is of huge importance for the Ethiopian working community. Our Confederation has taken an active part in initiating and designing the new social security scheme. The newly established social security scheme is aimed at extending the pension scheme to employees of private companies. The establishment of this social security scheme is of crucial importance to improving the lives of the Ethiopian workers.

On the other hand, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions, in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders, has been implementing a series of projects with the goal of fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the workplace.

Currently, as I noted earlier, our country, Ethiopia, creates numerous employment opportunities as a result of the nation's endeavour to implement home-grown and selectively adopted policies and strategies. Cognizant of this, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions is trying hard to organize non-unionized workers in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders. However, there are problems in implementing the rights of workers which are stipulated in the ILO Conventions Ethiopia has adopted. In order to solve these problems, CETU is doing its best through the tripartite forum. We are also sure that the International Labour Organization will support us throughout our endeavour to organize non-unionized Ethiopian workers so as to ensure their rights to organize and collective bargaining.

(*Mr Atwoli takes the Chair.*)

Mr JENNINGS (*Representative, UNI Global Union*)

I am speaking on behalf of UNI Global Union, the global trade union for services and skills. Let me first congratulate Guy Ryder on his successful election.

Guy, you must be the 600 million jobs man. That is the number of jobs required in the next decade. We won't get there with the economic austerity that

we see. George Soros says Europe has three months; well, the world has days to make up its mind.

The G20 meets in two weeks. They must deliver a globally coordinated jobs plan that will answer the call of the young people here and that has to be the common global goal.

European austerity has come with a kick in the teeth to ILO standards, to collective bargaining, to people, to welfare and rights. Perhaps it is time for a freedom of association complaint against the Troika: the IMF, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the EU. The Troika has become, as we say, "Walmartized". Its bailout conditionalities end collective agreement and cut rights. Social Europe, a eurozone, dead zone.

At this 101st Conference we should confine these practices to George Orwell's room 101 in the novel *Nineteen eight-four*. We need more, not less, collective bargaining to deal with collapsing consumption. Jobless numbers are soaring, wages are stagnant, yet CEO pay packages rise. Corporate return on equity is exaggerated, yet we still see an investment strike by the business sector. We need to change the rules of the game. Today's JP Morgan boss, Jamie Dimon, should listen to the words of his founder. The original JP Morgan said "The boss should not earn more than 20 times the wage of those at the bottom." CEO earnings are proven to be driven by a reckless unsustainable financial sector.

UNI Global Union is leading the charge for a responsible finance sector. The G20 must do more to clean up the finance sector. Bankers tried to rule the world and they failed. The Financial Stability Board has identified 32 banks that are "too big to fail". Those banks, which are now being asked to make "living wills" covering the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers, should enter into global agreements with the unions concerned in UNI Global Union. It is time to end the practice of people being treated as being too small to matter.

We anchor our global agreements and we have almost 50 in place now covering tens of millions of workers in the ILO standards. These are not just an affair for Europe. We have signed global agreements with companies in Japan, Indonesia, South Africa and Brazil.

The ILO should do more to promote these agreements, as they should set up a new unit based around the due diligence principles of the Ruggie principles, a new unit here at the ILO to ensure that businesses are implementing these due diligence practices. From Walmart to Deutsche Telecom and to DHL, such due diligence processes are absent. Too many businesses talk pretty on labour standards but act ugly in practice.

We in UNI Global Union are trying to break through in the services market, where the jobs of tomorrow are. We are successfully organizing workers in all continents. We welcome the presence of Aung San Suu Kyi here at the International Labour Conference; we support her call that investment must equal jobs, and we will help to build free and independent unions there as we have done in so many countries.

Workers must be free from fear. I am appalled at the manoeuvring by the Employers' group here on standards. Markets work better in democracies where rights are respected. Employers, we think you are posturing on standards. No free pass to rights abuses! We have had the Arab spring, do not

bring a trade union rights winter. Remember, strong unions are the path to inclusive growth. The inequality that we see is not sustainable. If the 1 per cent thrive and the 99 per cent nosedive, economic vitality is hampered for all.

Build our economies with the goal of "including you", including all people in the wealth produced. Instead, we have precarity with no certainty of wages and jobs and conditions of pensions. That's why we need social protection.

The ILO jobs report should answer the call for where the jobs of tomorrow are coming from and examine the impact of precarity on economic activity.

In closing, UNI Global Union recognizes the great contribution of outgoing Director-General Juan Somavia, who did more than decent work: a stronger ILO now than when he arrived, relevant at the G20, credible solutions to the crisis. Best of luck to Guy. Thank you, Juan Somavia. One parting request to him. I was in Côte d'Ivoire last week. The Dignité trade union leader, Basile Mahan Gahé, is still in prison. I appeal to you and this Conference to take steps with the Government to seek his immediate liberation.

Original Portuguese: Mr FEIJÓ (Representative, World Union of Professions)

We in the WUP represent many millions of men and women who are responsible for business management, finance, business records, the health of individuals, nature conservation and the preservation of the environment, social and legal issues, the use of new technologies, scientific development, cities, transport and many dozens of other activities which are typical of the professions based on university and technical qualifications across the world.

We are thus men and women who are very close to the problems which are afflicting the modern world and amid all these crises we must join forces and actively participate in promoting the principles and rights at work which serve as the basis for human, social, scientific and technical development in every form.

The WUP, its affiliates, and professionals in general are able and willing to participate in discussions under the United Nations Global Compact for the fulfilment of fundamental principles in the context of human rights, the environment and the fight against corruption, as well as fundamental principles and rights at work.

The role of the ILO, in particular, in the context of international labour standards, is based on obligations voluntarily assumed by member States which are responsible for their fulfilment; but in addition to governments, businesses and employers, workers and their unions and civil society organizations have a large share of responsibility as regards requiring the fulfilment of these obligations. This responsibility is even greater when it comes to States that do not meet these standards for political reasons or because of national practices or structural deficiencies.

What we call corporate social responsibility has gained increasing adherence worldwide, making room for new instruments and multilateral initiatives, always with the aim of promoting better conditions of work. On account of their experience and technical qualifications, professionals must be committed to this initiative, but we should be aware

that the proliferation of such initiatives does not diminish or affect proper public regulation to the detriment of the standards and principles that underpin collective labour relations.

Economic blocs, multinational enterprises, the free movement of persons and goods, social networks, spontaneous or forced migration, the end of borders, modern communications and the end of the isolation of the most remote communities are some examples of this new world of work which we must address and find solutions for in the next decades.

The ILO had, has and will always have an important role in finding solutions to the issue of human rights at work. The WUP reiterates that it wants to be part of this search and we are available to help in all fields of human knowledge with our experience and professional ethics in the defence of peace and the freedom of peoples, human rights, the environment and future generations.

Mr MURARKA (*Employer, Nepal*)

The important issues stated in the Report of the Director-General are significant for both employers and workers. Greater employment opportunities for both women and men, the social protection floor and social dialogue are all issues that contribute to the promotion of decent work for overall industrial prosperity.

Nepal is passing through a difficult phase. The political uncertainty has had a direct impact on the industrial sector. Nepal, as a member State of the ILO, is responsible for the promotion of ILO Conventions and Recommendations, both ratified and unratified, for the attainment of the broader objectives of the ILO.

Social security is one of the pillars of decent work, though social justice has been an issue of great concern for the Government of Nepal, employers and workers. As one of the agenda items in the Report of the Director-General, it holds great significance for us. The drafting of the Social Security Act for the establishment of social security through tripartite consultation has travelled quite far in Nepal. The legislation, the draft law, will soon be initiated.

The initiative taken by the ILO to adopt the Recommendation on the social protection floor is quite relevant in the present context. The concept of the social protection floor for an underdeveloped country like Nepal holds immense importance. The consolidation of the existing policies and programmes relating to social protection, which include a social security scheme for workers and other citizens, needs special consideration.

In the same way, the issue of social dialogue as stated in the Report also holds equal importance in the context of industrial relations with the situation in Nepal. The need for a strong tripartite mechanism for the promotion of social dialogue is strongly felt in Nepal. Social dialogue, at various levels, is required for policy formation as well as for labour dispute settlement.

The effort of the ILO in this area deserves appreciation. The support provided by the ILO for social dialogue in the labour market formation programme was highly commendable. The drafting of labour law in Nepal was the result of a series of social dialogues facilitated by the ILO. In addition, the training provided to employers by the ILO Turin Centre has helped to increase the capacity of the employers' organization in Nepal.

One of the important issues, apart from social protection and social dialogue, is employment generation for both men and women, which is dealt with in the Report of the Director-General.

The special interest shown by the ILO in employment crisis management through the Employment Generation Programme is really significant. The prospect of employment generation needs to be given high priority. Employment generation and industrial growth are interdependent. Therefore, they must be dealt with as one. The ILO's involvement in providing access to productive employment and decent work and income opportunities in countries like Nepal will be effective.

The employers of Nepal are also concerned with the issue of developing more enterprises and creating more jobs with the objective of reducing poverty and promoting economic growth. The economic and social impact of labour standards needs special focus in a developing country like Nepal. Some of the new issues that are being taken up by the ILO, like the extension of social security to the informal economy, need a pragmatic solution.

I would not like to repeat in detail the developments we have made, as our Government delegates will shed light on those aspects.

At present, our primary concern is to sustain existing employment and to create an environment that is conducive to establishing industrial peace and employment generation for the sustainable social, economic development of the country. The employers' organization of Nepal is working closely with the Government in the process of creating employment opportunities for both men and women in the country through self-employment forums.

In the existing scenario of the country, establishing industrial harmony is one of the major concerns. However, we have been making efforts for the promotion of industrial harmony and have placed emphasis on promoting social dialogue at all levels.

Focusing on the overall labour market situation, we have been working for legislative reforms with the support of the ILO. At the same time, we would like to promote ILO standards and fundamental principles and rights at work for the improvement of the working conditions of workers and to achieve industrial growth, as well as to attract foreign direct investment in Nepal.

I believe that it is very important for the Conference to come up with legislation to address the issues discussed, debated and expressed by the delegates. Many of our concerns may be different with respect to our own country's specific situations, but there are some common issues that we all are facing. We need to find to a common consensus and voice for addressing these issues. I would like to request that the ILO come up with more specific forums required and suitable for addressing the issues and concerns being faced by employers, especially in countries like Nepal.

Mr BENYDIN (*Worker, Mauritius*)

I wish to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his nomination. In fact it is encouraging and very reassuring to note that the focus this year is on building a future with decent work, which is meaningful and aims at eradicating all the ills of the world of work and implanting a new concept full of hope, fairness and equity.

The trade union dream in Mauritius is to consolidate the existing social protection to allow the emergence of a society where poor and vulnerable groups are not left out and marginalized in our society. Our senior citizens, who have toiled for the development of Mauritius, should have more assistance to meet their needs in terms of welfare and health as well as financial assistance.

With the world economic turmoil, there is at present an ever-increasing number of youths who cannot find jobs. It is therefore imperative that a comprehensive unemployment scheme in terms of an adequate allowance should be provided to them while they are searching for jobs.

In Mauritius, the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act of 2008 are having adverse repercussions on workers' and trade union rights. The right to strike with the former Industrial Relations Act was very difficult, but has become more complicated now. With the former Industrial Relations Act, it was compulsory for an employer who lay off workers to give three months' notice – this has been reduced to one months' notice with the current labour law.

In the field of labour dispute and dispute settlement procedures, we feel that the powers of the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation Division are too limited. For instance, following a complaint from a Mauritius Broadcasting Cooperation trade union, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment called for an in-depth study on the status of industrial relations. The Commission for Conciliation and Mediation carried out its study for more than two months. Unfortunately, for unknown reasons, the outcome has not been released. This has been damaging to the former president of the union there.

Furthermore, the Public Gathering Act undermines trade union rights and action. Even spontaneous peaceful demonstrations cannot be organized when workers' rights are undermined and enterprises closed down without notice. Three years ago, the Freedom of Association Committee of the ILO, in its report, recommended that the Government of Mauritius should amend the Public Gathering Act to allow workers to demonstrate peacefully, but unfortunately nothing has been done up to now.

In Mauritius in the private sector, the export processing zone sector, the textile sector and even in semi-government organizations, the sudden closing down of an organization can happen at any time. So it goes without saying that the support and immediate action of trade unions and their leaders are needed. But it is alarming to note that trade unionists are being constantly prosecuted. Note that in recent years, although peaceful marches have been organized, unionists have been found guilty under the Public Gathering Act. The Public Gathering Act forbids the holding of all protests where more than 11 persons participate. The two labour laws also need immediate review to better protect workers from losing their jobs and other forms of discrimination.

The Decent Work Country Programme has not yet been signed by the tripartite constituents and, at this point, we urge that it be signed without further delay.

Original Spanish: Mr PARRA (Employer, Cuba)

This session of the Conference is taking place at a particularly complex time since the impact of the

crisis is felt in all countries to a greater or lesser extent but it cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon.

As the Director-General has pointed out, since the financial crisis in 2008 there are 30 million more unemployed plus a 40 million increase in those who have stopped looking for work. It is therefore essential that we rethink policies because the crisis shows us that we need a change of direction.

It was at the 99th Session of the Conference that the Director-General himself declared that there would be no sustainable recovery without jobs recovery as a precondition for strong, sustainable and balanced growth.

Today, we see that this is a reality. We see that a drop in demand and an increase in unemployment are in direct proportion to each other and we need to break this vicious circle through programmes that take account of the need to support sustainable business development as a way of generating productive employment.

It was very relevant to place youth employment on the agenda for this session of the Conference. The report submitted to the Conference outlines the fact that, generally speaking, youth unemployment levels are three times higher than those of adults, without even counting the millions of young people who have stopped looking for work or have part-time employment. It is not going to be possible to find a way out of the crisis without addressing youth employment as a basis for sustainable development in the future.

We also feel that the debate on creating a social protection floor is very useful and this is a way of combating the effects of the crisis, in conjunction with social justice and a fair globalization, by adopting and extending sustainable social protection measures in line with national circumstances.

It is also important to highlight the situation of underdeveloped countries, which is much more complex. The degree of interdependency between national economies makes these countries more vulnerable to phenomena happening anywhere on the planet. This justifies the need to maintain and extend ILO cooperation with other agencies in the multilateral system of the United Nations.

There are a number of actions that should be adopted but, at all events, tripartite social dialogue is a vital tool and a key condition for a sound, long-term solution to the crisis at a national, regional and global level.

Discussions of the fundamental principles and rights at work laid down in the 1998 Declaration have been very useful. We agree that achieving these principles and rights at work is an end in itself and also a way of achieving the ILO's objectives, pointing the way towards a solution to the current crisis.

We agree that the reports submitted by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations can be a very useful instrument for helping authorities to make a commitment and engage in constructive dialogue, provided that there is clarity regarding the role of all the parties here.

Accordingly, we would like to declare our support for the Employers' position in the debates being held in the Committee on the Application of Standards. These discussions will certainly contribute to the review of, and improvements to, the working

methods of this important committee which are needed.

The experience of my country, which has scarce natural resources, has been subjected to a blockade spanning more than five decades and has suffered the effects of climate change, shows that the crisis can be tackled while still honouring social and labour guarantees and promoting broad social dialogue, allowing all the social partners to identify, propose and implement actions which help to mitigate the effects of the crisis.

We, the Employers, are aware of the weight of responsibility that falls on our shoulders as regards creating productive employment. We will participate actively in the search for alternative solutions, while reaffirming our commitment to creating and developing a social protection floor, and giving priority to youth employment.

Original French: Ms AWASSI ATSIMADJA (Employer, Gabon)

My own track record as employer bears witness to the major role that the ILO is playing in the collective and individual lives of constituents. Since 2002, I have been representing the International Labour Conference for the Gabonese Employers' Confederation (CPG), the most representative organization in Gabon. My role within the CPG, the Gabonese National Confederation of Employers' Associations (CNPGE) and the Council of Gabonese Employers (CGP) is that of Employer delegate from Gabon, and I have done this for the last ten years, during six of which I have been serving the ILO as a deputy member of the Governing Body. This has been an inspiring task and also an invaluable learning experience throughout my life.

Thanks to the priceless experiences I have willingly garnered, I now assume the role of focal point for the Decent Work Country Programme for Gabon. I would like to thank the ILO and the Republic of Gabon for this very active cooperation that is represented by the Decent Work Country Programme 2012–15 for fair and sustainable development.

I would also like to thank the International Institute of Labour Studies and the Turin Centre as well as the IOE and Business Africa.

I would like to congratulate the Director-General-elect, Mr Guy Ryder. In the Gabonese culture, we would hold out our hands and embrace him saying, "Samba"!

My thanks also go to the Governing Body of the ILO and to the Office for the quality of our agenda. For this session, each item of the agenda is very topical and seeks solutions to social justice and decent work for all in the face of serious crises that persist in our global village: employment in general and youth employment in particular; child labour and especially those forced to do the worst forms of child labour; a minimum social protection floor to address the precariousness of social security systems; international labour norms.

Our report notes advances in the strategic management of human resources and in development, which implies appropriate training courses and most importantly, staff ownership of their own careers. Of course all of this takes place through sharing the vision of the enterprise and devotion to its fulfilment. Satisfying the legitimate professional aspirations of human resources will depend on fulfilling the objectives of all involved (private, state, parastate, or international). Saying that human re-

sources are at the heart of any enterprise, is not just a slogan but a reality.

We would like to congratulate the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for the outstanding achievements of the ILO in the area of equality between men and women. He has very rightly said that he is extremely proud of what he has done, and I quote: "I am particularly proud of the results which we have obtained in the ILO in the field of equality between men and women. Parity has become a reality for ILO professional staff and the glass ceiling is no more than a mere memory for women in high positions. In fact, the proportion of women at the Director level increased from 18 to 44 per cent between 1999 and 2011."

Our report focuses on four strategic objectives that are mutually inclusive and the implementation of these should unfailingly be in line with the coherence of diverse policies. The report lists the 19 outcomes, and let me remind you that they should be dealt with while taking into account an approach based on gender equality.

The figures in Outcome 16 on child labour, in paragraphs 326 and 338 of our report, are telling: 215 million children are forced to work and more than half of those, do dangerous types of work.

With 2016 approaching, we are placing a lot of hope in the roadmap drawn up in the 2010 Global Child Labour Conference to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and we urge the ILO to continue its work together with IPEC, which is at the centre of this effort. We also note the importance of international labour norms in this struggle.

In the context of Outcome 9, the employers' organizations of Africa, which are strongly independent and representative, also understand each other by greater skill-sharing for the visibility and readability of women's representativity, as for example, in the future Governing Bodies of the ILO, and they should ensure greater integration of micro- and small and medium-sized enterprises.

I would like to conclude on a personal note to our Director-General, Juan Somavia. Excellency, in the language of Gabon I say, "levelewe" – thank you very much. Thank you for your love and interest that you have shown to Africa, and I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Mr TODOROV (Employer, Bulgaria)

On behalf of the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers, I would like to express our satisfaction with the work of ILC focusing on the topic of youth participation in the labour market because the high level of youth unemployment is one of the most serious consequences of the economic crisis.

The set of measures to reduce youth unemployment prepared by the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers was proposed for discussion with the Government and the social partners. Within the package of measures the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers points out the need to improve the quality of education. Education systems must provide an efficient education guaranteeing lifelong perspectives, stimulating individual potential and creativity and in the meantime avoiding disparities with the labour market. Indeed, in the education of young people and their training to join the market, special emphasis must be placed on extensive entrepreneurship training which will allow young people to acquire entre-

preneurship skills and employ their self-confidence at the earliest possible stage of their professional development.

Improving the business conditions and the economic environment in Bulgaria is an important prerequisite for increasing the level of youth employment. According to Bulgarian businesses, preserving the 10 per cent corporate income tax rates, reducing the number of regulatory regimes, reducing administrative fees, effectively battling corruption, and simplifying application procedures for EU operational programmes, are of utmost importance for achieving this goal.

As representatives of Bulgarian employers we are obliged to note that the changes introduced in the Bulgarian labour legislation in 2012 have placed serious hurdles before the tripartite dialogue. The amendments to the Labour Code adopted by the National Assembly stipulated criteria for representativeness of employers' organizations which restrict the representative functions of employers' associations engaged in activities assigned to them by a legislative act.

These criteria do not comply with the established world standards of representation of employers' organizations. The introduced amendments to the Bulgarian Labour Code come into direct conflict with international standards – the second paragraph of the Preamble to the ILO Constitution, paragraph I(b) of the Declaration concerning the Aims and Purposes of the International Labour Organisation, paragraph 2(a) of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, and Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 87. As a result of these changes a big part of Bulgaria's small and medium-sized enterprises might be left without appropriate representation and protection of their interests within the social dialogue.

Depending on the decision within the appealing procedure already undertaken before the Bulgarian Constitutional Court, we will take all necessary steps to protect the implementation of the internationally recognized principles for social partners' recognition and representativeness.

We believe that these adverse consequences should not be tolerated and the competent bodies of the Conference will react against attempts to restrict the representatives and participation of Bulgarian employers, when and if the issue is brought to their attention.

Original Arabic: ALMAHFOODH (Worker, Bahrain)

It is a pleasure on behalf of the workers of Bahrain to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the trade unionist, Guy Ryder. He hails from the working classes and is one of the symbols of the trade union movement. I congratulate him on the trust the Organization has placed in him by electing him as the new Director-General of the ILO. We thank him for the support he has given Bahraini workers and wish him a future filled with success in promoting the international labour standards, trade union rights and freedom of association. I also thank the outgoing Director-General of the ILO, Mr Somavia, who has left his mark on each country and each region he has visited on behalf of the ILO. He has dedicated himself wholeheartedly to promoting the causes this Organization defends: social justice, human dignity, equality and freedom – principles Mr Somavia brought together in an intelligent and

global framework represented by “decent work”, a notion born from an idea of his.

At this time last year, the situation of my country was completely different. Thousands of workers were unemployed owing to wrongful dismissals on grounds linked to freedom of opinion and expression. Thanks to the support of this Organization, our Federation, the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions, has succeeded, in cooperation with the other tripartite partners, in overcoming the obstacles and implementing the Recommendations of the Organization and the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry concerning the reinstatement of the dismissed workers. The General Federation pressed for the dismissed workers to be returned to their jobs without their rights or their posts being affected in any way. All of this was to happen in application of the international standards on equality and non-discrimination and the tripartite agreement signed under the auspices of the ILO. We reject any reinstatements that would undermine human dignity or marginalize the workers and deprive them of the opportunities their colleagues enjoy on the grounds of their beliefs, opinions and political affiliations.

Our Federation alerts the Conference to the slow pace of the process of reinstating the dismissed workers; it is as if there were a desire to draw out the crisis and prevent the case from being concluded, owing to vested interests. Our Federation is sending a clear message to all the parties that they should give up any hope that the Federation will abandon the fight and the rights of the dismissed workers. Our Federation is determined to fight resolutely against any arbitrary discrimination and will not give up defending the victims. We thank the Ministry of Labour for its efforts in this regard.

Furthermore, we will not forsake our principles on the promotion of civil liberties, particularly freedom of association. We affirm that the trade union movement cannot be isolated from the other economic, social and political aspects; it should be part of every facet of life. Any attempts to disseminate false notions to make people think that the trade union movement is interested in public affairs and demands the right to freedom of expression and social justice for political reasons goes against the genuine role of trade union and civil society.

We have always supported peace and reforms and have always believed in dialogue as the only way to resolve all the aspects of the political, economic and social crisis. We believe that all peoples have the right to demand reforms and we reject any attacks on goods and freedoms on the grounds of political activity or position. Dialogue has facilitated the resolution of some aspects in the arbitrary dismissals case and we can adopt it to resolve the remaining aspects of the crisis. Today we must also turn our attention to trade union freedoms, which are equally important. Decree No. 35 of 2011 makes changes that aim to divide the trade union movement along different lines, particularly by faith, in calling for plurality, which we consider to be blatant interference in union matters. The imposed plurality can only divide the workforce in a country where there are not more than 700,000 workers. Other changes give the Minister of Labour sole authority to appoint Worker representatives to international forums and collective bargaining and prevent unionists from standing as candidates if they are deemed to have caused their trade unions or their executive

committees to have closed down. We reject all these changes, which we consider to contravene international labour standards and trade union rights and freedoms. Some employers encourage the establishment of trade unions that they monitor with a view to fighting the existing unions, which we consider to be a serious step backwards as regards union rights and freedoms.

Our Federation will oppose these violations, armed with its will, the unity of its workers and its faith in social partnership and social dialogue, and with the support of the Organization to achieve our aim, which is a union movement that is free, independent, democratic and united.

Mr KONKOLEWSKY (*Representative, International Social Security Association*)

On behalf of Mr Errol Frank Stoové, President of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), it is my great pleasure to convey to all delegates to the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference the greetings of the ISSA.

This session of the Conference comes at a historic turning point for social security. The world is more than ever keenly aware of the potential of social security for combating poverty and contributing to economic growth and social cohesion. At the same time, investment in social security is questioned where government budgets face considerable pressures.

At this historic moment the ISSA and the 335 government departments and social security administrations that make up its membership highly value having the ILO at their side – a strong partner committed to giving the promotion and extension of social security the highest priority.

As you may recall, the ISSA provided its full support to the ILO strategy on the extension of social protection in the discussions at the Conference last year. These discussions came to the paramount conclusion to emphasize the need for a Recommendation on the social protection floor.

I should like to congratulate the ILO on its decisive action to implement this conclusion. Consequently, we are able to witness a unique opportunity for social security development: the consideration at this year's session of the adoption of an international labour Recommendation on the social protection floor.

The ISSA strongly supports the adoption of this Recommendation as an indispensable instrument in promoting social security extension and guiding national actors in achieving progress towards social security for all. We are ready to work hand-in-hand with the ILO to ensure the much needed impact of this Recommendation.

Positively, we are in possession of a powerful new instrument allowing us to fully exploit the high potential of close collaboration between the ILO and the ISSA. I am particularly pleased to report to you that on 22 March this year, the ISSA and the ILO signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the scope and modalities of cooperation as regards social security.

A direct response to the request of the 100th Session of the Conference that the ILO strengthen its cooperation with the ISSA, this Memorandum constitutes a milestone in the close relations between the ISSA and the ILO that go back to the creation of the ISSA under the auspices of the ILO, 85 years ago.

This MOU is important for both the ILO and the ISSA as it builds on the specific competences of each organization and identifies the complementarities that will enable us to better pursue our shared objectives.

This MOU is also important for the distinguished delegates gathered here at the 101st Session of the Conference, as it allows both the ISSA and the ILO to provide their respective constituents with a broader range of quality services concerning both policy and administrative aspects of social security.

Finally, and most significantly, this MOU is crucial as it will lead to more effective extension initiatives that are keenly needed in a world where billions of people are still without adequate social security protection.

I should like to conclude by thanking the outgoing ILO Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for the positive relations between the ISSA and the ILO during his tenure, and in particular, for his unwavering commitment to social protection as an indispensable component of decent work and a crucial means of making this world a better place for workers and their families.

At the same time, we are looking forward to working with the newly elected Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, to implement the Memorandum between the ILO and the ISSA with a view to strengthening social protection in the spirit of the new Recommendation and existing ILO instruments.

Mr WALDORFF (*Representative, Public Services International*)

Let me start by thanking the outgoing Director-General, Juan Somavia, for his strong and visionary leadership. Let me also congratulate the ILO for electing Guy Ryder as the next Director-General of the ILO. We are looking forward to working with the ILO's new leadership in the interest of the millions of women and men serving their communities with quality public services.

In selecting your new Director-General from the Workers' group, you are sending a strong signal of putting competence before tactics, of inclusion instead of exclusion. I am convinced that this demonstration of confidence will resound around the world.

We need to build confidence and trust in order to successfully get out of the current economic crisis.

In Public Services International (PSI), we are deeply concerned about the lack of progress when it comes to the employment situation of young people. We need to take the worsening developments much more seriously, and governments must take responsibility for the damaging policies that are further exacerbating the unemployment situation for young people.

Demands that older people should remain working more years before retirement is poisonous for the employment situation of the youth; it would be a caricature if we saw more and more elderly persons working until past 70 – leaving “young” people unable to fulfil their professional capacity until they are 35 years or older.

You cannot neglect that there is a contradiction between asking seniors to work longer, at the same time as the line of young unemployed continues to grow. It is just like having an apple tree in your orchard with hundreds of flowers that could become hundreds of apples. The clever fruit grower knows that if you do not cultivate well you will have a very

poor harvest. What a failure of historic dimensions it will if we do not develop and maintain the skills of the youth and give them the opportunity to grow.

But we do also see positive commitments for progressive change through the ILO. In PSI, we are particularly excited about the work on the social protection floor. We see many opportunities to use the social protection floor as a strong mechanism to bring people out of poverty. But a truly universal social protection floor does not limit itself to income protection and to health care; nor can it be successful if governments hand over responsibility to the private sector. The social protection floor must be the vehicle to bring clean water, education and health through quality public services to the millions who are suffering under conditions that are far from decent.

Unfortunately, the trade union rights situation for public sector workers are under growing attack. More than before, we see how employers, including the governments in their capacity as employers, disregard and disrespect trade union rights. The right to organize or even strike is questioned and often displayed as irrelevant – and therefore I have a strong message for governments and employers. You must understand your responsibilities. If you continue to downgrade trade union rights, you are responsible for scaling up violence against trade union leaders. The death threats, killings, rapes, and disappearances of trade union leaders will only continue to grow in number as you continue to question if trade union rights should exist. When the European Commission seeks to limit the right to strike, the EU calls into question its own role as a guardian of social inclusion.

We hope soon to see Japan grant the right to organize and to collective bargaining to the firefighters and prison services.

Our Members and countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Algeria, Botswana, Swaziland and Fiji are suffering from repression and live in fear. They are fighting for a decent life in democratic societies and they should be supported by the entire tripartite ILO.

When the public sector workers in Wisconsin and other states in the United States are stripped from their bargaining rights, the balance of the democracy scale is tilting the wrong way.

Is that what the twenty-first century is about? Stripping people of their democratic rights and concentrating the economic and political power on the few? I am asking you – and maybe it is, and this is why you see people react so strongly around the world because we are indignant; because the financial sector continues to rule the world with its immoral behaviour; and because governments are more enthusiastic in working for the few and not for the majority.

This is why we, as trade unionists, are on our feet, building up our strength and forming coalitions with other civil society groups who are determined to fight for inclusive democracies. We were born to work in the people's interest and we will continue to fight in the people's interest. We will not give up our fundamental human and trade union rights; instead of attacking our rights, I ask governments and employers to work together with workers so that we can decide a way forward.

Mr RYALL (*Worker, New Zealand*)

New Zealand was a founding Member of the ILO in 1919 and has historically taken its obligations as a Member seriously.

The New Zealand courts regularly refer to the core Conventions on fundamental principles and rights at work in relation to issues arising in collective bargaining and freedom of association cases. However, sometimes New Zealand governments have seen fit to ignore their ILO obligations to curry favour with a small section of the New Zealand population and overseas investors benefiting from weak employment legislation and low wage rates.

In 1991 the New Zealand Government destroyed nearly 100 years of support for collective bargaining with the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act and its emphasis on contractual law and individual contracts. The ILO agreed at the time that this move was in breach of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 and called for some major changes to this legislation.

It was not until 2000 that changes were made in New Zealand employment law to comply with these Conventions. But those changes were so weak that collective bargaining is still not available to thousands of New Zealand workers. Despite this weakness, and the fact that no collective agreements exist in the New Zealand film and television industry, the New Zealand Government last year unilaterally legislated to remove coverage of those workers from our employment law in order to attract an American film company to invest in a New Zealand-based film.

The Government also amended our laws to make access of union representatives into workplaces more difficult. Later this year, the New Zealand Government intends to introduce further legislation to: first, remove the obligation of unions and employers to conclude collective agreements. This will allow our employers to simply say they want individual agreements in the workplace and refuse to conclude a collective agreement; second, allow employers to refuse to negotiate multi-employer or industry collective agreements by “opting out” of this process; third, authorize employers to employ all new workers on inferior individual terms even when a union-negotiated collective agreement is in place; and finally, allow employers to unilaterally dock wages from the unionized workforce when a partial strike takes place in any workplace.

These moves will weaken collective bargaining and put barriers in the way of freedom of association. They are in breach of Conventions Nos 87 and 98. The Department of Labour has warned the New Zealand Government about these breaches, but it is determined to continue with this legislation anyway.

The weakening of collective bargaining since the 1980s is a principle cause of New Zealand developing one of the fastest growths of income and wealth inequality in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). From being nearly top of the OECD ranks for income equality in the early 1980s, we have fallen to 23rd out of 30 countries.

During this period there have been large increases in overall incomes for the top 20 per cent of New Zealand income earners, while the average real incomes of the bottom 20 per cent have decreased. The wealthiest 10 per cent now own 50 per cent of

our national wealth and the bottom 50 per cent own a miserable 5 per cent of our wealth.

Even some of the most conservative economic commentators in New Zealand agree that urgent action needs to be taken with respect to growth and economic inequality, and that robbing workers of more rights and relying on wealth trickling down to those at the bottom will not work.

Members of the Service and Food Workers Union are at the sharp end of these policies. Emma's story is typical of the struggle that ordinary New Zealand workers now face. A cleaner on the minimum wage of NZD13.50 an hour, she is supporting four children by herself. Her 16 year old son Peniata is also a member of this union. He works every day after school, also cleaning on the minimum wage to provide the basic necessities for his family. Increasingly New Zealand workers cannot survive on these incomes.

Two weeks ago this union, along with a number of other unions and over 60 civil society groups, launched a campaign for a New Zealand living wage. The living wage is a wage that is sufficient for workers and their families not just as to survive but to have time to participate in their schools, communities and civil society activities.

The Living Wage Campaign is aimed not just at the New Zealand Government, but at public institutions and large and small employers so that they become committed to the living wage principles. Together we want to change the objective of our economic thinking so that the focus of every economic decision is: "Will this deliver and maintain a living wage for all New Zealand workers or will it merely further enrich those New Zealanders who have already earned enough to enjoy 20 or 30 living wages?"

Original Spanish: Mr RONDON (Representative, International Young Christian Workers)

Thank you on behalf of International Young Christian Workers (IYCW) and World Solidarity (WSM) for this opportunity to make a statement in plenary at the current session of the International Labour Conference.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss youth employment at this session of the International Labour Conference. For us it is crucial that such a discussion begin and end with due account being taken of the realities that young people are facing.

One young such person, Jennifer, who is 19 years old and comes from Tamil Nadu in India, says: "I study on weekdays and I work every weekend, I work from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and earn 35 rupees (about US\$0.81) a day". This is below the poverty line as defined by the World Bank. She comments on this as follows: "it is a very low wage, it is not even enough for our daily meal, it is very hard to plan our future in this situation".

We believe that the insecure situation of young working men and women stems primarily from the fact that they are on short-term contracts, flexible contracts, and atypical and informal employment. The ILO constituents are starting to pay attention to this serious problem, but we need to do better, much better; we therefore urge the ILO to carry out more initiatives, including the adoption of standards, in coming years.

Furthermore, we would like to share with you two general observations which are very important in

our assessment of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference.

Firstly, we would like to give some thought to the idea of participation and its place in our discussions. On the one hand, participation is at the heart of this Organization because of its unique tripartite constituency, consisting not only of States, but also of representatives of employers and workers, which gives it a unique legitimacy and leads to richer and deeper forms of policy-making. However, we are surprised by the positions taken in the ongoing discussions with regard to the role of civil society organizations and social movements: both in the discussion of the Social Protection Floor Initiative and in the youth employment discussion, the idea of involving other relevant civil society organizations has met with scepticism and resistance.

Let us be clear: we are not seeking to replace or to change the tripartite model that is the hallmark of the ILO. We do, however, believe that, both nationally and internationally, the involvement of civil society, and more specifically other representative social movements, can be an excellent addition to the already unique constituency of the ILO, especially in areas where these social movements have been active and have built up experience over recent decades.

We believe that genuine collaboration between them and the ILO constituents could be a real win-win situation. We believe that in the case of youth employment, for example, "there should be no decisions about us without us".

Secondly, recent developments in the Committee on the Application of Standards do not give us hope for the future. We are sincerely concerned about the refusal of the Employers' group to recognize the right to strike as the logical corollary of freedom of association and the right to organize. This right has been established by an ample body of jurisprudence.

The tone and ambition in the discussion on youth employment and the Social Protection Floor Initiative give reason for hope. However, the intransigent stance of the Employers in the Committee on the Application of Standards casts a dark shadow on this ambition.

We are living through difficult times, times of crisis, and there are many changes and painful decisions ahead. These decisions may be detrimental to the most vulnerable members of society, including young people, migrants and women workers in informal and precarious jobs. Therefore, we feel that there is a clear intention on the part of the Employers' representatives to limit the few strategies that are still available to those who do not have a voice to claim their fundamental labour rights.

We believe that it is crucial for workers to unite, and to use strike action as a last resort if they feel their rights are being violated. To restrict this international right and full respect of this fundamental collective strategy in the current context seems cynical, given that the burden in this crisis is being placed on the most disadvantaged members of society.

Mr DANTAS (Representative, World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations)

I would like to say good afternoon to every single person in this Assembly House. My name is Romulo Dantas, I am 30 years old, and I am here representing the World YMCA, which is, by the way, celebrating 168 years of existence today.

Let me start with a little story, my personal story. I was born in São Paulo, Brazil, and I grew up in one of the poorest and most violent areas of my city. Most of my friends lacked the same kind of opportunities that I had to overcome the challenges of poverty. My situation led me to have low self-esteem and low self-confidence and, like some of my friends, I could have ended up without a proper education, without decent work, in jail or even killed from involvement in criminal activities. Tragically, most of these stories are the direct result of the lack of opportunities for youth, and employment is one of the most basic things that people are lacking.

I am here today able to speak with you because of the important work of civil society organizations such as the YMCA in my case. I want to illustrate how close my story is to the stories of maybe the majority of the young people worldwide, who do not have the luck that I have to be here speaking with you today. Every single day, in our branches, millions of young people come to share the challenges of their daily lives and many of them speak of lack of hope, lack of employment opportunities, lack of minimal conditions in their workplace, and so on and so forth. This is taking their natural shine away. We cannot just wait for big macro-economic policies and economic growth to solve this situation and to create jobs – there is much more we can do while those big challenges have yet to be solved and they must be.

We are part of the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO), a group of international youth organizations and regional youth platforms comprised of more than 150 million young people worldwide. There are 58 million of us at the YMCA, and in our particular case, we have more than 357,000 young people participating in employment programmes in different areas such as vocational training, entrepreneurship, etc. A good number of these programmes have shown success rates as high as 65 per cent to 85 per cent in terms of employing people. We can double those numbers if we have the right partners. And who are those partners? We believe that you are those partners.

We strive to serve and empower young people and not to interfere with the historic structure of the ILO. We do not want to be the fourth arm of this Organization, but we do want an official and proper space where we can sit together and talk business to scale-up good initiatives on employment in a cost-effective manner. This is urgent – while we are talking here, thousands of young people have returned home today after a long day of looking for work and have not had a proper meal. As you can imagine, most of them were unsuccessful. These are the people who are in need of our attention and cannot afford to wait any longer. My request for you today is to help us to create a space where richer dialogue can take place, where we can bring the voices of young people together with other social partners from civil society to continue building an inspired, invaluable work with all of you, trade unions, governments and employers.

Listening to the voices of youth is key to addressing the issue of youth unemployment, and this is not something for only one International Labour Conference, but a historical problem that we all have to tackle together. Put yourselves in our place and imagine a discussion about decent work anywhere in the world without your participation. Why should

we youth organizations not to have the same chance to express the voices of the young people that we deal with every single day at the grass-roots level?

You have the power to help us in this endeavour by creating space for us to see the inclusion of language in the subsequent documents that articulates a clear mandate for the ILO to strengthen the dialogue with those of us who are passionate about youth, who have great experience, and who, in many cases, have the reach that just a few institutions have.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that we want to do this within the limits and according to the nature of your system. We are respectful and we know the challenges you faced to build this tripartite structure. We want to be your partners in keeping the ILO relevant to the rules of work. We respect who you are.

Original Spanish: Mr SIGLIANO (Representative, Organización de Entidades Mutuales de las Américas)

“If we want to eradicate poverty we must have social protection.”

I thought it was appropriate to begin my intervention by referring to this eloquent and important definition based on the clear vision of Ms Michelle Bachelet. It embodies the revolutionary recommendation made to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the Advisory Group headed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the report entitled *Social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalization*.

This appeal for solidarity made to the world from the highest level not only calls on the members of the United Nations to work for social protection, which will involve developing strongly inclusive social policies, but also – and herein lays the important innovation – it takes account of civil society organizations.

The main result of the report has been, without doubt, concluding that civil society organizations in the same manner as mutual benefit societies, are able to implement, along with member States, the conditions required by their people with regard to social security.

This clear recognition of the importance of the involvement of civil associations in achieving this much longed-for social floor opens up unlimited possibilities for mutual societies, and particularly, for a continental organization such as Organización de Entidades Mutuales de las Américas (ODEMA), whose recognition as having special consultative status with ECOSOC makes it a global reference point for the system; an important position which enables it to play a full part in the work that will lead to a successful outcome in this exciting undertaking.

The United Nations has set itself the target of achieving a floor for social protection on the basis of decent work, social cohesion and inclusion. Given this and the fact that the recommendations and principles listed in the document entitled *Social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalization* propose better practices to achieve this aim, the mutual society movement in the Americas, through ODEMA, believes that it has been called upon, and it is ready and willing to contribute to the implementation of all those principles which are set out as parts of the recommended social protection floor.

Our organization shares the view of the ILO that the social protection floor is a set of social and public policies which are intended to guarantee income

security and access to essential social services for all, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups and protecting and empowering people throughout their lives.

This definition involves, in a literal and conceptual manner, the outlook and the practise of the mutual society system in every sense, making it quite clear that there is no situation affecting us to which we are indifferent. No doubt, that is the same premise behind the establishment of the social protection floor.

The implementation of a joint project between ODEMA and the ILO, to describe and illustrate the ways in which mutual benefit societies and others of a similar kind can comply with the majority of the principles recommended by the United Nations which ODEMA is proposing to the 101st Session of the Conference, is a step towards achieving an effective and efficient society of nations and civil associations with the laudable aim of eradicating poverty and establishing universal social protection.

On behalf of ODEMA I would like to wish you all a successful Conference which will serve to implement the move towards constructing a social protection floor for fair and inclusive globalization.

Finally, I would especially like to thank Mr Somavia for the welcome he has given to the mutual society movement in the Americas, in response to ODEMA's request.

Original French: Mr DUNIA MUTIMANUA LUBULA (Worker, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

On behalf of international workers' solidarity, we are here today to voice our deep indignation with the State of Côte d'Ivoire for its blatant and deliberate violation of freedom of association.

Indeed, you will recollect that the military and political crisis that broke out on 19 September 2002 culminated, in November 2011, with the post-election crisis in this country. With an official death toll of 3,000 dead, this crisis has since provoked the forced exile of thousands of Ivorian citizens and the arrest of politicians from the former regime – as well as those merely suspected of having had dealings with this regime.

Our dear brother Basile Mahan Gahé, Secretary-General of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Côte d'Ivoire, also known as "Dignité", is, unfortunately, one of these persons. Suspected of holding weapons, Secretary-General Basile was abducted from his home on 26 April 2011 at approximately 5.30 p.m., by a gang of heavily armed men wearing military uniform. Despite all the extensive searches in which nothing was found, he was taken to the 34th district police station where he almost died following the explosion of several tear gas bombs which were thrown by unidentified persons into his cell.

He was subsequently detained for over two months at the 11th district police station, in flagrant violation of the legislation of Côte d'Ivoire, which stipulates a custody period of 48 hours – renewable only once with the authorization of the Public Prosecutor or of an examining magistrate.

A contradictory event confirms that there was a premeditated campaign against our brother: on 27 April 2011, the Minister of Justice, Mr Ahoussou Kouadio Jeannot, appeared on television describing the Secretary-General as a common criminal surrounded by armed militia men; but when he met with a delegation from the International Labour Office and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on 2 July 2011, the Minister declared that no charges had been pressed against Mr Mangue and that he would be giving instructions to the Public Prosecutor to dismiss the case.

Contrary to expectations, our brother Basile Mahan Gahé was not released but was transferred, at 4 a.m. during the night of Friday, 8 to Saturday, 9 July, to the civilian jail of Boundali, a town 900 kilometres from Abidjan in the north of the country, after having been accused of the charges pressed against the authorities of the former regime. In order to secure his release, several other actions were taken – but to no avail. At national level, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Côte d'Ivoire asked, unsuccessfully, for a meeting with the Government in order to secure the release of the Secretary-General. It subsequently addressed various national institutions including the Human Rights Commission and the trade union organizations of Côte d'Ivoire, but nothing was done.

At international level, joint missions of the ITUC, the International Labour Office, the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions in Belgium (CSC-ACV) the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) were carried out, and there were also other responses from several other trade union organizations affiliated to the ITUC. Unfortunately all this led to nothing.

The result of all this is that through this kind of behaviour and attitude, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire is dangerously contravening Convention No. 87 of the ILO. It is weakening the trade union movement and trade union action in this country, with negative repercussions on the social welfare on workers in Côte d'Ivoire. We therefore call upon the International Labour Organization, as a matter of urgency, to pursue and support at all levels, any actions that might lead to the immediate unconditional release of brother Basile Mahan Gahé, the Secretary-General of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Côte d'Ivoire.

(The Conference adjourned at 6 p.m.)

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