



Fourth sitting

Wednesday, 12 June 2013, 11.40 a.m.

President: Mr Katamine

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

*Original Arabic: Mr SOUHAIL (Minister of Employment
and Vocational Training, Morocco)*

It is a great pleasure for me to be present at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. On my own behalf and on behalf of the Moroccan delegation accompanying me, I would like to congratulate the President of the Conference on his election, which indeed testifies to the confidence and trust we all have in him. It goes without saying that this is the appropriate forum for discussing issues relating to labour, employment and social protection, which are, as always, at the very heart of our interests and concerns. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the ILO Director-General and all of his team for the efforts they have made to ensure the success of the Conference.

I would like to refer to the Director-General's Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, which is to be commended for its high quality and relevance. The Report is indeed vitally important since it tackles the changes and challenges that the world of work is experiencing today and sheds light on the role to be played by the ILO in the twenty-first century.

In Morocco, 2012 was a year dominated by the democratic reforms launched under the provisions of the new Constitution adopted on 1 July 2011. The reform process focused on enhancing the rule of law and good governance in the country with a view to guaranteeing the dignity, rights, freedom and security of citizens and ensuring the satisfaction of their needs, promoting investment development and creating jobs, which is indisputably the way to ensure a decent standard of living for everyone.

The government employment strategy comprises a number of key areas, namely: encouraging and promoting investment, skilling of human resources, ensuring an appropriate match between training and the needs of the labour market, building bridges between the education system and the world of work, ensuring public provision of employment for all jobseekers, as well as developing and enhancing active programmes to promote employment, and improving and streamlining governance of the labour market. In all of this, we must not overlook the key role played by mechanisms for monitoring and analysing the formulation of public policies in the areas of training and employment.

In addition, the Government is focusing particularly on issues relating to environmental protection, which is now seen as a new vector for innovation and job creation, in particular by drawing up a national charter on the environment and sustainable development.

Turning now to labour relations, we are focusing on constructing a social model based on expanding the rule of law by finalizing the legal framework governing labour relations, improving working conditions and the working environment in order to enhance labour relations within our country and create a culture of dialogue, while striking the right balance between the rights and obligations of all stakeholders in the process.

Having decided to do this, we have to consolidate tools for ongoing dialogue and consultation involving the Government and social and economic partners, on the basis of an approach that reinforces workers' fundamental rights while maintaining enterprise stability as a key factor for development and progress.

Accordingly, the Government has adopted a legislative package providing for the adoption of a series of laws. These include a bill relating to conditions of work and employment for domestic workers. Another bill governs relations between employers and workers, as well as conditions of work in sectors that are basically traditional in nature. In addition, there is a framework bill concerning the exercise of the right to strike, a bill on occupational trade unions and another concerning occupational safety and health.

Furthermore, Morocco has seen significant progress in terms of promoting and upholding social dialogue. This positive dynamic has resulted in a contractual framework for mediation between the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) and the most representative trade unions, aimed at promoting consensus-based solutions to problems that exist within employment and labour.

All of this has been reflected in the adoption of a social covenant between the CGEM and the most representative unions designed to strengthen bilateral dialogue and promote collective bargaining, prevent collective disputes, safeguard workers' fundamental rights and enhance the competitiveness of enterprises.

When it comes to social protection, it should be noted that we are seeking to extend the social protection system and ensure universal social coverage in order to include people who at present have no social protection. We are also seeking to reform

schemes relating to pensions, mutual insurance and occupational accidents as part of an integrated national social protection strategy.

In 2012 and thus far in 2013, the Kingdom of Morocco has ratified the following Conventions: the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006); Conventions Nos 102, 131, 141, 144, 151, 164, 165 and 166; and the 1986 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution. The ratification procedure is also under way for: the Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132); the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97); the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176); and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187). In addition, the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), has been submitted to the relevant authorities.

With the support of a number of friendly countries, the relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the ILO have made significant progress in many labour-related areas. Achievements have been made in the areas of combating child labour, ensuring respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, and promoting youth employment.

Accordingly, and with a view to enhancing the capacity of our labour inspectorate to enforce labour legislation, training programmes on fundamental rights at work have been organized, in cooperation with the ILO, for 500 inspectors throughout the country. Morocco wishes to further extend such cooperation to other priority areas such as occupational safety and health and social protection.

I cannot conclude my statement without drawing attention to the very difficult situation in the Middle East, particularly the living conditions of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. In view of this situation, I appeal to the international community, through the ILO, to give the aid and support that the Palestinian people need to ease their suffering.

Original Portuguese: Ms TAIPO (Minister of Labour, Mozambique)

On behalf of the Government of Mozambique, I would like to convey my greetings to the President and the Officers and congratulate them on their election to steer the work of this session.

I would also like to extend warm greetings to the Director-General of the ILO for his efforts to reinforce and promote decent work in Mozambique and express our appreciation for the ILO's participation, in Maputo in April of this year, at the 12th meeting of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), of which Mozambique holds the presidency. Some important decisions were taken at this meeting, namely a resolution and a declaration in support of the third Global Child Labour Conference, which will take place in October of this year in Brazil.

I would also like to mention that the ministers and social partners of the Employment and Labour Sector of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which met in Maputo in May this year under the presidency of Mozambique, took some important decisions, notably the adoption of a protocol on employment, which aims to harmonize the practices in the countries of the region in the sphere of labour.

We have read carefully the Report of the Director-General, which focuses on what is expected of the ILO and member States by the time of the centenary of the Organization in 2019. Paragraph 42 of the Report points out that the world is not on a linear path to ending poverty, and there are still millions of people living in conditions of extreme poverty.

The Declaration of Philadelphia states that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere". This is why we agree with the view expressed in the document upholding the concept of decent work as a keystone of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

As the Director-General says in paragraph 79, the mandate of the ILO is not in itself a guarantee of the relevance, success and future of the Organization. We, however, are optimists. We do believe in the ILO, in its future, and in its victory. One of the approaches that the ILO should adopt is to become ever closer to the tripartite constituents and to make its presence felt where the needs are the greatest, where workers need greater protection and where enterprises need greater assistance. So, increasing the presence of the ILO on the ground could help strengthen the outreach of the Organization. This is why we support without any reservations the Programme and Budget for 2014–15, an instrument that is going to allow for further improvements in the performance of the Organization.

We note with interest the reference made to the process of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution. The ILO and its constituents should move forward with courage and determination in correcting the problem that we inherited from our predecessors. The ILO cannot be proud of maintaining a structure that is not representative and sets 54 countries apart. We do believe that the Director-General will take objective initiatives to ensure that the ILO will celebrate its centenary practicing true social justice, in particular in its structures.

The Government of Mozambique last week approved regulations on professional traineeships, which are aimed at improving the employability of young people, women and persons with a disability by integrating them in productive units with the objective of allowing them to acquire work experience.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining are priorities of the Government in its quest for social and labour peace and the results of these have proved to be a determining and positive factor for sustainable economic and social growth.

I would like to conclude by expressing my satisfaction at being able to speak at this assembly today, on 12 June, which is the World Day Against Child Labour, this year under the theme "No to child labour in domestic work". My country has not only ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); it has also approved regulations on domestic work that provide measures to protect children in domestic work.

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

Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Angola and the delegation that is accompanying me, and on my own behalf, to greet the President of the 102nd Session of this Conference and to congratulate

late Mr Guy Ryder on his election to the position of Director-General of the International Labour Office.

Our presence here bears witness, once again, to the importance that my country attaches to, and the interest that it has in, this Organization – which is part of the United Nations system – for its role in striving for harmony in labour relations and social progress, which are so necessary nowadays in view of the difficult economic and social context in many countries and regions of the world.

We continue to live in times of uncertainty, but also of faith, and in times where there are signs for concern, but also signs of hope; times in which we are all called upon to adopt, with responsibility and creativity, solutions that involve new approaches, with greater confidence, greater pragmatism, more solidarity and greater realism.

The dilemma today is not just a question of “to be or not to be”; our destiny today depends on continuing to be, in order not to cease from being. This is why the Government of Angola shares the views and the proposed solutions set out in the Report that has been submitted to this Conference by the Director-General, which is entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*.

In this regard, the priorities for action of the Government of Angola and its economic and social partners involve: a firm commitment to the education and training of human capital; improving the legal, technical and legislative environment to encourage national and foreign investment and boost economic activity, with a view to creating and increasing jobs and achieving better distribution of national income; intensifying social dialogue; and enhancing the civic, social and political participation of all citizens at the community and national levels.

We are now applying a strategy and a plan at the national level for training middle and senior management in order to be able to meet the main development objectives and goals in the medium and long term. We are also in the process of reviewing the General Labour Law with a view to making it an instrument that will contribute to creating jobs, increasing production and productivity, and building the capacity of workers on an ongoing basis.

Young people and those living on the outskirts of cities and in rural areas are the main target groups of various programmes and projects that are being implemented, which cover economic, educational, financial and social aspects.

Furthermore, we – the Government and the social partners – are committed to: improving and extending in a sustainable way the social welfare system; enhancing occupational health and safety measures; and strengthening the role of the organs and departments of the general labour inspectorate.

The multifaceted realities around the pressing need to boost the economy, improve corporate social responsibility and management, continuously promote job creation and guarantee vocational training in a competent and extended way, are permanent objectives in our efforts to carry out social dialogue and consultation.

We are confident that the deliberations and resolutions of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference will represent an important contribution to the efforts of all people and stakeholders in the world of labour towards achieving greater economic growth and social progress which, of

course, are objectives that our countries and our people aspire to in the context of the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

We must all be able to act responsibly, in dialogue and in partnership with each other, so that children, young people, men and women will be able to benefit from what we are building up today for a different and better tomorrow.

Original Farsi: Mr OTAREDIAN (Employer, Islamic Republic of Iran)

First, I would like to thank the Director-General for his concise and comprehensive Report.

According to that Report, at current participation rates, 44.5 million workers per year will enter the labour market in the next five years – a total of more than 222 million people seeking new and decent jobs. This is while the recent Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development focused world attention on building the future we want.

I wish to seize upon this occasion to sound the alarm about our policy direction as a human family.

Chaos exists in the global economy and financial markets; arms are easy to obtain but suitable jobs are hard to find; high levels of unemployment prevail; and education systems are pressured to adapt to new and emerging needs, while there are many threats to the health and well-being of our people. Additionally, the West's debt crisis reduced global demand, and industries started to suffer as a result. Their outputs in several countries are still falling, with weak overseas demands, and many export-oriented manufacturers are beginning to shrink further.

In the absence of decent work, young people subsist on the margins of the economy and are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, which breeds political instability.

The current alarming situation points to the pressing need to ensure effective “school-industry” partnerships and “school-to-work” transitions.

To this end, businesses and governments need: first, to pursue job-led growth by creating more and better and greener jobs for young people; second, to provide for equal social and economic opportunities for young women and men, and promote an enabling environment for entrepreneurship; and third, to provide youth-friendly information and services to promote healthier lifestyle choices for youth and reduce harmful risk-taking behaviour.

Across the world, youth from all walks of life are leading social movements and challenging the status quo. They are calling for political leadership that delivers greater accountability, opportunities and social justice. They are telling businesses and industry to promote more transparent, accountable and just business practices, and they are demanding that their voices be heard and that their role be recognized, not only as just a target group for which employment must be found or as tomorrow's leaders, but also as today's development partners.

I totally agree with the Director-General pointing out in his Report the fact that human capital is eroded by the effects of long-term unemployment, of the young in particular.

A key challenge facing not only my country, but countries the world over, is the young generation and the question of youth employment. We can provide young people with the opportunities to participate meaningfully in the developments that

shape their lives in the world. We can build institutions, such as youth parliaments, and other mechanisms to support young people's leadership and their participation in national decision-making.

Just to sum up: if the ILO is to remain faithful to its objectives of social justice, it must give top priority to the situation of those who are most disadvantaged, of youth in particular, in the world of work.

Original Arabic: Mr HUMAIDAN (Minister of Labour, Bahrain, speaking on behalf of the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council)

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to take the floor here, today, on behalf of the Ministers of Labour of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

I would like to begin by extending our congratulations to Professor Katamine, Minister of Labour of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on his election as President of this session of the Conference. I would like to wish every success to the Vice-Presidents, and the heads of their different groups and committees in their work.

The GCC expresses its appreciation of the efforts made by the Director-General of the ILO since he took office. These efforts are aimed at reforming the work and structure of this Organization to help it keep up with developments in the world of work.

The Report by the Director-General comes at a time when we are facing different challenges and changes, and are also preparing to mark the 100th anniversary of this Organization. Several centennial initiatives have been proposed, including seven key initiatives focusing on good governance, tripartite consensus, the green economy, enterprises, eliminating poverty, women at work and the future of work. These are important initiatives that are key to supporting the humanitarian and social roles of this Organization.

The GCC shall support the ILO in implementing these various initiatives for the ongoing modernization of policies and measures aimed at achieving the objectives of this Organization.

We would like to stress the importance of tackling our difficulties through continuous cooperation between the tripartite constituents in each and every State. We need to build trust and achieve positive cooperation among these partners because we believe that tripartism stands for rapprochement, not conflict, in achieving stability and welfare for us all, taking into account the economic and social development of each country.

The Member States of the GCC are making every effort to ensure an adequate working environment for creating job opportunities and achieving decent work in line with international standards, whether it concerns migrant workers or the national workforce.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates has created a number of labour policies and laws to ensure that workers will be able to move smoothly from one enterprise to another. The Government has also set up private employment agencies.

In Bahrain, for example, the Government has taken a number of steps in various work-related fields. It has enacted a new labour code which provides more protection to workers and which includes a flagship initiative that covers domestic workers. Hence, it has been able to control unemployment and keep it under 4 per cent. The projects and initiatives launched in Bahrain have enabled the

labour market to achieve stability and growth in a healthy and productive way.

In Saudi Arabia, further job opportunities were provided to citizens with the launch of the nationalization programme (Nitaqat). To date, over 615,000 citizens have found jobs, including 180,000 women who have found work for the first time in their lives. This has led to a notable decrease in unemployment among nationals.

In Oman, the Labour Law was amended to improve working conditions and employment. These amendments provide more protection to the workforce and to enterprises. Oman continues to implement its Decent Work Country Programme in cooperation with the ILO. It has taken a decision to increase the minimum wage and has adopted and implemented a number of other initiatives and projects.

Qatar has been eager to protect the rights of temporary migrant workers. More than 31 bilateral agreements have been signed with the workers' countries of origin. These agreements govern everything relating to employing migrant workers, drawing up and terminating contracts and the return of migrant workers to their country of origin.

In the same vein, Kuwait continues to develop its various policies and laws to provide job opportunities in a manner that is just and fair to workers. A law for the creation of a public workforce authority was enacted. This authority is responsible for bringing in expatriate personnel. Other laws have been enacted to combat human trafficking and illegal migration. A law on unemployment benefits was also enacted.

In Yemen, numerous amendments were made to laws on social policy, the rights of workers and social protection, which include drafting a new labour code that has just been submitted to Parliament, and will replace the present Code. Many other laws were also adopted in insurance and pensions, the rights of the child and other positive initiatives.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the Director-General for his Report on the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and in the occupied Arab territories. I would also like to thank Kuwait for providing US\$2.5 million as a voluntary contribution to the decent work programme in the occupied Palestinian Territories, stressing the need for renewed technical cooperation to support workers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories.

Mr PHANG (Minister of Employment and Labour, Republic of Korea)

It is my sincere pleasure to have this opportunity to speak with you today at the International Labour Conference. Indeed, it is clear that a decent job is a critical element of individual well-being and happiness, and, on a broader level, a precondition for sustainable growth across an economy. This is especially true, given the realities and new dynamics presented at this time of jobless growth and employment insecurity. In this context, the Park Geun-hye administration of the Republic of Korea has placed its specific focus on improving the employment rate, not the economic growth rate, as the Government's guiding indicator. The Government plans to increase the employment rate of the Republic of Korea to 70 per cent, while, at the same time, maintaining and improving the quality of employment.

As is relatively well known, the Korean labour market is, very generally, characterized by a high percentage of male workers, who serve as their family's only breadwinner. The intense work arrangements and short working life of Korean males has admittedly had an impact on their quality of life. At the same time, many female workers experience disruptions in their careers due to such important responsibilities as childbirth and childcare. Within this context, they find it difficult to achieve an adequate balance between work and family. Furthermore, many workers are forced to retire in their early 50s. At this stage in their life, it can be hard for people in this age bracket to find employment suitable for their experience and skills. In summary, the Korean Government faces challenges related to: the limited employment capacity within the economy; a lack of diversity and types of employment; a predominance of full-time jobs; long working hours and a relatively short working life. Faced with these challenges, the Korean Government will initiate labour market reform to significantly improve the employment environment and atmosphere at both the quantitative and qualitative levels.

First, in order to increase job opportunities for workers, new jobs will be created through active investment in the creative economy, as well as in new business ventures in the spheres of information technology and technology.

Second, policy measures will be initiated to gradually reduce working hours through market-wide job-sharing and improved work-life balance. Decent part-time jobs will be created, first in the public sector, followed by similar measures in the private sector. To this end, policy efforts and subsidies will be directed towards creating decent part-time jobs. Those part-time jobs are expected to help female workers better coordinate their work and family lives and maintain their jobs through marriage, childbirth and childcare. Quality part-time jobs could also serve as a gateway to the labour market for many married women who have long remained out of the labour force.

Third, the Korean Government will improve the employability of workers from vulnerable groups, including youth and the elderly, by implementing active labour market policies. Those policies will be customized to address the specific needs of each target group. Examples of this would include youth experiencing difficulties in finding a first job, as well as elderly persons who have lost their jobs.

To achieve this, labour, management and government stakeholders signed the Korean Jobs Pact on 30 May this year. Under the Pact, the tripartite parties promised to fully cooperate with each other and share the costs and burdens of increasing the number and improving the quality of jobs. They also agreed: to make continuous efforts to set the minimum wage at a socially agreeable level; to provide better opportunities for non-regular workers to obtain regular positions; and to enhance overall fairness in the distribution of labour incomes. By successfully implementing these strategies to achieve a 70 per cent employment rate, in cooperation with the key economic players, the Government aims to restore the proportion of middle-income households back to 70 per cent.

I have briefly introduced the new employment policies of the Korean Government. The Government will spare no effort to achieve the goal of a 70 per cent employment rate. We both hope and

expect that we will be able to share our success with you in five years' time.

Lastly, I hope that this Conference serves as an opportunity to share experiences and wisdom in labour and employment policies, to strengthen friendship among nations, and to discuss strategies for our better future.

Original Spanish: Mr FERRER DUFOL (Employer, Spain)

It is indeed an honour for me to address this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations.

First and foremost, I would like to underline the importance of the process of reform introduced in Spain to tackle the problems which we had, and still have, in our economy. These reforms are courageous, effective in tackling inequalities and, although in our opinion, they are not always successful, they are necessary to lay the foundations for the development of enterprise and the creation of jobs. But unlike other years when we underlined our domestic situation, this year, we should like to give you our ideas on the Director-General's Report and other aspects related to the functioning and reform of the ILO.

Firstly, concerning the Director-General's Report, I should like to stress my satisfaction, first with the format which is more accessible and secondly, with its content. I would like to stress, in general terms, the balance and the presentation of the document which, in a courageous way, sketches out a string of relevant issues which are going to have an impact on social and labour relations. The impact of demographic change on social protection systems and employment, and environmental sustainability are subjects that have been considered in depth at the current session of the Conference, as well as the onward march of technology and the changing character of production and employment, just to mention some examples, all of them key factors which will bring about profound change in the economies of our countries.

We should like, above all, to refer to the changing character of production and employment, the recommendation to establish a closer link between training and employment, and the need to strengthen social dialogue. Nevertheless, we regret the lack of any reference to the need to establish a favourable climate for the development of enterprises, which are the main source of job creation and the essential basis of any social protection system which can be sustainable in the medium and long term. On the other hand, the reference to growing inequalities must be qualified because we must take into account the economic crisis and its negative impacts on employment, and, in some cases, strong economic growth in some countries, which is triggering initial distortions in income distribution.

It is important to have a medium- and long-term vision, since in many emerging and developing countries we see the emergence of a thriving middle class. Therefore, we would like to stress that economic growth is an essential premise for tackling social inequalities.

In the same way as last year, we would again like to stress the role of the Committee of Experts. Its functions should be limited to analysis and monitoring, and it should not, in any way, replace the Committee on the Application of Standards, which we believe is the real tripartite body for the applica-

tion of standards, in terms of interpretation and application. This should be made clear in the Committee of Experts' report.

We would like to say that we diverge from the position of the Director-General concerning relations between enterprises and the ILO, and the Office establishing direct relations with enterprises, for two reasons: firstly, it is the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) which should be the entry point for any company wishing to liaise with the ILO. ACT/EMP must be informed and must participate in any relations established between the Office and firms. Secondly, the ILO's relations with the Employers must take place within the context of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and its member organizations. They have constitutional status within the Office and they participate in all the decision-making processes of the Conference and the Governing Body.

Turning now to the institutional reform of the ILO, we hope that the reforms initiated with the reduced duration of the Governing Body will in fact lead to reform of the ILC. The forthcoming celebration of the centenary of the ILO will be an excellent opportunity to consolidate this reform process. It must go hand in hand with a reorientation of the current focus of the Office, which so far has been very much centred on standard setting, and this should move towards a search for solutions and actions to help countries tackle their social and employment problems, with special emphasis on promoting a climate favourable to job creation. Nevertheless, it is necessary to attach greater importance to companies as a source of employment and wealth.

The ILO focus on sustainable enterprise must not be forgotten, but reinforced. Having said this, we should like to share the view of Mr Ryder in his opening speech, that the ILO must liaise more closely with enterprises on the ground, in order to meet their needs and realities better. This indeed is fundamental to the strategic reorientation of the ILO.

Original Spanish: Mr OYARCE (Government, Chile)

I am addressing this Conference to bring you the reflections of the Chilean Government that would have been presented by the former Deputy Minister of Labour in my country, Mr Bruno Baranda, who at the weekend was appointed Minister for Social Development of Chile. Mr Baranda sends his apologies for not being present today and he sincerely wishes this Conference every success. Above all, he appreciates the work of the ILO, its tripartism and the direction given by the Director-General, Guy Ryder, and congratulates him on the Report that he submitted at the start of this Conference.

The Government of Chile also brings greetings from the President of the Republic, Mr Sebastian Piñera, and the Minister of Labour and Social Security, Ms Evelyn Matthei.

First of all, we wish to reiterate Chile's commitment to the ILO, and to the principles and the values that inspire this Organization, particularly in promoting decent work, which is a universal concept nowadays.

Certainly, the social and economic dimension of work is fundamental for the development of countries and communities, but the key is the value of

work, because of the person who is the worker and that person's human dignity.

Work is important first of all for those who actually do the work, as workers and employers. This is a relationship between people, some of whom run enterprises and create jobs, and others who provide their time and their personal and intellectual services. This is how we see decent work, as a virtuous relationship in which people are enabled to develop vocationally and through their work, and also personally and in their home lives. It also, we hope, enables them to receive sufficient reward for their work to meet their needs, and to achieve greater well-being and a better quality of life.

Within this context, the Government of Chile defines and implements consistent public policies that generate confidence and good prospects. They give rise to more and better opportunities for work, backed up by effective instruments and programmes so that workers can obtain more and better jobs. The world of work brings together the task of overcoming poverty and injustice and achieving social inclusion. This is essential if we aspire to build a more equitable, more inclusive and more sustainable society. In this sense, the world of work offers us a major opportunity to exert a positive influence on the lives and dignity of families.

The added value of employment is especially important and should therefore be the central focus of the employment and social policies of States. In our country, this is how we see and apply it.

Last year, in this same forum, we asserted that Chile is compliant, meaning that the Government was committed to, and was applying, a number of measures that have allowed visible progress to be made in meeting the employment challenges it had assumed.

However, we are not yet satisfied. There is still a great deal to be done and we are fully aware that there are still places, sectors, jobs and functions in which the circumstances and features of employment relations require significant improvement.

For example, we must raise wages further and increase the share of workers in the profits of companies, while improving the skills and productivity of the workers. At the same time, we must continue to combat informal working and tax evasion. We are focusing on keeping the unemployment figure stable, at around 6 per cent. As for labour market participation and employment, although we have made substantial progress a national average of 60 per cent participation and 56 per cent in employment is still insufficient, especially for women and the almost 600,000 young people who are neither studying nor working.

The dynamism of our economy, the modernization of, and the changes made in, recruitment procedures, as well as in the direction and relevance of training programmes, have all contributed to ensuring that the majority of the jobs created are salaried and that over 80 per cent of them have a written contract and are covered by social security.

In terms of health and safety, the reforms that the Government has been introducing have resulted in a reduction in the accident rate from 5.5 per cent in 2011 to 4.9 per cent in 2012. As for fatal accidents, during the last six years, our country had a rate somewhere around 6.5 per 100,000, but in 2011 we managed to reduce this to 4.6 per 100,000 and in 2012 we consolidated this downward trend at 4.9.

All this is due largely to monitoring by the State to ensure greater compliance with employment obligations. This will continue to be another of the Government's priorities.

Lastly, we wish to pay tribute to the contribution made by the Chilean workers, trade union leaders and employers' associations, and to the public servants for their high quality of work and their dedication and professionalism in the work they do for the State. We are also grateful to Parliament and the members of Parliament who are here today in the delegation, especially those who are present in this room.

There is no doubt that in an environment of social dialogue and confidence, the contribution made by all of them to maintaining the forward momentum of our economy and creating good and better jobs, will bring about greater well-being, a better quality of life and more inclusion for all of our citizens.

Original Arabic: Mr FAKIH (Minister of Labour, Saudi Arabia)

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of this Conference. I also congratulate the Vice-Presidents, and wish them all every success.

I have pleasure to extend my greetings to the Director-General of the ILO and to thank him for his untiring efforts to permit the Organization to improve the labour market situation and bring social justice. I thank him for his excellent Report to this session of the Conference, in which he discusses the lessons we have learned from the past, the major developments and challenges in the world of work today and the role that the Organization is called upon to play in the twenty-first century.

Regarding the Report's affirmation that the basis of the ILO's work is its belief in the possibility of change and that progress can be measured in terms of the exchange of experiences and know-how and the opening up of a new vision of the future, I am happy to say that this is the principle that Saudi Arabia has adopted in its pursuit of the desired change and progress.

It also gives me great pleasure to announce that the competent authorities in the Kingdom recently approved the ratification of ILO Convention No. 138. The relevant procedures will follow shortly.

The steps taken recently by Saudi Arabia have been highly successful in providing decent employment, increasing the share of women in the labour market and raising the level of social protection.

We have made great strides in this direction. The employment of Saudi workers in the private sector since the launching of the Nitaqat programme in June 2011 has increased from 10 to 13 per cent. By the end of 2012, some 615,000 citizens had been hired in the private sector. The number and percentage of Saudi women who found fixed employment rose to unprecedented levels in 2012, and the number of first-time jobseekers among them reached 180,000, three times more than before the programme was launched. Special attention was given to workers with disabilities, of whom there were 17,000 at the end of 2012.

With regard to the protection of workers' rights, the Ministry of Labour has introduced a wage protection scheme in the private sector that guarantees workers' earnings by obliging enterprises to insure

them through the banks. The scheme became operational this month.

The Ministry has computerized labour inspection formalities and procedures in order to make them more efficient and transparent. It has also completed its work on the country's occupational safety and health profile.

In accordance with the directives issued by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, the competent authorities have taken a number of steps to tackle the situation of immigrant workers who have no residence or work permit and to make it easier to change jobs and to transfer from one employer to another under work contracts that preserve the rights of all the parties concerned.

Regarding tripartite participation, the Kingdom has made considerable progress in social dialogue as an important means of resolving labour issues. For the second year running, a social dialogue forum was organized with the participation of the social partners. Both the first forum on the organization of working hours and the second on minimum wages were well received, and I would like to thank the ILO for its technical support, which did much to ensure the success of the forums.

To conclude, I would like to pay tribute to the Director-General for his special Report on the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and the occupied territories and to reaffirm the need to resume ILO technical cooperation for the workers in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

Original Vietnamese: Mr PHAM (Deputy Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam)

It is my honour to address this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I would like to present our best compliments to the President, the Director-General and all the participants at this Conference.

I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his first but very timely Report to the Conference on *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. The Report reiterates the fundamental values of the ILO on universal and lasting peace based on social justice. Over the past 94 years, the ILO and tripartite partners have made relentless efforts to achieve that mandate, to make fundamental principles and rights at work a reality for workers all over the world.

We fully agree with the Report that the ILO, towards its centenary, needs to focus its efforts to save people from the worst forms of labour. The Government of Viet Nam will do its best to support the ILO's initiatives to make the Organization more effective and better serve the needs of its constituents.

Viet Nam welcomes the ILO's discussion at the Conference on the report on social dialogue. The report provides a global picture of the legislation, practice, challenges and lessons learnt, trends and good practices on social dialogue all over the world.

In Viet Nam, social dialogue is a highlight of the revised Labour Code, as of 1 May 2013. The Government of Viet Nam has implemented many programmes to enhance the capacity of social partners to represent their members, improve bargaining skills and promote dialogue, negotiate and sign collective bargaining agreements, strengthen industrial relations institutions and apply new models to promote sound industrial relations.

Viet Nam is strengthening its labour laws. Besides the revised Labour Code adopted last year, we are developing special laws, including the Employment Law, the Vocational Law (amended), the Social Insurance Law (amended), the Occupational Safety and Health Law, and the Minimum Wage Law. In this process, we have worked closely with workers' and employers' organizations to develop solid legal documents, balancing the interests of the parties and strengthening their commitment to enforce the laws.

The Government is implementing many programmes and policies to enhance access to education and lifelong learning opportunities to better match education and training with labour market demands, to improve employment services and vocational guidance, to address youth employment through the National Target Programme on Employment and Vocational Training, and to promote occupational health and safety and health-care services, especially for the youth, the poor and other vulnerable groups.

We follow a consistent policy of economic development in tandem with social security for all. The Government is studying and proposing the revised Social Insurance Law and the principles of ensuring the sustainability of the social insurance fund, broadening the coverage, facilitating the participation of informal workers in social insurance schemes and diversifying the forms of social insurance and social security schemes.

We have been studying the ILO Conventions, and on this occasion I would like to inform you that in April the President signed the instrument to ratify the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

The Government recognizes and appreciates the close cooperation between the ILO and the country in strengthening social dialogue as a means of achieving decent work in Viet Nam. Within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme 2012–16, we are implementing the industrial relations project aimed at strengthening industrial relations institutions and mechanisms, and promoting collective bargaining and social dialogue in Viet Nam. The Better Work project, jointly implemented by the ILO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in the Viet Nam garment sector, has established social dialogue mechanisms at both factory and national level to improve labour law compliance.

Promoting full and decent work for all is a priority for the members of the ASEAN countries. Within the framework of the Labour Ministers' Work Programme 2010–15, we are implementing a string of regional initiatives, in particular on occupational safety and health, labour inspection, social security and decent work for all.

I hope and look forward to seeing the positive outcomes of the reforms that the ILO is undertaking to improve the service it offers to its tripartite constituents.

I wish the Conference every success.

Original Korean: Mr KIM (Worker, Republic of Korea)

On behalf of the 18 million workers of the Republic of Korea, it is a great honour for me to deliver a speech to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Let me begin by extending my full support to the innovative action proposed by the Director-General

in order to accomplish social justice, which is the ultimate mandate of the ILO.

In particular, I have no doubt that job creation and the promotion of social protection in the new demographic context, decent work as the key to ending poverty and the alleviation of the fragmentation of the labour market due to the changing character of production and employment are tremendously important to achieve social justice.

Social dialogue is the key to achieving decent work, as well as implementing the overall development agenda.

Recently, Korean tripartite partners reached an agreement on employment, based on their shared views on the essential role of social dialogue. We have made a commitment to expand social service jobs, as well as jobs for youth, the elderly and women. The reduction of long working hours is also a main priority of the agreement.

The Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) attaches considerable value to social dialogue because we recognize the importance of joint efforts made by the tripartite partners to promote workers' job security in times of the unprecedented global economic and employment crisis. Having said that, I have to stress the fact that full implementation of the agreement by the Government and employers is much more important than the agreement per se.

The Korean trade union movement has taken the lead in overcoming crises and has willingly shared the burden whenever the nation is faced with economic hardships. However, a lot of tripartite agreements have not been properly implemented despite the workers' painful sacrifices. As a result, intensifying discrimination and social polarization have driven the country into even deeper crisis, threatening the integration of the whole society.

The Korean Government and employers must learn a lesson from past experience and make every possible effort to promote job security, eliminate discrimination against precarious workers and reduce working hours without wage cuts, and do so sincerely.

There are tremendous and urgent tasks ahead of us. Currently, tripartite negotiations are in full swing on the limit of paid time off for union activities and the increase of the minimum wage.

The FKTU will continue to adhere to core values of the ILO in resolving these issues. The Korean Government and employers should respect workers and trade unions as an equal partner, recognizing the effort made by the Korean trade union movement. Imposing unilateral sacrifices and shifting all the burdens towards the workers should be ceased immediately.

Last, but not least, I have to express my deepest regrets that the case of "comfort women" has again been excluded from the list of cases before the Committee on the Application of Standards. The Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), is one of the most important core Conventions. However, it has not been discussed for the last 16 years, due to the strong opposition of the Japanese Government and employers.

Let me conclude my speech by making a strong request to the ILO to play a pivotal role in resolving the issue to ensure that social justice, the mandate of the ILO, is achieved ahead of the ILO centenary.

Please allow me first and foremost to extend my thanks to all delegations, especially to those from the Asia and Pacific group. I would like to thank them all for having chosen His Excellency Professor Nidal Katamine, Minister of Labour of Jordan, as President of this session.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr Ryder. I would like to congratulate him on being elected as Director-General of this admirable Organization. I wish him every success in his efforts aimed at promoting the ILO, restructuring it, developing its work and enhancing its role in the service of all tripartite partners throughout the world.

The Jordanian economy has achieved positive growth rates over the past few years. This is due to the political stability enjoyed by the Kingdom of Jordan. This is also due to a number of political and economic reforms that were adopted to enhance free market mechanisms and promote entrepreneurship in a propitious environment for business and investment.

Jordan has witnessed stability in its labour market over the past year. We have also witnessed a huge improvement when it comes to relations between social partners. The Jordanian Ministry of Labour has cooperated with the Jordanian Social and Economic Council and also with the tripartite commission on labour issues to improve the living conditions of workers in all sectors.

When it comes to freedom of association, we have amended Labour Code, Law No. 8 of 1996, to enable non-Jordanian workers to join labour unions and benefit from their services. In the wake of this modification, we have concluded a number of collective contracts and pacts to improve the working conditions of our workers. This has had a very positive impact on job stability and has limited staff turnover.

When it comes to capacity building and enhancing the skills of workers in settling work disputes and providing a fair environment for collective bargaining, Jordan has also made notable progress. However, it still needs more support from the ILO, including the provision of necessary training programmes.

Despite the progress that we have made in various fields, Jordan has faced considerable challenges over the past two years, notably the upheavals experienced by the global economy and the uncertainties stemming from successive political and economic transformations.

Another problem requiring attention has been the influx of a vast number of Syrian refugees to Jordan over the past two years. They already exceed half a million in number, and this is exerting huge pressure on Jordan's infrastructure. Let us not forget the 750,000 Syrian citizens who were already living in Jordan before the influx of refugees. So Syrians in Jordan now represent about a quarter of the total number of the inhabitants of Jordan. This has had a huge impact on our infrastructure and services. It has also affected our state budget which already suffers from a chronic deficit.

Add to that the closure of borders and instability in the region owing to the situation in Syria. This has had a negative effect on Jordanian exports to Syria, Lebanon, Europe, Turkey and many other neighbouring States.

The additional cost of Syrian refugees in Jordan has exceeded US\$800 million annually in order to provide them with the necessary health, education and housing services, as well as all infrastructure services, such as water, sanitation, electricity, security and civil protection.

To face these difficult social and economic conditions, the Government of Jordan has drafted a national employment strategy based on comprehensive policies containing programmes to improve job opportunities and provide decent work for the population. Other policies were adopted to improve job market governance and to provide protection to the unemployed and help them find new jobs. We have also adopted mechanisms to adapt our education system to the needs of the job market and to develop job-generating projects and enhance our SMEs.

Jordan needs support to fulfil its responsibilities and duties towards the Syrian refugees and face these difficult and unprecedented conditions.

The situation in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories is rapidly deteriorating. Workers and employers are living in difficult conditions and are suffering in their daily lives due to Israeli occupation measures which include: blockades; closures; checkpoints; and the wall of separation that prevents farmers from reaching their land and prevents workers from reaching their workplaces.

The Report issued by the Director-General and presented to our Conference in this regard provides unequivocal proof that these conditions are extremely difficult and can only be settled if we put an end to the occupation and we enable the Palestinian people to build their own independent State with Al-Quds as its capital, based on the Arab Peace Initiative and on international resolutions.

Finally, the noble objectives pursued by this Organization over the past few decades in its effort to achieve social justice, serve the general objectives of the UN system, such as the achievement of international peace and security.

I believe that the restructuring and administrative reforms taking place in the ILO aim to improve the work of this Organization and enable it to help member States to develop their societies based on fair and just relations between the tripartite partners.

Mgr TOMASI (Apostolic Nuncio, The Holy See)

This Conference takes place in particularly adverse economic conditions. At the end of 2012, five years after the outbreak of the global financial crisis, the total number of jobless was almost 200 million. Since 2007, some 39 million people have dropped out of the labour market as job prospects proved unattainable, thus opening up a global gap of 67 million jobs lost.

Moderate growth in the labour market is expected for 2013–14, but this will be insufficient to alleviate the crisis. Advanced economies have been hit hardest. The regions that avoided an increase in unemployment, on the other hand, have experienced deterioration in job quality, since at-risk employment and the number of workers living below, or very near the poverty line, have increased.

Youth remain particularly affected by this crisis. Globally, some 73 million young people currently are unemployed, and by 2014 another half million are likely to be pushed into unemployment. The unemployment rate among youth is projected to increase.

Policy- and decision-makers need to take additional steps to recover from the second dip in the job market. Ways to deal with these challenges include overcoming uncertainty to increase investment and job creation; coordinating stimuli for global demand and more employment; addressing labour market mismatches and promoting structural change; and increasing efforts to promote long-term youth employment. Innovative solutions call for steady employment for everyone so that economic growth and well-being are not disconnected.

Work is the primary sphere where the links between the person, the economy and the environment are built, the first step towards their reconstruction, and where social and economic relations are nourished. The first link that we need to consider is the intergenerational link.

The older generation is extending its term of employment, while the new generation faces increasing difficulties in entering the labour market. Policies and institutions need to address this conflict and, in this framework, a key role has to be assumed by the family. The family, in fact, is the primary sphere where potential intergenerational conflicts of interest can be solved and recast. In this regard, in addition to policies that favour youth employment, it is necessary to implement policies aimed at promoting women's participation by facilitating the conciliation between work and family.

It is necessary to rebuild the links between education and work. Youth unemployment has two implications. On the one hand, it highlights the inability of the economy to generate enough job opportunities for the new generation. On the other hand, it shows up the difficulties for the education system in generating the qualifications and skills needed in the labour market.

The education system is the cornerstone of any development strategy. It is, in fact, the primary source of human capital, which is the most effective engine of economic growth. More importantly, educated individuals become fully aware of the worth of all persons and of the value of work, not because of what is produced but because of who undertakes it. Without this subjective dimension there would be no concern for the dignity of work, and only the economic dimension would be seen as relevant.

Experience shows that work is the way out of poverty for poor households, and that the expansion of productive and decent employment is the way economies grow and diversify. For countries at all levels of development, an adequate supply of jobs is the foundation of sustained and growing prosperity, inclusion and social cohesion. As the United Nations and the global community debate the development agenda for the coming decades, jobs should take centre stage.

The social dimension of work has always been emphasized by the Catholic Church. For this reason, it is of serious concern first, that over the next ten years, 40–50 million new jobs will be needed each year; second, that a wave of technological innovation is altering the capacity of modern manufacturing and the ability of service activities to generate jobs; and, third, that within and across countries, widening inequalities in income and opportunities are weakening the social and political fabric of our societies and fuelling a downward cycle of economic, political and social uncertainty.

Countries that achieved major job creation and poverty alleviation, for example in Asia and Latin

America, addressed the structural factors underlying poverty and underemployment. Policies included extensive social protection with active support for diversification of their economies, inclusive access to finance and employment-friendly macroeconomic policies that fostered both investment and consumption.

In conclusion, the worldwide financial and economic crisis has highlighted a grave deficiency in the human perspective, thus reducing man to only one of his needs, namely, that of consumption. Worse yet, nowadays human beings themselves are considered as consumer goods which can be used and thrown away. The problem of unemployment, particularly, is very often caused by a purely economic view of society which seeks self-centred profit, outside the bounds of social justice. Within the economy links between individuals, firms and policies need to be rebuilt. We must promote the conditions for a recovery built on substantial job creation in order to establish a new social pact that puts the person and work at the centre of the economy.

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

Allow me to begin by congratulating the President of the Conference, the Officers and the representatives of the groups on the confidence shown in them by their election to conduct this important session of the Conference.

I would like to express my admiration to the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, for his first Report on the situation of the Palestinian workers of the occupied Arab territories and for the profound thinking, open mind, wisdom and energy he has demonstrated since he succeeded as Director-General of our Organization.

The Arab Labour Organization (ALO) greatly appreciated his participation in the 40th meeting of the Arab Labour Council in April this year and his reaffirmation of the importance of a veritable partnership between the ALO and the ILO in supporting the objectives of the social partners in the Arab countries and the challenges we face today.

We are convinced that his vast experience and energy will enable him to leave his mark on this Organization and on the noble values and principles it proclaims.

I would also like to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr Juan Somavia, whom we appreciate and respect. We share Mr Ryder's wish that the Organization, on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of its rich history, should achieve great things thanks to the seven initiatives he has presented in his first Report to the Conference. These initiatives based on equity, justice and social justice correspond to the very goals of our Organization and will enable it uphold the great principles defined by its founders.

It may be appropriate here to add an initiative regarding balanced development, particularly in developing countries, so as to establish firmly the rules for maintaining a balance between social development and economic development, especially in the light of all the many changes and crises in every region and throughout the world.

The Arab world has undergone major changes during the past two-and-a-half years in response to its peoples' aspiration to a better future and their desire to take up the challenge of bringing about social justice and meeting the need for sustainable

development. This calls for a new, enlightened and innovative strategic approach that can solve the pressing problem of employment, anticipate the next stage in economic and social development and in the generation of the necessary skills for the unemployed and first-time jobseekers – especially young people – to find work on the labour market, and to promote social justice for the benefit of all.

It is perhaps relevant at this point to recall the promises made at the Deauville Summit by the major financial institutions, which expressed their readiness to support the Arab region so as to bring stability and meet the economic and social development requirements of such an important region.

The International Labour Conference is the biggest world forum for bringing together the social partners from every country in the world in order to institute social justice. First and foremost, this calls for equity in resolving the regional issues confront-

ing the people of the region, which threaten regional and world security. The first of these issues of is the problem of Palestine. The Palestinian people at every level, workers, employers, men, women and children, continue to be subjected to constant violations and mistreatment by the Israeli occupying forces, to the colonization of occupied Arab lands and to aggression against both Muslim and Christian holy places, despite the many international resolutions condemning these criminal acts that violate international charters, laws and resolutions.

We call on our Organization and all its bodies and Members to oppose firmly the inhumane practices and aggression which undermine any hope of peace.

We are deeply convinced that Palestine will one day be a sovereign State, with Al-Quds as its capital.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.20 p.m.)

Fifth sitting

Wednesday, 12 June 2013, 2.40 p.m.

Presidents: Mr Rahman and Mr Katamine

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

Mr LEE (*Employer, Republic of Korea*)

On behalf of Korean employers, I would like to give my heartfelt congratulations to Mr Katamine on his election as President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Director-General of the ILO, in his Report, reviews the changes in the world of work and the role of the Organization. It is noteworthy that a full-time permanent job is not a standard form of employment any more, while atypical forms of work are becoming typical.

I believe that we need to recognize diverse forms of employment and direct these changes towards the desirable outcome of job creation, instead of negating the changes. We need to alert ourselves against the dichotomy between conventional and atypical forms of work. It is important to recognize that diverse forms of employment not only offer more jobs but also provide a good opportunity to improve the quality of the working lives of aged people, housewives, long-term jobless people and unemployed youth, who find it difficult to enter the rigid labour market.

In recent years, the global economy has been in serious trouble. The trends of the slow economic upturn are being witnessed in some countries, but no sign of improvement is in sight in global employment.

The ILO predicted that the worldwide unemployment rate for this year would be 6 per cent, which is higher than the rate for last year, and that the youth unemployment rate would be 12.6 per cent. It observed that this high level of unemployment would persist for a considerable period of time. Undoubtedly, it is a matter of great concern that young generations might suffer great difficulties in terms of their income and job conditions.

Korea is not an exception. In recent years, Korea has been stuck in the mire of low growth and low employment. To make a breakthrough, the social partners of the country have set the goal of an employment rate of 70 per cent and have mapped out what specific actions to take and how to cooperate.

The target of a 70 per cent employment rate means a transition in the paradigm for the labour market. The concept of an unemployment rate which is computed out of the economically active population has been replaced by the employment

ratio among the working-age population. The current job policies are not aimed simply at reducing the number of unemployed people, but at taking into consideration the economically inactive population, including housewives, senior citizens and discouraged workers, who cannot even enter the labour market. To this end, it is necessary to lower the barriers to the labour market.

Here, today, I would like to highlight what the social partners should do to create more jobs based on the current tripartite efforts to achieve the 70 per cent employment rate.

First, the labour market should be made more flexible. Excessive employment protection, mainly for workers in large companies and regular jobs, are certain to result in worse conditions of employment for those in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and non-regular jobs. We should try to enhance companies' job creation potential, based on the increased flexibility of the labour market, and to diversify the types of employment further, rather than draw a line between regular and non-regular jobs.

Second, it should be clearly understood that a job is the best form of welfare and job creation is the best policy to address the polarization issue.

Third, more effort should be made to promote companies' growth and investment. We should remember that enterprises are the key actor of job creation and, therefore, the primary source of welfare.

Since the current Director-General of the ILO took office, organizational restructuring has been under way. It is important to increase efficiency in all ILO activities, and job creation should be given the highest priority. Furthermore, a system of employment impact assessment should be introduced to ensure that reviews are carried out when the Organization sets up a new policy or a new technical cooperation programme.

I do hope that the ongoing change within the ILO is not simply change for the sake of change, but change for the better, that is, more job creation.

Ms ALEXANDER (*Minister for Labour and Human Resource Development, Seychelles*)

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. Seychelles is pleased to be part of this important platform, supporting the cause of the International Labour Organization in promoting decent work and enabling us, as a small island developing

State, to share our vision to ensure decent work opportunities for the people of Seychelles.

I wish firstly to convey my deep gratitude to Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, for the support he has extended to the Republic of Seychelles, notably through the effective implementation of the Seychelles Decent Work Country Programme.

I am pleased to note that the discussions of this year's International Labour Conference are analysing the challenges which are transforming the world of work, for indeed the current global development trends are of significant importance in guiding the work of the employment sector, now and in the future.

Accordingly, the Report of the Director-General, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, reflects the challenges faced by policy-makers and their impact on workers, employers and national economies. I believe that the initiatives proposed in the Report are important in engaging the ILO's constituents and thereby developing strong and effective strategies to address the effects of the rapid changes of the various economic sectors on the world of work.

As a small State, Seychelles remains committed to investing in its people and in ensuring a quality working life and equal opportunities for all. The effects of globalization, notably the recent world crisis, have been a wake-up call on the vulnerability of the employment sector against financial and environmental shocks.

I seize this occasion to emphasize the effects of demographic trends and climate change, which today represent a challenge for the labour market across the world, including the Seychelles. Our national records indicate that our population is slowly ageing and the median age has further increased to 31 years over the last eight years. In addition, the Government of Seychelles is strongly advocating for sustainable development to guarantee the future existence of our nation, which is being threatened by the impact of climate change. While these are challenging tasks, we remain determined in protecting our workers, our environment, our economy and our future, based on the foundations of decent work.

With the efficient collaboration of the ILO, Seychelles is actively implementing its Decent Work Country Programme, which has brought prominent progress for the employment and labour sector. Notably, the ongoing review of our national employment policy is focused on linking capacity building with the demands of the labour market and it is opportune for us to agree on strategic responses to act and react to the needs of labour and businesses, while supporting the ILO's effort in achieving its centenary initiatives.

I am delighted to note that the centenary initiatives reflect the plan of my Ministry and new approaches undertaken in the past year. We have decentralized employment services, to move closer to jobseekers, with a view to facilitating their access to employment or enrolment in employment training schemes. We have also recently established a forum comprising key human resources stakeholders, to enhance the public-private sector partnership, thus enabling joint collaboration in national human resource development.

Indeed, employment and decent work is not a concern for the ILO only; nor is it a concern for the ministries of labour and social partners only. It is a

concern for all economic sectors. Each and every one of us needs to leave a landmark in fostering decent work.

Let us be ready to take on the opportunities that are presented to us: the opportunity to innovate our methods of work so that they promptly adapt to the changing needs of the labour market; the opportunity to analyse the developments of other economic sectors, so that employment is mainstreamed in sectoral objectives; and the opportunity for us, constituents, to collaborate on common grounds so that our strategies converge and decent work is further permeated in the lives of our fellow citizens.

It is therefore my sincere wish that tripartite constituents join together for decent work in order to secure a stronghold in our policy objectives and future achievement.

Original Arabic: Ms AL-RASHIDI (Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Kuwait)

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure for me to represent my country, Kuwait. I would like to begin my statement by conveying to you our good wishes and expressing the esteem in which we hold the Conference. All the constitutions in the world stipulate the right to work. There is no doubt that there are two sides to the right to work – one economic and the other social. Providing opportunities to work is to guarantee a decent income for the members of society, limit crime, prevent human injustice and promote social justice, which is the cornerstone of social peace.

The economies of all societies are based on production and there is no production without workers. Consequently, work is not only a right but also a duty. If work is a right, then there should be legislation to protect that right, regulate it and define its scope, in addition to guarantees to ensure its protection and protect workers against exploitation, forced labour and blackmailing.

It is with this in mind that Kuwait has been adopting legislation to regulate and protect the right to work, taking into account the relevant international labour standards. There is no doubt that my country, thanks to its flourishing economic activity, is seen as an attractive labour market for workers of many different nationalities. Kuwait protects the rights of foreign workers, guaranteeing their rights and ensuring they receive decent treatment and are covered by international labour standards at the workplace and in respect of residency. It provides all measures necessary to ensure their protection at the workplace and monitors the presence of occupational health protection in accordance with international labour standards.

Kuwait provides its foreign workers with the necessary medical treatment in public hospitals on an equal footing with national citizens, and private sector employers are required to provide medical treatment free of charge to their foreign workers.

Kuwait is constantly opening up new horizons on its labour market thanks to increased employment opportunities, so as to assimilate young Kuwaitis who have completed their training and are ready to work.

Kuwait, wishing to conform to international labour standards regarding industrial relations and the protection of workers against exploitation, blackmailing and forced labour, has promulgated a series of laws, notably Law No. 6 of 2010 on work in the private sector, which provides workers with rights

they had not enjoyed previously and establishes a three-month period of notice prior to dismissal, instead of the previously required 15 days. The same law also makes it an obligation for employers to pay the salaries established in the employment contract and to transfer workers' salaries and other amounts due to their bank accounts. In this way Kuwait is indeed abiding by the highest level of international labour standards in this regard and is endeavouring to ensure respect for the human rights recognized at the international level.

In Kuwait there is equality between men and women. All employment opportunities are available to women without distinction or discrimination. Education is accessible to women without any distinction. Women also participate in parliamentary life as they are elected to the National Council. Women occupy the highest positions, including ministerial positions, and on occasion hold both parliamentary and ministerial positions.

Kuwait, with a view to creating new employment opportunities, promotes the development of small enterprises in order to provide accessible jobs, on an equal footing, to men and women.

Kuwait will always strive to achieve the objectives of the International Labour Organization and to implement the decisions emanating from the International Labour Conference.

I wish you every success in achieving the Organization's objective of providing everyone on this planet with decent work.

Original Spanish: Ms HERNÁNDEZ (Minister of Labour, Dominican Republic)

It is an honour for me to represent my country, the Dominican Republic, here at the 102nd Session of the Conference.

For developing countries, and we are one of those countries, employment is a fundamental right of citizens. It is a particularly worthy and meaningful activity that contributes not just to national development but also to the personal fulfilment of each individual. Work also fosters human development, economic growth, the equitable distribution of wealth, and social and territorial cohesion.

It is essential that States promote the right to work, whether in the private sector, in the public sector or in self-employment under prevailing conditions of social protection.

Latin America today has a very young population, and this is the great potential of our countries, where families tend to be very large. When we talk of employment, we mean not only the people who are actually working but their whole family – an average of five people who have access to a better life.

In the Dominican Republic, with its more than 10 million inhabitants, 56 per cent of the population is under the age of 29. Young Dominicans over 15 years old want to train, to study, to get on in the world, and that is why we need to protect workers' employment and purchasing power, to promote businesses and encourage entrepreneurs, who are the employers of tomorrow.

At both the regional and the national levels, my Ministry proposes that employment be at the very heart of all social policies, a means of prioritizing our national policies so as to give our population access to higher income and to progress.

This affirmation ties in with the national development strategy which the Dominican Republic has

formulated as our vision for the country. The creation of new jobs each year is a challenge, and, as such, it is part of our national development agenda involving all sectors of national life.

This view of my Ministry coincides very largely with the views expressed here by the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder.

The Dominican State, along with the leaders of the production sector, has expressed its eagerness to implement a national employment pact for 2012–16 during the mandate of President Danilo Medina, in order to create 400,000 new jobs.

The major challenges facing our country in terms of active employment policies are: (1) to reconcile the aims and objectives of our employment policy and of our macroeconomic and fiscal policies; (2) to integrate public and private investment so as to generate employment; (3) to create a genuine occupational training system that is in line with the region's priorities and our own occupational training requirements at the national level; (4) to create jobs, and promote industrialization and the financing of productive clusters at competitive rates with emphasis on the production of fruit and vegetables; (5) to stimulate agricultural production and tourism, to create productive circles and to foster specialization in agriculture; (6) to organize the country's chains of production efficiently; and (7) to create an efficient non-monopolistic transport system for food and drink.

Original Spanish: Mr ECHAVARRÍA (Employer, Colombia)

I congratulate the Officers of the Conference for their appointment to this Conference.

I would like to highlight the following from the Director-General's Report: first, the greater balance in data on economic and social progress. We suggest that the Director-General's Report to the next sessions of the Conference include precise and comparable indicators by years. Second, the new challenges in production and employment, which highlight the fact that atypical forms of employment are ever more frequent. We believe that this should have an effect on how international standards are applied in the national juridical context, both in legislation and in their interpretation by judges. Third, the ever-closer links between work and education. We believe that companies should be more connected to the educational system so as to prepare and encourage new generations to take up relevant professions. Workers should also be trained to cope with global competitiveness and productivity. And fourth, regarding the importance of social dialogue as a means for the collective achievement of the aims of society, we believe that this should lead to responsible social partnerships within enterprises.

There are other aspects, not listed in the Director-General's Report, to which I would like to make a brief reference given their importance for employers.

First, the need for governments, supported by the ILO, to create favourable environments for the development of sustainable enterprises, in the economic, social and environmental fields. Second, the need to overcome current drawbacks in the supervisory machinery of the ILO; the present crisis and the discussions that have been trying to remedy the situation should lead to the establishment of a supervisory machinery that is reliable and easy to understand, and that strictly respects the spirit and texts of the Conventions and refrains from making

broad interpretations of them without the participation of the tripartite constituents. Third, the need of a medium- and long-term vision to reduce social inequalities in developing countries by ensuring balance in the growing middle class, and in developed countries to overcome the economic crisis.

I would like to say something about the situation in my country. The ILO has been developing a technical cooperation programme to consolidate the recommendations made by the high-level mission that visited the country in 2011. This programme has strengthened the capacity for action of the labour inspectorate. It has improved social tripartite dialogue and helped public institutions in their responsibilities before the ILO. In particular, we highlight the activities by trade union leaders and activists, by the Ministries of the Interior and of Labour for their protection, and by the Public Prosecutor's Office and judges in addressing the offences committed against them.

Colombia has taken steps in the correct direction. In the economic sphere there has been an average growth of 4 per cent over the last decade; a reduction of unemployment to almost one digit, interest rates that give the population access to goods and services that were not available before; diversified direct foreign investment in all areas of production; inflation controlled at 2 per cent and the adjustment of the exchange rate to make the productive sector competitive. In the social sphere there has been a reduction of poverty from 54 per cent to 32 per cent over the past ten years; an extension of the social protection system; an improvement of the social distribution of taxes and bonuses, and a sustained increase of the minimum salary above the inflation rate. In the political sphere, respect for the diversity of political opinions has been expressed through democratic elections.

All this has led to more confidence internationally and nationally, which means that Colombia is now part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – in other words, within the group of countries with the highest level of development and compliance with best institutional government practices. Trade integration agreements have been an excellent vehicle for this.

We still have to make changes and this should be our collective aim. We call on the workers to resolve disputes and to define our corporate and social destiny by increasing frank and constructive social dialogue, in particular by contributing to the achievement of national peace now that this possibility is so near.

*Original Spanish: Mr OLAECHEA ÁLVAREZ-CALDERÓN
(Employer, Peru)*

I take the floor on behalf of the employers in Peru. The business sector generates 70 per cent of formal employment in my country, and also sustains growth and generates wage increases in the formal sector of the national economy.

For us, private enterprise is at the heart of achieving decent work while respecting the fundamental rights championed by this Organization. We are convinced that wealth creation through private enterprise is the best mechanism for improving levels of decent work in our countries. Nevertheless, the employers in Peru, while being tremendously satisfied at the progress made, are fully aware that the development task facing our country calls for greater efforts. It is by clearly identifying problems

that require recognition and analysis in the national situation that we will continue to make progress. For this reason we have noted with concern three points which are having a noticeable impact on the economic and social dynamics of Peru.

As Guy Ryder has said in the Director-General's Report presented to this session of the Conference, there is a need to renew tripartism and so our participation is relevant.

Firstly, for 12 years I participated in the National Labour Council of Peru, a body which should embody tripartism in our country. But I have to be self-critical. Political development in my country has not been able to take on board the importance of social dialogue and what it means for resolving structural issues in a concerted manner.

Secondly, we also need to be clear about the fact that business activity in Peru is dominated by small firms which are mainly established informally and do not have the capacity to grow or comply with tax and labour law in its current form, on account of the complexity and high costs involved.

Thirdly, a matter of great concern is that the State is transferring some of its essential duties to the private sector, as a means of solving the problem described above. This has involved new measures, adopted without any tripartite dialogue and even criminalizing private activity, and this undermines the development of positive and proactive labour relations.

In fact, in Peru, legislation has been adopted on occupational safety and health which perversely exceeds what is proposed in the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and new legislation is being adopted in Parliament on the basis of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). All this means that informal employment is not the exception but the rule. The painful tragedy in Bangladesh reflects the need to work, to live and to progress, all of them universal human rights, but in the situation on the ground this turns into exploitation, survival and frustration. That is why the Peruvian employers are raising the alarm. Although we have referred to the success stories in our country, of which we are justifiably proud, we recognize that 28 per cent of our population still live in severe poverty and more than two-thirds of enterprises which today form part of the industrial fabric of our nation are outside the legal framework.

Today, virtual companies are worth more than countries producing raw materials. There is talk of work at home, titles with temporary capacities, virtual work, challenges are growing and differences are worsening. On the one hand, employment is growing more sophisticated; on the other, it is getting more precarious. But we recognize the problem. That is why we make a point of asking how many tragedies caused by informal environments we have to suffer before recognizing that a perfect world does not exist. But hope remains in the form of work by consensus. For that reason we must strive to understand the realities that are challenging us today, to which the theories of the past are largely inapplicable. On the evidence of joint work through tripartism, it is likely that we will begin to create the asset of the relations that should exist in any kind of sustainable enterprise.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Director-General's Report.

The Report is comprehensive and sets out clearly some of the challenges facing this unique Organization and it also raises the issue that not all those that participate here have the same commitment to the promise of social justice so strongly articulated in the preamble to the ILO Constitution.

It is my view that the New Zealand Government is one such participant. As we meet here this week, the New Zealand Government is introducing legislation which its own department advises is in breach of the ILO core Conventions, and this is not the first time. Two years ago, legislation removing the rights to collective bargaining for workers in the film industry was passed as part of an agreement with the film company, Warner Bros, which makes films in New Zealand and does not want the industry unionized.

The legislation currently being debated will effectively place individual employment agreements and collective employment agreements on the same footing as each other. This law, the Government says, will increase the rights of employers to the same level as those of workers and unions.

Already New Zealand has one of the worst rates of income inequality among developed countries. In the last two decades, within this group of countries we have gone from being one of the most equal to becoming one of the most unequal. A recent OECD report notes that New Zealand's inequality is increasing faster than any other OECD country. It lays significant fault for that shameful fact on the great inequality in wages and salaries. Meanwhile, 230,000 children live in poverty in New Zealand, with one in four of these in a family with at least one full-time worker.

Collective bargaining is already at all-time lows in our country with only 9 per cent of private sector workers covered by collective agreements due to already weak labour law. For many workers, the only protections they have are contained in the minimum code with 300,000 workers earning on or near the minimum wage.

We welcome the declaration in the Director-General's Report that the red lines set by the ILO around efforts to improve competitiveness are set clearly at the point where such efforts would impinge on fundamental principles and rights at work.

The New Zealand Government has regularly promoted the low wages in New Zealand as a comparative advantage against Australia, which retains strong collective bargaining, and, as the Director-General points out, the idea that individual contract arrangements could be an equal and equivalent alternative to collective bargaining between representative organizations, cannot easily be squared with the ILO's unique advantage of tripartism and social dialogue.

I do not have time to highlight the detail of these changes here today. They include significant new restrictions on the right to strike, removal of the obligation of employers to bargain for multi-employer agreements and, in regard to the film industry, the unilateral declaration that these workers can be employed as independent contractors regardless of the true nature of the employment relationship.

New Zealand has a habit of turning up to international forums pretending to be the good guy. It likes to portray an image that it can no longer sustain, of an egalitarian society where everyone gets a fair go, of a liberal social agenda with strong social dialogue and of a modern international outlook which respects and actively supports the international institutions and in particular the United Nations (UN). On this basis, for example, it is actively seeking a position on the UN Security Council. But the reality is that the current Government of New Zealand is choosing to deliberately legislate in a way it knows breaches ILO Conventions, and it is not good enough to pick and choose which international obligations a country will comply with.

Our Labour Minister will visit the ILO next week and has said that he will seek advice from the Organization about the international legality of the proposed changes. I want to thank the Office for agreeing to help at this meeting and I hope our Minister shows sufficient respect when he is here to take up that offer.

Original French: Mr BERGER (Worker, France)

When the ILO adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization in June 2008, we were right at the beginning of a deep and lasting global crisis.

In fact, it was not just a crisis of the kind the world had already known and overcome in the past. What we have experienced for more than five years is a manifestation of far-reaching change. The global redistribution of the economy continues inexorably. Enterprises and workers have to deal with constant adjustments and it is extremely difficult to see where jobs will be created in five years' time in a new development model which we still have to invent. To be sustainable, that model will need to reconcile the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The social consequences of these major changes are dramatic. Unemployment is affecting more than 200 million workers around the world, especially young people. Of the workers who have jobs, far too many do not have decent work. There is no escaping the fact that the economic and social rules do not fit these new circumstances since they are unable to prevent worsening inequalities or ensure decent work for everyone.

To remedy the situation, the International Labour Organization has a huge responsibility: to change the direction of the globalization of the economy. This is a collective responsibility, which must be shouldered by the three constituents of the ILO, and a huge one, because the ILO is the only place which brings together all the stakeholders in economic and social issues: we see them here in the meeting room. It is an extraordinary place where Governments, Workers and Employers meet and, through dialogue, develop rules for reconciling social progress and economic development.

This dialogue must be rooted in the experiences of the workers and the nature of enterprises. Hence it was absolutely essential that the ILO was present at the G20 in order to raise the profile of the social dimension of globalization. This has brought recognition for the ILO but at the same time responsibility which it has to live up to in the future.

Echoing the words of the Director-General in his Report, the ILO has to take a longer term view and broader perspective as it addresses the major devel-

opments and challenges in the world of work and the role the ILO has to play in this twenty-first century.

Yes, we have to ask ourselves about our representativeness. The legitimacy of tripartism is based on the conviction that its players represent, beyond any shadow of doubt, those on whose behalf they speak.

Yes, we have to preserve the full force of the ILO's standard-setting activity. Standards must remain the key means of ensuring that fundamental rights are respected throughout the world, and that means monitoring observance of them.

Yes, we have to take up the challenge of coherence: coherence among international organizations and coherence among the positions adopted by governments within these organizations, because this is the cornerstone on which the credibility and effectiveness of the multilateral system is built.

Lastly, yes, the ILO needs to think carefully about its position and its responsibilities when it comes to corporate social responsibility. ILO standards only make sense if they really produce effects for all workers in their workplaces, and because the aim of giving everyone decent work is inextricably linked to the need for enterprises to show social responsibility.

These are all challenges which we must take up with confidence and resolve, and we must commit ourselves fully towards implementing the seven initiatives proposed by the Director-General. Faced with the major changes in the world, faced with the dramatic social situations which are giving rise to violence, the world has to choose between chaos or dialogue. The task of the International Labour Organization is to finally turn globalization in the direction of social progress. That depends on social dialogue and compromise. In this way we will be faithful to the ideals which underpinned the establishment of the ILO nearly 100 years ago and we will be able to create the conditions for greater social justice for future generations.

Ms KITUYI (*Government, Kenya*)

It is a great honour to participate in this session of the International Labour Conference, and I take this opportunity to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election.

Kenya wishes to thank the Director-General for a comprehensive and insightful Report which outlines transformational, innovative action required for the ILO's renewed capacity to deliver on its mandate of social justice.

The proposed seven initiatives that are central to work reflect realities that we must embrace, but will require a renewed approach to the work of the ILO and calls for greater tripartite engagement and commitment.

Employment, social protection and environmental issues, woven into an authoritative relevant standards system, have been high on the global agenda, and it is gratifying that they continue to take centre stage at our deliberations at this session of the Conference.

On the eve of its centenary celebrations, the ILO needs to focus more on building the capacity of its constituents to contribute more effectively to the achievement of equitable and inclusive growth. The world, in particular Africa, cannot afford the price of social and political unrest latent in youth unemployment and inequitable growth. We affirm the Report's observation that achieving sustainable

poverty reduction has much to do with a country's ability to reduce inequalities as it grows.

Poverty and the informal economy across developing nations, particularly in Africa, makes it extremely difficult to extend social protection to the unemployed, underemployed and working poor. In order to break poverty cycles among the working poor, we call for a focus on wage-setting mechanisms that strike a balance between the provision, on the one hand, of an adequate living wage that addresses the plight of the underemployed and working poor and, on the other hand, productivity-based wages.

Kenya calls for a fresh boost for objective and realistic labour and macroeconomic policies, skewed towards full and productive employment creation, especially for young people; entrepreneurship promotion in SMEs; and support for the extension of social protection and decent work as a way of addressing poverty reduction and sustainable development.

We urge the ILO to incorporate the outcomes of this year's session of the Conference relating to employment and social protection in its programmes. We also want to see full implementation of the call to action made at last year's Conference session to address the deepening crisis of youth unemployment. In this regard, Kenya requests support for developing and implementing a time-bound national action plan on employment creation as a follow-up to the recent approval by Cabinet of a national employment policy.

In relation to the impact of demographic change, we note that, of the projected global population of 9.3 billion by 2050, seven out of ten people will be living in cities and much of the urban growth will take place in developing countries. We urge the ILO to focus more on rural job creation and development initiatives to stem rural urban migration, particularly in Africa.

The integration of socio-economic and environmental dimensions has become increasingly necessary for sustainable development. The changing labour market conditions are a prerequisite for serious consideration at national level of the need to give priority to green initiatives that lead to a low-carbon work environment and the generation of decent jobs.

Kenya recognizes the Women at Work Initiative and has put in place measures for implementing equality of opportunity and treatment.

The controversy that has dogged the ILO supervisory system should not be an excuse. As an Organization built on the principle of tripartism, we must continue to demonstrate in word and deed that the process of social dialogue is productive and relevant in addressing not only work-related challenges but also governance challenges.

Kenya notes the paradox of high unemployment and the inability of employers to find the right skills to fill existing vacancies. We urge the ILO to focus more on building the capacity of its constituents to create synergy between education and training institutions and industry to address the enduring mismatch between supply and labour.

Kenya believes that to attain full, productive and decent work for all, the ILO and its constituents must re-engage more vigorously ahead of the post-2015 development agenda to ensure that job-rich sustainable growth remains a priority on the international agenda.

Finally, Kenya wishes to take this opportunity to affirm its commitment and continued collaboration with the ILO and the international community in the promotion of social justice.

Original Arabic: Mr EL AZHARY (Minister of Manpower and Migration, Egypt)

At the outset, on behalf of the Arab Republic of Egypt, I would like to congratulate Mr Nidal Katamine on his election to the Presidency of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would also like to express my pleasure in addressing this session, which deals with important issues and topics, which represent major challenges for both member States and the social partners.

I would like to thank Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Office, and his entire staff, for having prepared his Report entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. This is a good report, which reviews in all transparency a few issues including the preparations of the ILO to respond to the needs which are required for the process of change and reform, which it has embarked on in the past months. This is based on the ILO's sense of responsibility towards fulfilling its mandate aimed at achieving social justice, to which all people aspire, especially the people in developing countries. We would like to recall, albeit emphasize, that the ILO has always been, and continues to be, one of the first and most important organizations which address several social and economic crises confronting the world, and to which it pays increasing attention. This is done through monitoring and following up on global changes; and providing means of remedy with respect to the consequences of such crises, through its numerous declarations and instruments. This, in turn, helps the ILO in addressing any imbalance or disorder which impact negatively on the economies of numerous countries, which has started with the Philadelphia Declaration in 1944, and ended in the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact in 2009. This Pact was accepted and adopted at all levels in various regions of the world.

We would like also to pay tribute to the role played by the Organization in this area, in view of its unique tripartite structure.

Allow me to make a few comments on the Report which is before us today. First of all, with respect to the criticism levelled against the efforts of the Organization in coping in all competence and efficiency with global developments, we need to re-examine this position especially in view of the consecutive crises affecting the world, with its negative consequences on the achievements of the Organization. We have a shared responsibility towards various issues and problems. In Egypt, we face similar challenges and no effort is spared in achieving comprehensive social justice, which has been our prime concern since our glorious 25th of January Revolution for we have deployed great efforts in areas such as combating unemployment, promoting youth employment, setting down a minimum wage and introducing other types of social protection. This is all done within the framework of a constructive social dialogue based on applying the principle of tripartite consultation with a view to realizing the social cohesion of Egyptian society. We must pay attention to the role and status of the Organization at the international level and should not forget its

positive contribution in bringing social justice home to the leaders in the different parts of the world. However, this does not mean that the Organization does not have a responsibility to shoulder, for we believe in its pioneering role, and its exceptional capacity in bringing a balance among the partners in the world of work, since its establishment up to the present day. In this connection, one of the lessons learnt is the need to improve the efficient performance of the ILO through the capacity building of its bodies so as to meet its obligations set out in its mandate in order to carry out its work better, and also through the diversification and renewal of some of its bodies. To this effect, Mr Guy Ryder has already embarked on this endeavour by adopting a plan of reform, which is clear in the programme and budget proposals which are before you. We must ensure that all parties express their mutual trust and ensure its reflection in practice.

Second, I would like to commend the Director-General on the Appendix of his Report, *The situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories*, which describes the real situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories in an objective and transparent manner. We would also like to express our agreement with the conclusions contained therein with respect to the efforts which need to be deployed in order to put an end to the suffering of workers of the occupied Arab territories. This is of prime importance especially with regard to the lifting of the excessive restrictions imposed by Israel on mobility, work and economic activity in order to increase job opportunities in an environment characterized by equality, and equal treatment of Palestinian workers.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the entire secretariat of the International Labour Organization on the organization of this Conference, as well as extend my sincere hope for its success.

Mr MAIPAKAI (Minister for Labour and Industrial Relations, Papua New Guinea)

On behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea, may I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his appointment as Director-General of the International Labour Office. It is over six months into his new term and the small nation of Papua New Guinea is confident in the work of his directorship. Our vision is now far-reaching.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment of the President of the 102nd Session of the Conference and I congratulate him indeed for his exuberant captaincy over the working of the session of 2013.

In the light of the pace of change affecting much of the world and on the eve of the ILO's centenary, Papua New Guinea shares that wake-up call for a new and more workable approach to alert to the dawning realities that are transforming the world of work.

The International Labour Organization has been present in Papua New Guinea for the last 35 years. I commend the tireless work and efforts that have undeniably paved the way for gradual improvement in existing gaps, thus ensuring coherency on the labour front in the world of work through enabling partnerships for development, and progress and direct involvement at the international and regional levels.

In the light of a whole aggregate of lessons learned in the world of work and identified challenges ahead, a more competitive platform is needed to strengthen the capacity of the ILO to better its mandate with the support of the constituents as it edges towards its centenary. Papua New Guinea stands ready and committed to usher in this new era.

The Decent Work Agenda has given rise to a lot of development initiatives for advancement as the way forward among constituents. A developing Papua New Guinea, that is yet to grasp more from lessons learned, is attentive and fully aware of the extent of its capacity to react to the impact of globalization.

Two months from now, Papua New Guinea's tripartite body will sign the reviewed Decent Work Country Programme 2013–16. The review has thus far identified priorities, now to be pursued as the ILO draws towards its 100th year.

A new national policy framework for Papua New Guinea – “Vision 2050” – to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of benefits in a safe and secure environment for all its people is partly owing to the Decent Work Agenda, as it also sets the course for work towards nation-building, human development and integrity.

Currently, our economy is dominated by the mining and energy sectors. It is estimated that these sectors contribute some 80 per cent of our total export revenue. The strategic direction for “Vision 2050” of Papua New Guinea is to develop and expand the manufacturing services, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors between 2010 and 2050. However, our current labour capacity faces future challenges in a growing economy.

Our people are the most vulnerable resources in our development aspirations and ongoing national building efforts and this time around, in line with the objectives of our national framework, Papua New Guinea includes in its Decent Work Country Programme 2013–16, amid considerable consultation, a first-time commitment to establish a national employment policy underpinning cross-sectoral labour issues on employment, skills development, training, job creation, child labour, etc.

As we collectively commit ourselves to these remaining weeks, may all our deliberations and decisions benefit humanity all over the world.

Original Spanish: Mr BERMÚDEZ (Worker, Uruguay)

On behalf of the Uruguayan workers organized in our confederation, the Inter-Trade Union Assembly-Workers' National Convention (PIT-CNT), we would like to express our satisfaction with the contents of the Report, presented to this Conference by the Director-General, in particular regarding the changes affecting the world of work in this century and their repercussions and impacts, addressed through this Organization's commitment to promote social justice to the fullest possible extent in meeting the institutional challenges created by the global context.

We also support the initiatives with which he concludes his analysis and we feel committed to doing everything that we can towards their implementation.

However, regarding the indication of the weakening of the ILO's transforming capacities as a result of the acceleration of the globalization of the economy, we have observed in this Conference that cer-

tain institutional challenges have also picked up speed. We consider that those challenges are part of a strategy adopted by some actors within the Organization itself, who are deliberately trying to undermine and delegitimize the work of the supervisory bodies, and the Organization's key standard-setting work.

Furthermore, these efforts, be they deliberate or not, tend towards the incorrect application of the general principles of law included in the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. As seen in 2012, this tactic has consisted of calling into question the role of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the Committee on Freedom of Association. As workers, we do not always agree with their decisions, but we recognize their work and the need for their existence, in so far as they contribute to the development and protection of fundamental rights, incorporated into the global judicial conscience through national proceedings, and to the extension of these values and rights in the world of work.

On the other hand, we have unions, such as those in Uruguay, and governments that try, and, in the case of Uruguay, succeed in developing standards in line with the fundamental labour Conventions, especially those relating to freedom of association and collective bargaining. We should therefore be serious and determined in calling into question these regressive practices that are undermining that which the Report of the Director-General identifies as the ILO's “unique advantage”.

This was again the case this year in the Committee on the Application of Standards, when it came to analysing the General Survey on labour relations in the public service.

We reject the stance taken by the Employers in this Committee, as well as the position of the GRULAC member countries, which has been supported, whether by omission or commission, by the Government of Uruguay, which has developed legislation in line with the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), but when it came to examining the report presented before the Committee on the Application of Standards, supported the unjustified criticisms of the group to which it belongs.

The Government of Uruguay, which was very nearly placed back on the list of countries that are asked to answer complaints under 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), in the private sector, contradicts its legislative activities and its progress in this area by aligning itself with those who intend to undermine the ILO supervisory system, dismantle its standard-setting mechanism, and ignore the general principles and fundamental Conventions of this Organization.

We wish to express our deep concern in this regard, and restate our commitment, especially to the Director-General's governance initiatives under the reform of the ILO and the implementation of the measures contained in the 2008 Declaration, which refers to the consolidation of the tripartite system and the recognition of international labour standards.

Today, on the World Day Against Child Labour, we salute the children of this world, who should be able to study, play, love and be protected because they are our future.

Mr ATWOLI (*Worker, Kenya*)

I take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Conference and his Vice-Presidents for their well deserved election to guide the affairs of this Conference. The Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), Kenya, has total confidence in their ability to effectively guide the affairs of the Conference. I also congratulate the Director-General of the ILO for producing a clear, focused Report on the status of the Organization as it prepares its transition to the next century.

We agree that, despite the changed context of the world of work in which the ILO and its constituents find themselves, the mandate still remains the same and, as such, we have to be able to jointly adapt, innovate and build our creativities in order to effectively deliver on the ILO's mandate. The Kenyan Workers agree with the Report's observation that, despite the encouraging achievements in the last 89 years of its existence, new challenges have emerged that must be dealt with in order to position the Organization in an advantaged position as the rollover to its second century enters the home stretch.

Indeed, as echoed by Mr David Morse, the fifth Director-General of the International Labour Office, on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969, the "dangerous explosives" in "the hidden depths of the community – the national community and the world community" that he talked about are still around, and we welcome the Report for pointing out where they lie and how we can better go about continuing the task of "defusing" them.

With this in view, it is our position that this Conference, and the ILO in general, has to comprehensively address the key institutional challenges outlined in the Report and which touch on the following areas: tripartism and the representative legitimacy, standards, coherence, and the ILO and enterprises.

We, in the trade union fraternity, recognize that changes in productive arrangements brought by globalization and global supply chains have tended to reduce trade union membership. This, however, needs to be viewed in the context of the practice of multinational enterprises of engaging labour contractors whose sole objective is to maximize profits without due regard for adherence to minimum labour standards, thereby exacerbating the "race to the bottom" thesis.

In this regard, Kenyan workers are of the view that the ILO may wish to prioritize and consider re-tabling the issue of employment relations in the agenda of the Conference in the near future with a view to adopting a firm, fair and relevant standard to guide the tripartite partners.

We further agree that, while constituents may not fully represent all the classes of workers on some of the issues we raised earlier, this cannot be an excuse for non-state actors to invade the tested framework of tripartism. In this regard we, in Kenya, take this opportunity to advise civil society and other non-state actors that labour issues remain the core domain of established workers' and employers' organizations, and that their participation in such mat-

ters can only be through such organizations and not directly through the workers and our members.

The COTU (Kenya) agrees with the Report's analysis that a number of challenges that face the ILO and its constituents are owing to the transformation that has taken place in the world of work. For developing countries, like Kenya, some of these challenges, which include, among others, the impact of demographic change and the changing nature of production and employment, require a shift of policy mixes and production patterns towards job-rich growth. We say this because we, in Kenya, have in the past witnessed impressive economic growth, reaching 7 per cent in 2007, but such growth never resulted in decent jobs. Instead, what we witnessed was an upsurge in inequality and poverty among workers. We are, however, privileged in that we have recently inaugurated a new democratically elected Government, whose central goal and manifesto is the creation of jobs through economic growth. Nevertheless, during our Labour Day celebration, which was graced by none other than our newly elected President, Honourable Uhuru Kenyatta, we pointed out to him the need for the new Government to seal leakages through which huge amounts of revenue, which could have been used for investment in job-rich infrastructure and investment in development projects, are lost. It is indeed our firm belief that if foolproof systems are put in place to curtail tax evasion, the country would conservatively gain more than a third of 354.45 billion Kenya shillings, which could significantly address the employment and social challenges facing our country.

Lastly, I inform this august Conference that there is a looming threat in Kenya from a creature created by the new National Constitution, namely the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, which intends to encroach on freely negotiated collective bargaining agreements by fighting to reduce wages of both public and private employees. As workers, we will resist any attempt by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission of Kenya to interfere with the freely negotiated terms and conditions of service of our members, as this negates the ILO Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95).

Original Spanish: Mr PARRA (Employer, Cuba)

I congratulate the President on his election as President of the International Labour Conference, and I wish him every success in his work.

Throughout consecutive years of crisis the situation has not improved. The extent of interdependence of the world economy means that the effects of any problems spread from one region to another.

We second the Director-General when calling attention to the deteriorating youth employment crisis. Its effects will have a dangerous impact on the future.

Furthermore, there is greater consensus on the fact that social inequalities are growing and this is a threat for the stability of countries throughout the world. This has been identified as a global risk.

The contraction of demand and an increase in unemployment go hand in hand. We have to break this vicious circle with programmes that take into account the need to support the development of sustainable enterprises in order to produce productive jobs.

The Director-General's Report recognizes the mandate of the ILO to promote sustainable enter-

prises as an integral part of the Decent Work Agenda, and we welcome the new Enterprises Department which has been set up by the ILO in response to the need for an increase in the level of information available on entrepreneurship.

With the centenary of the ILO approaching, seven initiatives have been proposed. They deserve our support since any advancement in these areas will be very important.

Regarding standards, there is a need to improve the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, the Committee of Experts and the International Labour Standards Department itself, to achieve greater transparency while adhering to the founding principles.

Regarding the green initiative, discussing the topic during this Conference is an important step in endeavouring to extend decent work towards sustainable development and lower carbon emission levels. On the same note, we must highlight how the business sector has presented initiatives in this area, recognizing the opportunities in innovation and the development of new products and services.

Of key importance are regulations, investments and better support for companies to produce new green and efficient products and services. This transition will also generate losses for parts of the business sector, affecting workers. This situation should be planned for and managed under national policies.

Another important line of action is promoting the ongoing training of workers and the development of new skills so that they can adapt to new economic and work situations.

Updating the economic model in my country with the involvement of workers, employers and society as a whole, has been very positive. We have been able to make progress and mitigate the effects of the global economic crisis which, in our case, have been aggravated by a 40-year long economic blockade and the effects of climate change. The results of this permanent social dialogue, adjusted to our country characteristics, have shown that it is an invaluable instrument in identifying each problem and the solutions to it.

We can highlight the progress that has been made on the environment and the changes to our energy policies: we are encouraging different forms of sustainable agriculture and increasing the proportion of renewable energies, such as biomass, wind and solar energy, which is very important in a small country with limited natural resources.

Original Farsi: Ms AFZALI (Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Afghanistan)

Please allow me, on behalf of the Afghanistan delegation, to congratulate the President on his election to the International Labour Conference. Under his wise leadership and guidance, we are highly confident that we will achieve the objectives of the Conference as set forth in the agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that Afghanistan stands firmly behind its commitments and obligations to implement the ILO Conventions and Recommendations that it has ratified to date. In the light of the ILO's standards and with its technical assistance, we have completed the revision of our labour legislation, which we began two years ago.

In Afghanistan, unemployment and underemployment are unfortunately much worse than in

many other countries around the world. This is largely due to several decades of war and unrest, which have demolished most of our country's economic infrastructures. We see that there is a close link in our country between unemployment and underemployment on the one hand, and insecurity and instability on the other. Lack of work and insufficient income encourage some to join insurgent groups or result in their exploitation by opportunists. Others are compelled to flee their country and migrate illegally, sometimes becoming involved in drug trafficking or falling victim to acts of terrorism.

In order to tackle unemployment and create decent work, the Government of Afghanistan has developed the first draft of the national labour policy, as well as a national employment policy. It has also drafted its first labour immigration policy to fight illegal practices in this area. These policies have been submitted to ILO experts.

As a least developed country, Afghanistan faces a number of challenges. In particular, we need to develop our agriculture and mining sectors to generate employment and improve the socio-economic situation. Recognizing the importance of the agriculture and mining sectors, the Government of Afghanistan has set these at the heart of its macroeconomic policy. Considering that 65–70 per cent of our working population is engaged in the agricultural sector, the development of this sector naturally plays an important role in the development of Afghanistan. We should therefore commit ourselves to building the necessary infrastructures to increase the productivity of this sector.

On the other hand, in order to build infrastructure in all sectors, including transport, water supply and sanitation, sufficient financial and skilled human resources are needed. Through the exploitation of mining resources we should be able to increase our financial resources and create an environment conducive to investment and building national infrastructures.

Regarding the increase in unemployment, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is striving to pave the way for establishing a technical and professional training system and a national qualification and certification authority.

We are also in the process of developing and implementing a macroeconomic policy that takes our regional labour market policies into consideration. Our objectives also include the enhancement of self-employment and social protection, along with other major levers contributing to the increase in the rate of employment and we are currently considering other measures to improve the labour market. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled is currently training 100,000 people for occupations meeting labour market demand. The creation of employment services for our jobseekers is also a priority. We hope that the ILO will be able to assist us in achieving this goal.

A large number of Afghans are currently working in foreign countries, especially in the Gulf and Middle Eastern countries. These people are economic migrants facing a number of problems such as inadequate working conditions, the violation of their fundamental rights, lack of documentation and financial problems, among others. To resolve these problems, we are trying to regulate labour migration and we rely on the technical cooperation of the ILO

to help us finalize and implement our national labour migration policy.

In the area of social security, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, with the cooperation of the World Bank, has implemented a pension reform project and a social security net pilot project in a few districts. We have thus developed the necessary infrastructures for pensioners and hope to achieve the objectives of our pilot project.

The initiative of the Decent Work Country Programme for Afghanistan, which is being implemented with the technical cooperation of the ILO, is of major importance. The Programme has three key priorities: promoting employment in the context of international labour standards; informing employers and encouraging job creation, while involving them in drafting national policies; and improving industrial relations. It also highlights the importance of social dialogue and gender equality.

In concluding, I would like to thank the International Labour Organization for its cooperation with Afghanistan and wish it every success in the future.

Mr BATSHU (*Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana*)

On behalf of the Botswana delegation, I would like to add my word of congratulations to the President on his election to direct the proceedings of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I have no doubt in his ability to competently and successfully direct the proceedings of this Conference, and I pledge the support of my delegation to him and to his Vice-Presidents.

The 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference is taking place at a time when the world is experiencing a less than satisfactory recovery from the global economic crisis. As the Director-General has rightly observed in his Report to the Conference, there are signs of significant improvements in the economic performance of some countries, while, in others, economic recovery is still slow. This trend has adverse implications for the attainment of the goal of decent work.

In Botswana we are approaching the issues of employment creation and social protection with the seriousness they deserve. The Government has come up with several interventions aimed at promoting employment and self-employment among women, young people and people with disabilities. Worth noting are huge reforms in skills, citizen empowerment schemes, poverty alleviation programmes, apprenticeship and internship programmes, as well as legislative reviews to remove discriminatory practices against people with disabilities.

Tribute must be paid to the social partners for their contribution to the fight against poverty. Through the pursuit of the principles of decent work, the goal of eliminating poverty by 2030, as set by the World Bank, has become possible.

As part of the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme, the design of a broad-based occupational pension scheme is at an advanced stage. The objective is to establish a universal occupational pension scheme and to consolidate existing old-age and private occupational pension schemes.

The realization that the responsibilities of the ILO extend beyond the working environment is timely. The impact of the working environment on our planet is substantial. In fact, the world of work is the single most important contributor to the degrada-

tion of the environment. Failure on the part of the ILO to act would be not only tragic, but also suicidal, because, as has rightly been pointed out in the Report of the Director-General, environmental sustainability is a precondition for sustainable enterprises and jobs.

My delegation strongly endorses discussing the strategic objective of social dialogue under the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. Social dialogue is one of the founding principles of the ILO. The ILO derives its strength from tripartism and social dialogue.

It is a fact that social dialogue gives meaning to the existence of workers' and employers' organizations. For it to deliver, social dialogue must be free and autonomous. Strong social partners are key to effective social dialogue. Consequently, the ILO should devote more resources to capacity building among the social partners. In addition, the ILO should assist member States with law reforms to facilitate compliance with ILO standards.

It is gratifying to note that the zero real growth budget proposal for 2014–15 takes into account the precarious budgetary situation in most countries. The increasing demands on the services of the ILO by its constituents call for prioritization of programmes so as to maximize the utilization of resources.

The road to the ILO centenary is clear. Selecting the eight areas of critical importance in the Programme and Budget for 2014–15 is a step in the right direction. Botswana accepts the appeal by the Director-General for the tripartite constituents to renew their commitment to the realization of the mandate of the ILO.

Original Arabic: Mr ABDULLA (Worker, Bahrain)

It is a great pleasure for me to address you on behalf of the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions and to share with you the hopes and fears that are of concern to all of us as Members of the ILO, which will soon be celebrating its centenary at a time when we face many challenges.

As the Director-General states in his Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, the world of work in this twenty-first century is very much a world of change. He says in the Report that this Organization of ours has to renew itself and adapt to the world of work as it is today. The ILO's essential principles are embodied in three crucial declarations: the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia, the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. These three declarations, together with the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), reflect the ILO's ever-present goals as they relate to the two underlying themes of sustainable world peace and social justice for all.

Tripartism, which has been a central feature of our Organization from its creation with 44 member States right up to today when it has 185 Members, forms part of the very bedrock of the Organization. If growth, whether in terms of capital, production or the distribution of wealth, is to reflect a balanced distribution of assets among the various segments of society and guarantee prosperity and stability rather than simply enriching one class of society while marginalizing the rest, there has to be genuine tripartism that is conducive to the generation of decent

work in a context of freedom, equality and social justice.

Our Confederation has always promoted effective tripartism through social dialogue as a means of achieving Bahraini society's objective of social justice.

Even during the Arab Spring, whose impact was felt in our country too, where large numbers of workers were dismissed, suspended or discriminated against in terms of their rights following the Bassiouni report presented on 23 November 2011 to His Majesty the King, who ordered that its recommendations be implemented, our Confederation never lost its faith in dialogue. It strove patiently to maintain contact with the competent authorities at a state summit, from His Majesty the King down to the lowliest official, explaining the situation to them without any attempt to exaggerate or to deceive – contrary to all the accusations that have been levelled against us. The most recent agreement that we reached with our tripartite partners in the Tripartite Commission concerned the introduction of a tripartite mechanism (which has unfortunately not yet got off the ground) to compile a list of dismissed workers to show all those who falsely accuse us of exaggeration and deceit.

When we look at all we have done so far, we are proud to belong to the ILO, which not only protects the rights of workers but offers a remarkable degree of protection in human and juridical terms.

Let me make two points. First of all, we have not achieved everything we had hoped to achieve, namely, to have all dismissed workers reinstated in their jobs and paid all the compensation to which they were entitled, so as to cover the wages they lost during the time they were out of work as well as social security coverage for that period and beyond, and to guarantee their right to equal treatment and to non-discrimination in terms of benefits and acquired rights.

We would like to reassert that, even if we have sometimes fallen short of our ambitions, our achievements bear testimony to the importance of dialogue and collective bargaining. It is not the victory of one side or the other, but the victory of workers' rights and freedoms and of the ILO's principles and standards, a victory for the country and for the working class as a whole.

As we confront with determination the repercussions of the dismissed workers issue today, we would like to stress that only through concerted efforts backed by ILO technical assistance can we bring the matter to a close and move on to other matters of major concern for workers, such as jobs for the unemployed, social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Our Federation will always need the ILO's support, especially because of the sanctions imposed upon it both explicitly and implicitly. There is no longer any social dialogue with the Federation and its affiliated unions, and the Federation has not been involved in the amendment of the Labour Code or in the law on trade unions, even though it has the right to be. Its views have been ignored.

We would like to stress the need for the ILO to state clearly its position on the Palestinian issue and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

We wish the Conference every success in its efforts to establish a more equitable and just world

and to attain its strategic objectives as it reaches its 100th anniversary.

Mr WALLABA JAYATISSA LIYANAGE (*Government, Sri Lanka*)

I have the honour to participate in the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference and to deliver a statement on behalf of the Group of 15, which is known as the G-15.

We are a summit-level group of 17 developing countries established to foster, promote and sustain South–South cooperation and North–South dialogue for socio-economic progress, stability and sustainable development. Naturally, the labour and employment issues which are the centre of the deliberations at this Conference appear high on our agenda as well.

This Group remains concerned that the continuing global financial crisis, which has led to an uncertain economic outlook, aggravated unemployment and rising poverty levels, is hampering ongoing efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in many developing countries.

The number of unemployed worldwide rose to over 197 million in 2012 and, if this global unemployment trend persists, it may reach more than 210 million in the next five years. These figures are particularly daunting as three-quarters of this increase directly affects developing countries, particularly in Asia and Africa. Noting that the youth are developing countries are severely affected by this crisis, the Group calls for vigorous and unified action to promote forward-looking and progressive pro-macroeconomic and labour market policies to enhance youth rights, employability and entrepreneurship, while adequately confronting the grim legacy of a "lost generation".

The Group welcomes the outcome of the Rio +20 Conference which confirms the global commitment for eradicating poverty and integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and clearly draws attention to the need for sustainable development strategies to proactively address employment and generate decent jobs. The outcome also recognizes the importance of a just transition, including programmes to help workers adjust to labour market conditions and enhance capacity building to help optimize the development of workers' skills according to the present needs.

The Group urges special attention to be focused on SMEs through policy support, investments and incentives, as they remain fundamental to the economic fabric of developing countries. The Group recognizes the significant implications of the new demographic context for employment and social protection, particularly as it affects, inter alia, issues of productivity, poverty and migration in developing countries.

The Group appeals for adequate and informed policy interventions for an inclusive, integrated and gender-sensitive decent labour framework that builds on intergenerational solidarity and extends over the life cycle. In this regard, the Group calls upon the ILO to undertake further research and analysis on demographic transition, its impact and possible policy responses, particularly for developing countries where 73 per cent of the world's older population will be living by 2030. The Group notes the report of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, just submitted in May 2013,

where we have noted, with great interest, that creating jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth are among the priorities. The Group welcomes the ILO's involvement in the post-2015 development process.

Looking ahead, the Group calls for the redoubling of global efforts, to ensure that the objectives of full and productive employment and decent work for all are duly considered in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. In the attempt to make employment and decent work the priority on the international agenda, the Group recognizes the importance of promoting social dialogue. The Group reiterates its full commitment to continue stimulating and harnessing the potential of South-South triangular, and North-South, cooperation in this important endeavour.

Finally, the Group agrees that the controversy surrounding the ILO supervisory system raises questions of fundamental significance for the ILO itself. A standards system which does not command full tripartite support and commitment will inevitably suffer in terms of authority and credibility. The Group underlines the importance of an inclusive, tripartite and constituent-led process for overcoming the challenges ahead.

In closing, the Group would like to express its appreciation for the dedicated leadership and commitment of Mr Guy Ryder at this critical time and wishes this Conference every success.

Original Spanish: Ms SEGOVIA AZUCAS (Minister of Justice and Labour, Paraguay)

At the outset, the official delegation of the Republic of Paraguay would like to congratulate Mr Nidal Katamine on his election as President of the plenary sessions of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, wishing him every success.

We would also like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder for the Report that he has given to us as Director-General of the ILO, and highlight the accuracy and soundness of the analysis carried out and the conclusions reached.

The Report presented by the Director-General gives us an overview of the world of work in this twenty-first century, analysing the different factors contributing to changing that world, their influence on the ILO and the capacities of the ILO to continue fulfilling its mandate. We support the conclusions of the Director-General which state that the ILO has repeatedly demonstrated, throughout its existence, its outstanding creativity and capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and that it will thus be successful in meeting present challenges. In this light, our delegation not only agrees with the conclusions in the Report, but also expresses our full tripartite support for implementing the initiatives it puts forward. We are also convinced that these initiatives are effective tools to enable the ILO to fulfil its mandate and continue fighting for social justice.

We think that decent work is a prerequisite for eradicating poverty and a key element of the post-2015 development agenda. As for Paraguay, specialists predict annual economic growth of 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) for this decade. It goes without saying that this should be accompanied by policies and programmes aimed at mitigating poverty and reducing social inequality. Failing this, such problems will undermine the effective development of our economy and the valid-

ity of our democratic and fundamental labour rights, which will make social peace impossible to achieve.

For all these reasons, and in light of our country's situation, we think that the first essential step for us is to set up a Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. The national Government headed by our President, Federico Franco, has prioritized the creation of this new Ministry, and all necessary steps have been taken to that end, and I would like to reaffirm here in this forum that we will not cease in our endeavours. We are driven in our efforts by the conviction that the structure of the Ministry of Justice and Labour, which goes back to 1948, is simply not adapted to meeting the current challenges in the world of work, referred to in the Report of the Director-General.

In much the same way, we reaffirm that social dialogue and tripartism are necessary and relevant for resolving economic and social problems at the national level, and for strengthening social cohesion.

When it comes to the standards system of the ILO, we are pleased to report that as a result of our tripartite efforts, our country has ratified Convention No. 189. Likewise, we have also implemented the act on the integration of young persons into the labour market. This reflects Paraguay's desire to internalize and assimilate the ILO Conventions in its national legal system.

We would like to thank the ILO for the unfailing technical cooperation that it has provided to Paraguay. We also would like to take this opportunity to call for a permanent office to be set up in our country so that we can continue to make progress in solving pressing issues.

The Republic of Paraguay expresses its firm support for the ILO and recognizes the progress which has been made during the nearly 100 years of its existence. Yet again, our country wants to voice its confidence that the Organization will continue to meet its objectives through a commitment to tripartism.

May God help us in these efforts.

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

Let me first of all express my gratitude to the new ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, for the comprehensive Report identifying the global priorities and key challenges of the twenty-first century in labour, employment and social security.

I believe that the Report reflects the determination of the ILO to share with our countries its valuable experience in the restoration of social justice, even in critical circumstances.

On the other hand, in many countries decent work and a fair system of social protection have yet to be achieved, and despite macroeconomic growth there is no fair distribution of incomes, while social stratification is on the rise and ecologically unsound and environmentally harmful conditions of work are spreading. These problems continue to perturb the international community.

The experience of recent years has shown that tension in the labour market, and in the social sphere generally, can cause political crises.

These are also topical matters in Azerbaijan. As well as macroeconomic stability, we are focusing primarily on the real challenges and tasks for the future. Current programmes in the country give an important place to tasks such as: providing better

employment opportunities for the population, particularly for young people; training a competitive workforce; creating an equal social security system accessible to all; creating a fair labour market compatible with international labour standards; and developing of a middle class.

The more than threefold growth in the national economy during the last nine years has resulted in the non-oil sector now taking a 52.7 per cent share of GDP, and the creation of more than 1.2 million new jobs, as well as a fall in unemployment to 5.2 per cent.

In 2009, when the global economy was in severe crisis, Azerbaijan achieved 9.3 per cent economic growth, thereby ending its transitional period and entering the stage of modern reforms.

As long ago as 2000, when Azerbaijan became a signatory to the UN Millennium Declaration, it launched concrete programmes to reduce poverty. As a result, in the last ten years the poverty rate has decreased from 49 per cent to 6 per cent. In this sense, the initiative by the World Bank to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 is fully achievable in Azerbaijan.

Of course, because of economic growth and modernization and Azerbaijan's integration into the world economy, increasing the competitiveness of labour resources and their adaptation to the demands of economic growth are topical issues. The extensive introduction of new technologies requires the training of skilled and competent human resources for newly emerging professions, and creating a close link between education and the labour market. Certainly, in spite of all that is being done and the results achieved in the country's economy, the continuing existence in Azerbaijan of an informal economy, inadequate vocational knowledge and skills among unemployed people and jobseekers, including young people, and the failure of labour resources to meet international standards, are causes of serious difficulties for the country's integration into the global labour market.

Alongside economic growth, providing workers with decent working conditions and a fair system of social protection is one of the priority tasks in the reform strategies being pursued in Azerbaijan. Already, in conjunction with foreign partners and in the framework of the programme on improved vocational standards, 200 occupational standards have been devised for training skilled workers to international standards, and especially for adapting the system of higher and secondary education to the current demands of the labour market.

As a consequence of the increased attention paid in Azerbaijan to international cooperation on labour and employment, the second conference of ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was held in April this year in Baku, Azerbaijan, at which important documents on cooperation in labour and employment were signed between the member States of the Organization, and a decision was made to establish, in Baku, a special organ of the OIC, the Labour Centre. The Centre's main function will be to promote and encourage the adoption of ILO principles in the member countries of the OIC. Azerbaijan is also expected to host the Conference of Ministers of the Council of Europe responsible for Social Cohesion.

I am sure that this Conference will contribute to the development and successful implementation of

active policies addressing these issues in member States, and will strengthen joint efforts in this field.

(Mr Katamine takes the Chair.)

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

First of all, I should like to congratulate the President of this year's session of the Conference on his election. Allow me also to express the interest of the Government of the United Arab Emirates in the Director-General's Report, which sets out the challenges faced by the world of work and the policies aimed at allowing the ILO to renew its capacity for fulfilling its mandate and achieving its goals.

The Director-General's Report paints a picture of the challenges facing labour markets as a result of the new demographic context, including the need to provide new entrants to the labour market with decent job opportunities, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East. We are in full agreement with what has been said in the Report because the Gulf region is facing the same issues, the resolution of which calls for the formulation of a series of policies that can create decent work in the region.

I particularly appreciate what is said in the Report regarding the commitment to tackling the challenges facing the ILO, especially the need to accomplish tasks in a climate of rapid global change and the issue of governance of the relationship between the ILO constituents, with the strengthening of their partnership being the prerequisite for achieving the constitutional objectives of the Organization.

I agree with the Director-General's view, stated in paragraph 89 of the Report, that it is necessary to face the criticisms sometimes levelled at the ILO's tripartite structure and working methods. He does not advocate ignoring such criticisms, even if some of them are misplaced. From my Government's point of view, the decisive factor in preserving the ILO's capacity to fulfil its historic role is not so much to engage with criticism from outside sources but to ensure the cohesion of the Organization's tripartite constituents and structure on the basis of a balance of interests and roles. This was also the opinion of former ILO Director-General David Morse, who said: "The ILO can only be as effective an instrument for progress as its member States and its other constituents want it to be."

Moreover, the Report highlights the need to renew the international labour standards system. However, one of the obstacles here is the lack of trust, especially when the perception of the parties concerned is that their partners are actually seeking to derive sectoral advantages at the expense of common interests.

The Report also refers to the fact that the Committee on the Application of Standards failed to complete its work at the Conference last year, not only because of differences of opinion regarding the right to strike, but also owing to conflicting interpretations of the mandate and authority of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. We feel that what happened actually reflected a crisis of confidence between two key constituents, with one party feeling that the other was seeking to derive sectoral advantages to the detriment of common objectives.

We fully agree with the emphasis placed by the Director-General in the Report on the importance of

overcoming the difficulties that arose last year. However, we would also like to point out that avoiding repercussions from last year's dispute depends on how we tackle the issue of the loss of trust between the constituents. It is not just about differences of opinion regarding the role and responsibility of the Committee of the Experts. If we believe that what happened last year reflects a crisis of confidence, then the Organization has the responsibility to deal with this crisis while also making sure that there is no such recurrence in future. This must be done through systematic initiatives to restore the importance of responsible dialogue between the constituents of the Organization on the basis of common goals and a balance of interests and roles.

We therefore call upon the ILO to give special attention to the strengthening of responsible dialogue within the decision-making bodies of the Organization, in particular the Conference and the Governing Body, and also give special attention to the promotion of social dialogue at the national level in the member States. The Government of the United Arab Emirates looks forward to contributing to the achievement of this goal.

Original Russian: Mr MOHBALIYEV (Worker, Azerbaijan)

May I, on behalf of the Trade Union Confederation of Azerbaijan, warmly welcome all participants to this session of the Conference and wish us all successful work.

Today's topic is interesting and topical in the way it relates to the social and economic activities of the labour markets of countries with different levels of population development. As you know, according to the UN classification, the population of countries where the proportion of people 65 and over is less than 4 per cent is considered young; when that figure is 4–7 per cent, the population is considered to be ageing; and when it is 7 and above, the population is considered to be an elderly one. At present, the ageing process in developed countries is accelerating. In many European States, the proportion of the population aged over 65 is already more than 15–17 per cent. This is because of a falling birth rate and because people are living longer. According to present forecasts, in the very near future the average age of the population of the planet will soon grow, and by 2030 it will be 35. These demographic changes have already affected Azerbaijan. Twenty years ago, the population of our State could have been called fairly young. However, today it is considered ageing. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over has grown from 4.8 to 5.8 per cent, and the proportion of those under 15 years of age has dropped from 33.1 to 22.3 per cent. Life expectancy continues to grow steadily and at present is about 74 years.

In the first few years after the restoration of independence in Azerbaijan, when the political, social and economic situation in the Republic was unstable, contrary to the will and mentality of the Azerbaijani people, there was a separatist conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, an ancient Azerbaijani territory. I will not go into the details of this conflict. I just want to point out that it caused much destruction in the life of our peace-loving people, and one of the results was a breakdown of the demographic development of the population. The birth rate fell. Whereas at the beginning of the 1990s, for every 1,000 people, 26.6 persons were born, in recent years it has hardly been more than 18 per 1,000. In

describing the demographic changes we must note that although the population is increasing, the number of those below working age has fallen slightly, which may cause problems in supplying the economy with sufficient labour. We are aware of this problem and we are working on trying to resolve it, and we hope that our meeting today will enrich us with the experience of other countries.

Labour resources for the period 2000–11 have grown from 4.7 million to 6.1 million people, slightly less than in the preceding period. By implementing a policy of turning “black gold” into human capital, Azerbaijan has managed to avoid the fallout from the world crisis. A number of comprehensive programmes have been adopted, aiming at an increase in GDP, which has tripled since 2003, increasing employment and creating conditions for decent work. Between 2007 and 2012, almost US\$100 billion were invested in the Republic, of which US\$60 billion were provided from internal funds. As a result, more than 1.1 million additional jobs were created, 70 per cent of them in the regions, and this has considerably reduced internal migration. Unemployment has fallen from 11 to 5.2 per cent, and 130,000 families, or over 600,000 people, are receiving targeted social assistance.

We are glad to see that in recent years there has been a trend towards an increased birth rate in the Republic, and we are sure that with a gradual increase in wages and the implementation of measures under the law on social security, intended to stimulate the birth rate and ameliorate mortgage terms for young families, the state programme on demographic development and population will help to rejuvenate and strengthen the country's skilled labour potential.

Analysing trends of ageing populations throughout the world, we can say that there are demographic problems common to many countries. Standards of living are worsening for some sectors of the population; there are growing social inequalities based on income, some infrastructure is badly developed, many people have no access to services, the quality of food products is poor, a range of illnesses are spreading, the ecological balance is disturbed along with environmental damage, there are interethnic and international conflicts, refugees and forced migrants, and there is poor regulation of migratory flows. Eliminating these and other problems should be a central focus of strategic programmes in both developed and developing countries.

I also think that the problem of ageing should be the subject of negotiation between the social partners. We should make maximum use of the Older Workers Recommendation, 1980 (No. 162), because we are talking about social protection for older workers. The International Labour Organization could help our countries to adopt this document in its essence and to implement it in practice. The ageing of the population is irreversible and unavoidable. However, if we devise and carry out the necessary measures in a timely manner, we can avoid the negative consequences of this process.

Mr AHMED (Minister of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh)

Let me begin by congratulating Dr Nidal Katamine of Jordan on his election as President of the Conference.

Let me also thank the Director-General for his Report focusing on decent jobs, labour standards,

sustainable development, social dialogue and the restructuring of the ILO. Bangladesh attaches much importance to all these.

We are currently working with the ILO to implement the Better Work programme in Bangladesh which is expected to improve both compliance with labour standards and competitiveness in the global supply chains. As part of the regional programme, the Green Jobs Initiative in Bangladesh has been implemented in two phases by the ILO's tripartite partners.

A total of 2.5 per cent of our GDP accounts for social protection schemes. In line with our constitutional obligations, our Government is committed to ensuring social security for all citizens. While we are yet to face the challenge of an ageing population, we have initiated schemes to ensure long-term social protection for the aged, particularly by expanding the scope and coverage of these schemes, with technical support from the ILO.

Allow me to highlight some steps that the Government has taken since the last session of the International Labour Conference for improving overall working conditions and workplace safety in Bangladesh.

Our commitment to poverty reduction remains central, through job creation, productivity growth and social investments. Our development policies are aimed at ensuring that economic growth is sustainable and inclusive, and at promoting social justice and equity.

In 2010, the Government took a major step for the workers of the ready-made garments industry by raising wages in the ready-made garments sector. Wages were increased by over 80 per cent through dialogue between the employers and workers. Considering the cost of living, a new Wage Board was formed a month back to recommend minimum wages for the ready-made garments sector. This will directly benefit 3.5 million workers, most of them women.

Considering our socio-economic setting and the ILO Conventions, the Government has taken further steps to update the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006. The draft amendments were finalized in consultation with the tripartite constituents to ensure that the views of various stakeholders are reflected adequately. Inputs of the ILO were also taken into account. Last April, the Bangladesh Cabinet approved the amendments to the Act which has been placed before the Parliament during the ongoing session.

Our Government is also working towards eliminating hazardous and worst forms of child labour by 2016. To this effect, in line with the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), we have listed 38 types of work which are hazardous for children.

We have introduced a National Employment Services Programme to provide short-term employment and training for 4 million unemployed youth in the public sector. Two years back, we adopted the National Skills Development Policy aiming at supporting skills development and training across the public and private sectors.

Bangladesh views occupational health and safety for workers as a high priority. In recent times, the Bangladesh Prime Minister has particularly underlined that we do not want economic growth at the cost of the lives of our workers.

The factory collapse this April, resulting in the loss of 1,127 precious lives, was most shocking for

the entire nation. It turned out to be a testing time for our people, when most ordinary people stepped into the initial rescue operation with their passion, barefoot, along with the rescue team of the Government.

Today, the nation is united in improving matters in the entire industry by taking the required corrective measures. Hence, we appreciated the support from the ILO, development partners, international buyers and the international community as they stood by us. The joint declaration signed in Dhaka on 4 May, in the presence of the Deputy Director-General of the ILO, now serves as a key blueprint for actions going forward. In this context, we do appreciate the role of the Director-General of the ILO.

We also welcome the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh that was signed a few weeks back by the international buyers. We also view the recent initiatives by the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and other partners as positive steps towards addressing various compliance issues in the factories in Bangladesh.

In order to provide long-term sustainability to the industry, we are moving fast towards establishing a ready-made garments park to which the vulnerable factories can relocate.

We would like all our friends to appreciate the challenges that Bangladesh faces. Once again we thank you for your support and would urge you to remain engaged with us. Indeed, this is a time when any form of trade restriction, in the garb of labour rights protection, is certain to do more harm to workers, particularly millions of women.

On our part, Bangladesh is fully engaged in working closely with the ILO. We are confident that together, we can achieve our common goal of building a future with decent work.

Original Spanish: Mr SEGURA (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Costa Rica)

Greetings on this World Day Against Child Labour.

I am from Costa Rica, a small country where our people cherish their well-being, dignity, happiness, work and joy. This model of development has not been easy, but it has been pleasing and fair.

I would like to share with you a bit of our history.

In the nineteenth century, shortly after achieving national independence, the people of Costa Rica created a State under the rule of law, promoting free public education and training for women. It opened the economy up to the world with the first coffee exportations from our country and encouraged the creation of a middle class made up of landowners of small and medium-sized agricultural estates.

Towards the end of the first half of the twentieth century, between 1940 and 1948, a political alliance was forged within the country, the first in Latin America, bringing together the forces of Christians, liberals and Marxists.

This alliance, led by the President of the Republic, Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia, the communist leader Manuel Mora Valverde and Monsignor Víctor Manuel Sanabria Martínez, encouraged the establishment of the University of Costa Rica, the adoption of the Labour Code, the introduction into the Constitution of the chapter on social guarantees, the law on affordable housing, and spearheaded land reform and industrial development.

Building on this social reform, which was unprecedented in Latin America, the 1949 Constituent National Assembly created the new social State governed by law, reaffirmed the abolition of the military which had been decreed by the National Liberation Movement led by José Figueres Ferrer, and put in place the foundations for a form of development that prioritized industrial and agricultural strengthening, while at the same time promoting the establishment of a vast middle class linked to state activities.

It was in this historic context that Costa Rica, in just 30 years, became a middle-income country that was open to the global economy. As that status has taken hold, it has brought us to the threshold of socially inclusive comprehensive human development.

Having survived the international economic crisis at the end of the 1970s, it became clear that there was a need to strengthen domestic production systems by weaving them into the global economy. To that end, we developed an outward-looking development strategy.

Since then, over the last 31 years, since 1982, Costa Rica has continued in its commitment to progress, democracy and modernity.

While promoting trade openness and integration in the major global development trends, our country is striving on a daily basis to ensure high-quality public education, universal access to health services, security, modernization of infrastructure and full compliance with labour rights.

Under the pressure of the international economic crisis that started in 2008, Costa Rica has remained faithful to its history and its ideals. We fully support tripartite social dialogue, as did our ancestors and as did Mr Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General, in his opening speech. Our warmest greetings go out to him.

As in the past, Costa Rica continues to strengthen its commitment to eradicating extreme poverty, reducing poverty, lessening social inequality, integrating into the global economy and strengthening the middle classes, human rights, liberty and peace.

We know from our own experience that at the heart of all these objectives is decent work.

There is no such thing as social progress without decent work and there is no decent work for people without a production system that creates quality jobs and a social system that gives everyone access to health, education, housing, security, culture and unimpeded observance of labour rights.

Whatever income is available to an individual or a family, there should be a basic social safety net in place to ensure they have employment, education, health, security and housing throughout their entire lives.

We are convinced of this and we have worked with the unlimited support and solidarity of the President of Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla Miranda, the President Pro Tempore of the Council of Ministers of Labour of Central America and the Dominican Republic, and regional labour ministers, to promote a regional strategic agenda on labour and employment in the Central American Integration System. We are currently finalizing the regional action plan which will establish the regional strategic agenda, according to the conditions in each country.

This is the path we have chosen to put decent work at the heart of socially inclusive development

in our region, and so that Central America can add its voice to the international dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda.

It is a pleasure to be here. It is an honour to be part of this global dialogue aiming to help build a fairer world, one based on freedom, peace and justice and on decent work for all its inhabitants.

Original French: Ms KNIESNER (Worker, Romania)

On behalf of the workers of Romania, allow me to convey our congratulations to the President and the Vice-Presidents on their elections to this Conference. I would like to congratulate the new Director-General upon his Report and especially for the fact that he has focused on such important issues as: employment creation; encouragement of genuine social dialogue; improving the quality of employment; reinforcing wage policies; promoting health and safety at work; policies to promote youth employment; lasting strategies to cope with the ageing of our populations; systems of social protection; and policies which promote economic growth, job creation and social justice.

Unfortunately, the change of strategic direction towards measures of budget austerity and a series of structural reforms, undertaken without any proper consultation with the social partners, has undermined the prospects of employment growth everywhere, as well as fundamental rights, and at the same time has worsened the impact of the crisis. This is why it has become urgent to devise unified and above all viable policies to remedy the growing inequalities and bring the world back to the path to sustainable development.

Precariousness, informal work, unpaid wages and insecurity: in Romania, the fundamental rights of many workers are flouted every day for the benefit of a parallel economy. Poor working conditions, minimal wages, overtime and social security contributions not paid, and social and economic insecurity leave Romanian workers in a precarious situation. Although precariousness is spoken of as a global phenomenon, there are more workers in Romania who fall into this category than in the other European countries. I would remind you of the fact that, in 2011, my Government imposed a change in our labour law and the five fundamental labour market laws: the law on trade union organization; the law on employers' organizations; the law on industrial disputes; the law on collective bargaining; and the law on the Economic and Social Council. All these were put together into one single law which, ironically enough, is called the Social Dialogue Law. The International Labour Organization asked Romania to amend its labour legislation and its legislation on social dialogue after a study on the reform of labour legislation in Romania established that this reform of 2011 had had a highly negative impact on workers, affecting their fundamental rights and the right to strike, and banning nationwide collective agreements. It distorted the rate of representation of the social partners and discriminated against trade union organization in favour of employee representatives, and also impeded access to collective bargaining.

The outcome of all this is that the workers were sidelined, were turned into observers and were not able to fight for their fundamental rights. And the negative effect of this legislative reform has resulted in a decline in the number of collective agreements for Romanian workers. Nor is the voice

of the social partners of any importance for the present Government, which is influenced only by the representatives of the US Chamber of Commerce, and they, together with the Troika, are in favour of maintaining the current labour legislation in Romania. Urgent change is needed. We need new legislation for the labour market and for social dialogue, and that legislation has to be in conformity with the fundamental Conventions of the ILO.

During these times of crisis the delegates of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union are always stressing the point that the only effective solutions are austerity, poor working conditions and the privatization of all utilities and natural monopolies. In that case, privatization is often carried out by competing companies whose aim is to ensure that the enterprises concerned go bankrupt, thereby eliminating a competitor on the European or international market. Or else the privatization is carried out by foreign enterprises in which other governments are majority shareholders. This sort of policy is bound to make jobs even scarcer and cause mass migration of skilled labour, especially towards Western Europe, which stimulates the export of capital and profit but does nothing to attract investment at national level or to create jobs.

In conclusion, let me say that the Romanian trade unions are all convinced that the tripartite partners must think and act together to bring about the necessary changes to secure balanced growth at the national and international levels – stable growth, sustainable growth and growth which will create employment.

Original Spanish: Mr GONZÁLEZ ARIAS (Employer, Paraguay)

First of all I should like to congratulate Mr Nidal Katamine on his election to direct the discussions of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference and to wish him every success in this important post.

I should also like to thank the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Guy Ryder, for the Report he has presented, whose specific guidelines should pave the way for the smooth running of our Organization in the future.

We are engaged in a fight against poverty because, as the Report reminds us, poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

Paraguay is a landlocked country. Most of its population are young and this is a constant challenge to our efforts to carry out development projects and programmes based on social inclusion. Unfortunately, though it is rich in natural resources, my country has serious shortcomings when it comes to the distribution of wealth.

The employer sector of my country supports the programme put forward by the Government which will take over on 15 August. The first priority in that programme is the fight against poverty, particularly extreme poverty. If we do not resolve this unjust situation we cannot hope for a more egalitarian and fair society.

Because we are a landlocked country, our exports are almost 40 per cent more expensive than those of any country with access to the sea and, to be competitive, we have to take this into account.

Entering the labour market is a real challenge for our system of education and training. Experience has shown that the countries that have introduced

the dual-education system have been the most successful in terms of productivity, quality and growth.

It is a source of satisfaction that the employers, particularly the Paraguayan Industrial Union in co-operation with Heidelberg SRH Holding in Heidelberg, is setting up a University of Applied Sciences in Paraguay which will train high-level operators and professionals to adapt to the rapid growth of technology in industrial production. The programme is supported by the employers' organizations in Germany, for which we are very grateful.

We believe in sustainable development and consider it the responsibility of present and future generations to respect the environment and avoid indiscriminate use of resources, which could lead to the unsustainable loss of natural resources and make environmental sustainability impossible.

We believe that the impact of technology on production today should take into account the need to create and maintain jobs, and not the contrary.

We also believe in tripartism as the instrument that is best suited to reaching agreements that can maintain social peace and governability, and the employers will therefore continue to participate actively in resolving every kind of labour dispute.

ILO technical cooperation is extremely important for the training of all sectors of society. We are grateful to the ILO for its help, which we hope to continue receiving. Through their agricultural and industrial organizations, the employers are carrying out specific training projects to combat child labour in sugar cane plantations and in the ceramic tile industry in the building sector.

Economic growth today is such that the developed countries continue to influence production in developing countries because of their greater economic, market and financial capacity. We agree with the Director-General that the financial sector should give greater attention to the needs of the real economy. One of the most serious problems of developing countries is the lack of adequate financing for production and export.

We support the plans to mark the ILO's centenary. The topics proposed in the document are sufficiently concrete to serve as a framework for action for our Organization.

Finally, I would like to share with you the commitment of the employers of my country to continue working constructively with the ILO, the Government and the trade unions, so that the principles and objectives of the ILO can help us bring about a fairer and more inclusive society.

Original Spanish: Mr ARELLANO CHOQUE (Worker, Peru)

I am speaking on behalf of the General Confederation of Workers of Peru (CGTP).

The worst global social, economic and labour crisis that we have seen is not only continuing but getting worse. Changes are coming thick and fast, accentuating disparities and widening the gap between rich and poor.

In Peru, the Government led by Mr Ollanta Humala is pursuing the same neoliberal economic policies as those applied by the previous Governments of Fujimori, Toledo and García Pérez. All of them promised the people they were going to change things and improve living conditions for the poorest segment of the population, yet little or nothing has changed. Though we have seen sustained GDP growth, most people have not benefited. Our natural resources continue to be pillaged by multi-

nationals, as in the case of Camisea natural gas which is sold abroad instead of being used for domestic consumption and industrial development.

The privatization of strategic enterprises – water, energy, ports, etc. – poses a veritable threat to our national security and the right to work. In other words, our country continues to be dependent on the exportation of raw materials, and the gap between rich and poor continues to widen.

Though it is true that employment has increased, it has not been in the form of decent work, work with rights. What has increased is the precarious jobs performed by thousands of workers, particularly women in the textile sector and in the agriculture export sector. According to the Ministry of Labour's own figures, more than a million workers are on temporary contracts, and more than half a million in firms with over 100 employees. Yet the vast majority of these short-term contracts are abusive, because they are actually for full-time work. That is why union membership is so low and collective bargaining so rare in Peru.

Under our present Government, over 3,000 workers have been fired simply for trying to join or start a trade union. Social dialogue has been completely undermined and labour conflicts are common occurrences. Institutions such as the National Labour Council have ceased functioning as such. This tripartite body, which should be discussing the most pressing problems of employment and labour rights, has just become an obstacle to the initiatives put forward by workers. As a result, the workers are reconsidering their participation in the Council so as not to appear to condone its immobilism or, worse still, to give an impression of a consensus where none exists.

The fact is that the Government has abandoned its electoral promises and is instead implementing a programme that favours the big capital interest of multinational corporations and has led to a climate of increasing confrontation among the country's inhabitants, who are not prepared to accept such a policy. A typical example is the protest launched in the last few days by hundreds of thousands of state employees who are up against a new Civil Service Bill concocted by the Government under the pretext of consolidating Peru's existing labour legislation, which conflicts gravely with the international Conventions of the ILO and even with the Peruvian Constitution, as was clearly shown in the technical report prepared by the ILO itself at the request of the trade union confederations and Congress itself. Despite this, and although the workers' representatives have come forward with alternative proposals, the Government is insisting on its nonsense, with the result that thousands of state employees affiliated to the CGTP have taken to the streets throughout the country and there have been violent confrontations with the police, who have brutally attacked workers.

The Peruvian Government has blatantly violated Convention No. 151, ratified by Peru, which stipulates that measures appropriate to national conditions shall be taken, where necessary, to encourage and promote the full development and utilization of machinery for negotiation of terms and conditions of employment between the public authorities concerned and public employees' organizations, or of such other methods as will allow representatives of public employees to participate in the determination of these matters – not to mention Convention

No. 154, which also guarantees the possibility of obtaining better wages and working conditions without intervention by the State or by the employers.

Moreover, in defiance of the pronouncements of the Committee on Freedom of Association, the Government of Peru totally disregards arbitration as a means of resolving labour disputes. Not only is it failing to comply with the promotion of collective bargaining, but it is blatantly undermining any such possibilities.

That is why we have called for the Government to ratify Conventions Nos 154 and 189. The rights and guarantees conferred by the State must be based on democracy and social inclusion.

We therefore call upon the officials of the ILO to investigate why there has been no reduction in the number of complaints brought before the Organization.

Original Portuguese: Mr MUNGUAMBE (Worker, Mozambique)

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to take the floor before this important plenary of the International Labour Conference. To the President of the Conference and to all here present, I would like to extend the warmest welcome and wishes for success on behalf of the Workers' Organization of Mozambique (OTM-CS) and on my own behalf.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder, for the brilliant work that he has done since his election. We are well aware that he will continue to apply all his knowledge, energy and dedication to the promotion of social and labour justice, ensuring ever-increasing respect for human and trade union rights.

Many have already referred to his experience in the labour movement and in other international organizations. He is someone who is committed to the workers' interests, and so we have reason to be optimistic about the future of the ILO.

The current financial and economic crisis has faced humanity with extreme challenges in terms of unemployment, poverty, social inequalities and other related ills.

The labour movement in Mozambique has followed with great interest the efforts to combat unemployment, particularly as it affects young people. They are the first to lose jobs as a result of the economic downturn and often cannot find work after leaving school because of the absence of available jobs and because they lack the qualifications required by employers.

In the context of tripartite social dialogue, the social partners are deeply involved in formulating and implementing measures aimed at providing vocational training for young people and encouraging industry to invest in vocational training with a view to creating work placements and fulfilling the human potential of Mozambique.

The union movement in our country is increasing its action to achieve improved wages and develop the human capital of the workforce via the promotion of decent work, gender equality and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Our unions are committed to working with the social partners to face the challenges of precarious employment and low levels of wages and protection, which are still far from meeting workers' needs and expectations.

We welcome the General Survey, produced by the ILO and presented in the Conference committees,

concerning collective bargaining in the public sector. We recognize that this is one area where many countries, including our own, need to reinforce social dialogue, including through the establishment of mechanisms for collective regulation.

Our union is awaiting the adoption of a law issuing regulations governing the public service union, which has been before the National Assembly since last year. The law will extend to civil servants the right to organize which is enjoyed by other workers and thus create a legal platform from which they can discuss matters of relevance to them as workers.

Our country has made significant progress with legislation which establishes a legal framework for mandatory social security coverage and basic social protection. This helps people with special needs or disabilities and improves the quality of social security services, in a context involving the participation of workers, employers and the Government.

We are still facing challenges regarding the effective implementation of social security legislation for special categories of persons, such as domestic workers and workers in the informal sector. We are facing major challenges in making decent work a reality and overcoming the difficulties resulting from the dynamics of a market economy based on competition and the search for profit to the detriment of social and human factors. Since Mozambique is a country with a largely agricultural economy and in view of the current development context, it is necessary to provide better protection for workers in this sector, and this can be achieved through ratification of the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129).

We are seeking to adapt vocational training and employment policies to meet the need to improve the employability of young people and respond to the skill requirements of enterprises.

It is therefore important to emphasize the relevance of ILO technical assistance in training for trade unionists so that they can participate effectively in collective bargaining, definition of the social protection floor, development of employment initiatives, establishing equal rights and opportunities for men and women, and enhancing social dialogue.

We reaffirm the need for greater involvement by all countries in relevant social dialogue for the promotion of tripartite consultation as a means of creating greater social harmony and fair employment policies in the workplace.

In concluding, I am bound to mention the World Day Against Child Labour, which is now observed throughout the world. I should like to urge everyone to contribute to putting an end to this scourge, which has implications for future generations as well as violating the human rights of the child.

We wish the Director-General, and the ILO as a whole, every success in implementing the current reform programme aimed at making the Organization more effective in its mandate to promote fairer and more equitable labour relations.

Original Arabic: Mr WAHBALLAH (Worker, Egypt)

On my own behalf, and on behalf of the Egyptian trade union federations, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the Conference. I hope that this unique international gathering, which includes the three social partners, will realize new achievements which will contribute to guaranteeing the legitimate rights of workers to

fair wages, stable working relations, a suitable working environment and decent work.

I would also like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as Director-General of the International Labour Office, wishing him every success in attaining further achievements. I would also like to express the readiness of our workers' federations to collaborate with the Director-General, and hope that our dialogue will continue in order to build on what the ILO has already provided to us in the area of technical cooperation, especially social dialogue, which was launched in 2008.

We workers have come under pressure from successive political systems in Egypt. We have succeeded, however, in providing services to the workers of Egypt in spite of the difficult circumstances we have experienced on the economic, social and political fronts. One of the most important challenges facing the Egyptian trade union movement was the transformation of the Egyptian economy since 1970, and its change of course from a directed economy to a liberal market economy, causing problems and disruptions which had to be borne by workers. It is through this suffering that workers and their leaders played a huge role in protests against the practices of the Government, which led to the El Mahallah textiles strike in December 2006 and April 2008.

The glorious 25th of January Revolution has brought about deep changes in the Egyptian political system. What is most important for us, the workers, is the freedom to establish trade unions so as to start a new era of freedom of association in Egypt, leading in turn to the establishment of hundreds and hundreds of federations, and new trade union committees.

Since the glorious 25th of January Revolution, Egyptian workers have obtained the right to freedom of association. We will not go back now, and we will not allow anyone to hinder this freedom. In light of this unprecedented freedom of association, the workers of Egypt would like to express their objection to including Egypt on the shortlist of cases, as we consider it to be contrary to reality, and request the Conference to review its position in this regard.

Since 2011, the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), which is the most representative federation, has carried out a comprehensive review of its rules, its membership and the legislation which needs to be amended in accordance with the new situation. It has also embarked on the restructuring of its bodies and mechanisms of work, inspired by the aims of the 25th of January Revolution.

Based on the ETUF's determination to carry out workers' elections on the appointed date, it requested that such elections take place without any delay, in view of the end of the trade union session in November 2011.

In this connection, I would like to request the Government to expedite the promulgation of the new Trade Unions Law in accordance with the conclusions reached by the social dialogue committee, although we, as workers, have some reservations with regard to submitting this draft law to the Shura Council in its present form, and request its submission to the People's Assembly.

I do not exaggerate in stating that the ETUF has managed to attain some achievements, the most important of which are: representation of the workers at grassroots level in tripartite social dialogue; the

expression of workers' interests and achievements and pressure exerted on the Government to amend workers' legislation; our rejection of interference by the administrative authority in trade union organization and our determination to safeguard trade union independence; and the establishment of pressure groups to stand up to the current political system. This resulted in the setting up of the Social and Economic Council through the new Constitution, article 52 of which provides for freedom of association.

In this connection, it should be recalled that we have called upon the Government and employers on more than one occasion to reinstate the trade unionists and workers who have been dismissed, and to amend the Labour Code, which authorizes unfair dismissal.

We also work with employers so as to make the role of social dialogue more effective, and agree to the workers' desire to set up trade union committees at undertakings. I repeat that we shall continue our struggle until the dismissed workers are reinstated. We shall continue our struggle until the right to strike is exercised without any restriction. We shall struggle until minimum and maximum wages are fixed in order to achieve social justice, and to expedite the amendment of laws related to work and workers.

We workers look forward to the considerable role to be played by the International Labour Organization in providing technical cooperation with respect to the plan to amend our national legislation in general, and social security legislation for old-age pensioners in particular, in order to guarantee that retirees obtain a pension which is similar to the wage earned during their working lives, in appreciation of their role and work.

We also hope that the ILO, and its office in Cairo in particular, will engage with the ETUF in all transparency, in the same manner as it treats other federations, as we are all Egyptians, and our aim is to serve workers. It should be pointed out that the ETUF pays close attention to observing international instruments and ILO international labour standards, and believes in trade union freedoms. It also endeavours to develop workers' legislation and social security and health schemes; provide job security to workers; and achieve sustainable development, which is the basis of stability at work both nationally and abroad.

With respect to the Director-General's Report on the situation of Palestinian workers, we would like to express our support for the Director-General's initiative, and state that Israel's racist practices, including settlement, the continued construction of the apartheid wall, ethnic cleansing, killings and detentions, are solely based on the impunity of force.

We therefore call upon this august Conference to put an end to such practices so that international law is observed.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you success at this Conference, by elaborating new international standards which safeguard workers' rights and defend their interests.

*Original Spanish: Mr RANGEL (Worker,
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)*

I am speaking on behalf of the workers of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, led by our Bolivarian Socialist Workers' Confederation for the

City, Rural Areas and Fisheries, which is sincerely pleased after 35 years that this Conference is discussing union rights for public service workers.

The workers' delegation is anxious to see compliance with Conventions Nos 151 and 154. We demand of our Governments, as employers, that they should comply with these Conventions, signed by most of the member States of the ILO, to protect fundamental rights such as freedom of association, collective bargaining and collective agreements.

In Venezuela, we have complete union freedom and completely free collective bargaining. This is guaranteed by the Republic and defended by the workers' movement. In the Venezuelan State, collective agreements cover professional employees, administrative staff and workers in the five national public authorities, and also in the 24 governorates and 335 municipalities, dealing with education and public health. These agreements cover more than 2.55 million workers in these sectors, who account for 20.5 per cent of the labour force in our country, according to the National Statistics Office.

Dozens of socialist companies, or companies recovered from capitalism, thus have a union and a collective agreement.

There are also collective agreements for the workers who work in the capitalist private sector. We are now discussing agreements to cover workers in the university sector, in health care and also in construction. Their unions are all affiliated to our central confederation, and these agreements will cover 1.7 million beneficiaries. Our professional unions and those for public service employees and workers will soon be introducing their draft collective agreement. Public service workers will then enjoy full collective bargaining. The minimum wage is raised annually, above the rate of inflation. The Organic Workers' Act, adopted a year ago, is considered as one of the best laws in the world, and was amply discussed by the working population before it was actually promulgated, through a participatory democratic process. We have received 19,700 proposals from the workers. This was promoted by the working classes and by our beloved Commander Hugo Chávez Frias.

In Venezuela, there has been a reduction of the working week to 40 hours, with two consecutive days of rest, since 7 May 2013. The right to organize and the right to collective bargaining have been enacted into law, along with the right to strike, both for public and private sector workers, and gender equality in the workplace.

On 1 May, the new President of the Republic, Nicolás Maduro, also the first worker Chavist President and transport union leader, marched with the working class, along with other union members of the Bolivarian Socialist Workers' Confederation for the City, Rural Areas and Fisheries, and this was extremely important for the social visibility of the workers.

A major programme for workers, the workers' housing mission, provides housing for workers, as well as microcredits for them to own their homes. There is also access in factories and working places to medical care when this is required, and access to emergency treatment centres. Through the "learning and labour" programme, skills training is provided for workers so that they can obtain a profession and a trade. This will help them and of course will help their families. Another programme provides secondary and higher education for workers.

All I have just said is denied of course by those who do not understand what our Government is trying to do. There is a campaign to reintroduce imperialism. There is a bourgeoisie, represented by FEDECAMARAS, that would like to see our economy fail. But there will be no progress in our country without this revolution and we will fight for this.

President Nicolás Maduro and the working class in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are working for the socialization of our country.

We support the struggle of the working class in Europe, and the struggle in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for the liberation of the Palestinian people, and also the struggles in the African countries against imperialist colonizing forces. We certainly are a people of peace.

We are united and we will fight and we will gain victory. ¡Hasta la victoria siempre!

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

I am very pleased to take this opportunity that you are offering me today to say how much we appreciate the Report of the Director-General of the ILO entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. This is a reference document which brings an in-depth analysis to the world of work in a context of significant change, as well as to the challenges faced by the ILO in its fight to guarantee peace and social justice for all. These are preconditions for development and progress. The importance of this Report for Benin lies not only in the various developments undergone by the Organization, but also in its capacity to adapt to current challenges.

The Report proposes seven ideas for initiatives which, for the tripartite constituents, are a roadmap for the future of the Organization. Nevertheless, the efforts of the ILO cannot achieve the goal of development and shared prosperity in the member States without the commitment alongside the ILO of the tripartite constituents, which are responsible for putting into practice the standards set by the Organization. This is why I would like here to renew the commitment of my country to working to achieve the goal of decent work for all Beninese, and take this opportunity to share with the eminent delegates here present the experience of my country in its efforts to implement the agenda for achieving that goal. The promotion of human capital is an essential factor in accelerating growth and significantly reducing poverty. This is why my country has given priority to the agricultural sector, to promote the employment of the largest possible number of young people and guide them towards agricultural entrepreneurship. To this end, small factories producing and assembling agricultural equipment and processing agricultural produce have been established.

In the area of social protection, it should be said that the economy of my country is based on two sectors, which are the formal structured sector and the informal sector. Workers in the informal economy now benefit from adequate social protection, like those who work in the formal economy, since the creation of a social security fund which works across the territory of Benin and today has more than 25,000 members. In order to extend social coverage to the entire population, the Government has launched the Universal Health Insurance Scheme (RAMU), which is gradually being implemented.

Concerning the application of labour standards, in 2012, Benin ratified Convention No. 154, and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). The incorporation of the provisions of these Conventions into national legislation is ongoing, in the framework of the revision of the Labour Code, and this process has already begun.

To date, Benin has ratified 31 ILO Conventions, including the eight core Conventions, and has set up formal structures responsible for promoting the principles involved. Steps are being taken to ratify the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and Conventions Nos 187 and 189.

With regard to the application of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and Convention No. 182, Benin has a list of types of work which are hazardous for children, and a national action plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

In the area of social dialogue, freedom of association is a reality in Benin. We have, in our country, eight unions and federations of unions. I would also like to stress the determination of my country to improve the status of collective bargaining by providing a statutory framework for the exercise of trade union rights. This is why, since 2001, the Government has been organizing workers' elections to determine the degrees of representativeness of trade unions and trade union federations in the various consultative bodies. The third round of these elections, which have already begun, will take place by the end of this year. Here, I would like to reiterate the appreciation and gratitude of the Government of Benin for the assistance that the International Labour Organization gives us in promoting decent work and implementing international labour standards.

Finally, allow me to take this opportunity to convey to the Director-General of the ILO the thanks of His Excellency Dr Boni Yayi, the President of the Republic, for the confidence he has placed in our dear compatriot Mr Charles Dan by entrusting him with the function of special representative of the ILO for youth and social inclusion.

Ms OPECHOWSKA (Employer, Poland)

It is an honour and a privilege for me to address this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of Polish employers' organizations.

Although Poland has so far been seen by other countries as a green island, the economic situation in Poland is far from satisfactory. It is predicted that the rate of economic growth in Poland will decline to 1.8 per cent of GDP in 2013. Our country is undergoing a severe economic crisis, with unemployment rising to 14.3 per cent and the economic situation of enterprises worsening.

Economists agree that the situation in the eurozone poses a major threat for the Polish economy. We do not know how it will end. Euroland will probably survive in its present form. However, the recession will no doubt be longer than previously expected. To mitigate the effects of the economic crisis, the Polish Government and the social partners have undertaken several initiatives to that end. The aim is to improve the performance of enterprises and of the economy. The most important solutions concern the labour market and job retention. Amendments have accordingly been proposed to the Labour Code with respect to flexible working time and changes in the reference periods with regard to

working hours. It has thus been proposed that the Code incorporate some aspects of flexible working time and the possibility for small businesses to reduce the hourly wage for overtime. For micro-enterprises, support is to come mainly from the Labour Fund, for SMEs from the Anti-Crisis Act, and for large enterprises from the new rules relating to their organization and working time.

These solutions have not yet been accepted by the trade unions, which have tried to hold up work on these necessary changes, not understanding that during the crisis the most important thing is to maintain jobs and prevent companies from closing.

At the same time, the Government has extended parental leave from six months to one year. This provision is to be extended from September 2013 and will enable parents who decide to take one year's leave to continue receiving 80 per cent of their salary. The Polish employers' organizations did not support this idea, knowing that it would make it difficult to ensure employability, but it is necessary to help address the country's demographic problems.

To mitigate the negative climate among trade unions in the Tripartite Commission, the Prime Minister has joined it. There is some optimism for the future of social dialogue in Poland, in that not all the trade unions have had a negative attitude towards the Government's legislative proposals, realizing that they are necessary to mitigate the effects of the crisis expected by many enterprises.

Employers' organizations who are members of the Tripartite Commission understand the trade unions' concern to protect jobs, but they have to realize that, given the state of public finances, it will have negative consequences for the state budget. The employers have sent a letter to the employees and unemployed informing them that, in this uncertain situation when we are afraid of the future, it is important to seek consensus and dialogue to resolve difficult problems. We believe that the more competitive the Polish economy is, the more demand there will be, unemployment will drop, new jobs will be created and the demographic situation will become more stable.

The employers' organizations are trying to convince the unions that it is not always necessary to maintain one's positions firmly. In the process of social dialogue, we would like to resolve problems without adversely affecting the functioning of the labour market. We believe that that is the only right way, which will help to develop the best solutions for mitigating the effects of the crisis.

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

On behalf of the Government of South Sudan and myself, please allow me to congratulate the newly elected President of the 102nd International Labour Conference. I am pleased and confident that the voters' choice in electing him as President was prudent, as his rich experience and illustrious track record will help in objectively guiding the proceedings. I also have no doubt that under his leadership, the Organization will be able to introduce innovations to guide us to new heights in charting the future.

Referring to the Reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO, as well as the recommendations, I fully agree with the way forward, especially considering that

the Republic of South Sudan is one of the youngest nations, which has undergone more than two decades of devastating civil war.

My country's hope for a bright future is based on the fact that not only are we a young nation but also 72 per cent of our population are youth. But this social asset has its downside. Obviously as a result of the recent civil war, some of these young people are of school age but are out of school owing to shortages of teachers and well-equipped schools. Others have dropped out of school and have not found decent employment either because they lack the necessary skills or because of the shortage of sufficient vocational training facilities all over the Republic. The youths who have completed secondary school are unable to find jobs because the Government, now in the process of establishing a viable, professional and efficient civil service, is short of funds.

The situation in the private sector, which should take the bulk of these young people, is the same: both national and foreign entrepreneurs and investors are struggling to operate profitably at the moment.

The situation I have described is undoubtedly a cause for concern for us in the Republic of South Sudan. There are four main reasons for this.

First, employment that provides decent livelihoods to people and their families is a right in the category of the right to life.

Second, the war which we are trying to put behind us has left its scars, which still manifest themselves in several dangerous forms. These phenomena include the loss of coping mechanisms by former war victims, some of whom suffer from varying degrees of trauma.

Third, the correlation between unemployment, crimes and other antisocial behaviour, especially among youth, is a fact that is known to all of us and one that I do not need to emphasize.

Fourth, the war has resulted in an increase in the number of street children, mostly orphans who lost their parents during the war and currently have no close and direct relations to take care of them. As these minors are vulnerable, they often fall victim to unscrupulous business people who exploit them as child labourers, despite our laws banning such insensitive and unethical practices by people who care only for their personal profits and at any cost.

However, the Government and my Ministry are facing up to these problems, and we have put in place policies and strategies to address the situation. But since the success of these measures depends mostly on a clear policy, direction, scientific planning and execution of ideas, financial resources and professional expertise have to be the backbone for our Government to come to grips with the problem. Unfortunately, as a member of the global village that is going through very difficult economic times, we suffer some of these knock-on effects.

Domestically, we have our own particular economic crisis. Again, because of the recent civil war that destroyed physical infrastructures and agriculture, 98 per cent of our budget is based on oil revenues. Owing to the dispute with our neighbour, the Republic of Sudan, over the post-secession issues, they shut down oil production more than a year ago. Our Government had to resort to austerity measures which leave little or no room for the initiation of new projects or even the completion of existing ones.

The situation in my country is not all gloomy. Over recent years, we have recorded some modest achievements. These success stories, which I will mention in passing, have been made possible thanks to tangible cooperation and technical support from partners, and from the ILO in particular. This assistance has enabled us, in the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, to promote our compliance with technical labour standards, norms and practices. The following have been achieved: first, a five-year strategic plan. This programme aims to develop decent work ethics as one of our priorities. Second, the development of the decent work programme. The scheme is currently being reviewed by the ILO team of experts, who will return the documents to us for implementation.

South Sudan's first labour law has been passed by the Council of Ministers and is on its way to Parliament. The Labour Advisory Group will be established after the corresponding law is passed.

Combating child labour: this programme will consist of establishing a national steering committee on child labour. The other component of this scheme is the development of a list of hazardous work, with ILO experts at headquarters here in Geneva, as well as with stakeholders in the ten states of South Sudan.

A committee to review the transitional Constitution: the Child Act of 2008 is under review and we will put in place a team that will review our Constitution to ensure that vulnerable groups are represented so that their rights are enshrined in the permanent Constitution.

Ratification of the core Conventions: the Republic of South Sudan has adopted and ratified the seven fundamental core Conventions that had previously been ratified by Sudan before the secession of South Sudan. With technical support from the ILO in Geneva, the International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), and in collaboration with the ILO-Cairo Office, the National Legislative Assembly is willing to deliberate on the ratification of Conventions Nos 87 and 144.

We celebrated Labour Day for the first time on the first of last month. I had the honour to give a speech and it was a great achievement.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that my nation, being an infant in the family of nations, still faces various challenges, with plans and initiatives competing for priority, while at the same time our resources, both human and capital, are limited.

We appeal to friends and bodies, such as the ILO, which have voluntarily shown willingness to cooperate and assist us, not to be discouraged by our constant requests for technical help and advice.

Original Spanish: Mr ACEVEDO (Worker, Guatemala)

We congratulate the President on his election to guide the proceedings. I bring you warm greetings on behalf of the Republic of Guatemala, and in particular the Union of Education Workers of Guatemala. It is a pleasure to speak at this plenary sitting, to present our report on the labour and union laws in my country. Before I give a more detailed account, I would like to express to you, the ILO, and the global movement of unions, our thanks for your support and collaboration with the trade unions movement in Guatemala, given the very difficult situation that we are in.

In the context of our national situation, we need to take into consideration the actors that have determined the trajectory of Guatemala's development: an elite that, historically, has maintained and always sought to maintain power to protect its own interests and privileges. Add to this the corruption in some government structures which is supported by those who are entrenched in the public service. More recently, drug trafficking and organized crime have infiltrated into the very structures of the Government to attain their share of power. And it is no secret that government members and foreign governments have sought to influence and protect the capital that they have invested in the country, especially in opencast mining. There are still high levels of common and organized crime that affect the psychological, physical and mental stability of the general population. The competent authorities are unable to combat and overcome the situation, which limits the climate of peace and tranquillity that the Guatemalan population aspires to.

In parallel, we need to remember the worsening economic and social crisis that is affecting a high percentage of the population, including our indigenous peoples, who have traditionally been marginalized. Those living in urban and rural areas have been badly affected, but indigenous women have been hit hardest. Children are dying of hunger, and statistics indicate that a high percentage of the infant population suffers from malnutrition, preventing them from developing fully and having better living conditions in adulthood.

We would also like to place on record the fact that there has been another outbreak of discrimination against workers' movements, and assassinations of many union leaders and members of our trade unions, carried out by de facto groups that are enemies of peace and the right to organize. These are organized groups who work in the shadows, hide in anonymity and wear the mask of common criminals. In reality, their modus operandi reveals that this is nothing other than organized crime. Although this is not a state policy, it comes under the scope of the state's responsibility and that of its institutions, and particularly the law, to investigate and sanction the perpetrators, and uncover those who try to promote and wear the cloak of impunity in our country.

In Guatemala, labour rights and freedom of association have been infringed many a time over the years. As a result, the eyes of the international community, ILO monitoring bodies and the Government of the United States, through the Free Trade Agreement, have been turned towards Guatemala.

On the other hand, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, our Government has used the situation to implement myriad political and diplomatic steps to make sure that the country is not penalized. It has managed to establish an agreement with the Workers' group of the Committee of the Application of Standards, overseen by Ms Burrows, General-Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and Mr Ryder, Director-General of the ILO. The workers have acknowledged this effort and this is why we trust and support our colleagues in the Workers' group, the ITUC and the Director-General, who act in good faith and with goodwill in the interests of the workers of Guatemala and the world at large. The commitments made have allowed the Government a period of six months. To monitor implementation, a

plan of action is being assessed by the Tripartite Commission on International Affairs in Guatemala, covering the period from April to October 2013.

To achieve this objective we call on this Organization to send, as soon as possible, a high-level mission to our country, to investigate the social, labour and union rights situation in situ, and above all to monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, the aforementioned agreements, through actions more than words. In the case of the slightest sign of non-compliance from October 2013, we call on this Organization to set up a commission of inquiry and have ongoing monitoring carried out by the international community, with particular emphasis on the global unions movement to ensure that law, social dialogue, truth and social justice prevail.

Let us say “no” to child labour. I thank you very much, Director-General, and thank the President. Ever onwards to victory, *compañeros y compañeras*!

Mr RAY (*Worker, Mauritius*)

I feel inspired by the ILO Director-General’s vision of making “decent work a central element of policy-making” and of making the ILO “an Organization which is better placed to provide services to trade unions, employers’ organizations and governments”. I heartily welcome the sustained efforts of the Director of ACTRAV and his team in promoting social dialogue and their dedicated support in encouraging the trade union movement to unite and speak with one voice.

Sustainable development, social dialogue, decent work and green jobs are the real challenges for this century. I am glad that Mauritius signed the new Decent Work Country Programme 2012–14 on 30 November 2012. However, I note with deep concern the delay regarding its implementation. I therefore urge the honourable Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to take the necessary steps to implement the programme fully as soon as possible.

It is recognized that tripartism thrives when there is effective healthy dialogue between workers, employers and government, and I believe that industrial relations problems can be solved through social dialogue. I positively acknowledge the setting up of the National Tripartite Forum (NTF) aiming to strengthen social dialogue and uplift tripartism, but I am afraid the NTF must meet more frequently to discuss pertinent industrial relations issues of national interest, especially those which have already been referred to the Government’s attention by the trade union movement. In my humble view, issues that need the immediate attention of the NTF are the introduction of a decent minimum wage in the private sector, the harmonization of salaries between the public and private sectors, and the discriminatory pay regimes in the various parastatal bodies. While there is contention about the NTF’s legality, the apprehensions of the trade union movement may not be underestimated. So I request the Government to take the appropriate measures to establish the NTF as an authoritative legal entity.

I also draw attention to the fact that there are glaring disparities in wages between workers doing similar jobs within the same organization. The situation is worse in SMEs and in the informal sectors. For example, salaries and conditions of work bearing similarity falling under the aegis of the Pay Research Bureau are more favourable than those

falling under the National Remuneration Board. In view of this, I call on the Government to open discussions with the trade union movement regarding a decent minimum wage in the private sector and the harmonization of conditions of work and salaries in the parastatal bodies. And, not least, I further call on the Honourable Minister to urgently review all the remuneration orders regarding conditions of work and salaries in the different sectors of the economy within the private sector.

The adverse effects of globalization, competition and multinationals transcend all the barriers. They may not only adversely affect the environment in an irreversible manner, but may have damaging negative impacts on overall work conditions and the quality of life. Whereas the traditional economic model is phasing out, at a rapid pace, local labour legislations remain under pressure. I wish to draw attention that amendments to the Employment Relations Act and the Employment Rights Act were being introduced into Parliament without any consultation with the trade union movement.

The unwelcome amendments to both these labour laws would not only have definitely undermined the trade union movement but would also have seriously jeopardized collective bargaining, thereby opening the floodgate for precarious jobs and massive lay-offs. It is noteworthy that the Honourable Minister adopted a more conciliatory approach and early this year new, improved amendments were adopted in Parliament. I believe it is imperative now to promulgate all the amendments as adopted in Parliament without any further delay and I call on the Government to take appropriate action in this direction.

Repression and democracy do not go together. I denounce the repressive acts in May this year, where trade union leaders and members of the ITUC were arrested and arbitrarily detained, while participating in a peaceful demonstration against appalling violations of workers’ rights and safety. The Public Gathering Act (PGA) is still being used as a repressive tool against trade unions, whereas the rights and freedoms under both the Constitution and the ILO fundamental Conventions are central to human and workers’ rights. I request the amendment of the long-standing oppressive provisions of the PGA.

At the same time as unemployment among the young is reaching alarming heights, migrant worker and gender issues remain. The Government must take bold initiatives to curb the situation and stop the haemorrhage of youth unemployment, a situation which is becoming unsustainable. The ICT–BPO (information and communication technologies–business process outsourcing) sector is emerging rapidly as an economic pillar. It should be noted that this sector comprises mainly young graduates, including a proportion of women. Jobs are precarious and workers are exploited in practice owing, among other things, to their inexperience of the world of work and unfamiliarity with the intricacies of the labour market and its realities. The law hardly provides any social protection or security for these workers. Erratic and short fixed-term contracts of employment, insecurity, harassment of all kinds and violence at work are not uncommon. I appeal to the Government to urgently put in place an appropriate legal framework to support workers in the ICT–BPO sector.

As President of the Congress of Independent Trade Unions and in my capacity as Workers' delegate of Mauritius, I take the opportunity to say that workers are not silent automatons but are the driving force behind successful enterprises and economies. As the major stakeholder of the national economy, workers are the most important social and collaborative partners. Taking that into consideration, I make a humble plea to the Government that it translate its promises for a sustainable green economy and decent work for all into reality, with a view to improving the quality of life of the workers at large, and I am confident that the ILO will encourage the Government to respect its obligations.

Mr LAKEMFA (*Representative, Organization of African Trade Union Unity*)

The Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) thanks the ILO for the privilege of addressing this plenary meeting.

The Report of the Director-General entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, is a global wake-up call.

Everywhere we turn there are parsimonious sermons about ending poverty and want. The additional melody is about ending them in their extreme forms. Yet from Nicosia to Dhaka workers are being tossed into the expanding ocean of mass unemployment.

From Athens to Port-au-Prince more youths are being minted daily for the unemployment market. The Director-General's Report tells us that, between this session of the Conference and the one next year, 44.5 million more workers will enter the labour market. From the needless war in Damascus to the pointless wars in Bangui, workers, artisans, traders, farmers and other productive forces of society are being put to flight.

Now those who rationalize these man-made tragedies do not seem to understand that these productive forces are precisely the forces we need to bid farewell to poverty and want. They are forces that we need to bid farewell to terrorism and insecurity. We insist that there can be no world without the working people.

It is in this way that the ILO has to reject the evangelism of the market place in which human beings are objects and mere statistics in the balancing of budgets. Making profit is good but not at the cost of human lives. The fact that public funds are used to bail out private banks shows that the State remains the most important instrument in the search for the socio-economic well-being of the citizenry.

Therefore, the hypothesis that the private sector is the engine of development is false. The financial crisis and the role of the State in bailing out the private sector in countries of the industrialized world has given the lie to the propaganda that government has no business in business. On the contrary, a government's business is business, the business of developing society for the good of all.

Just as the State did not abandon the troubled banks to the so-called market forces, so can it not abandon the poor, the dispossessed, the unemployed, the homeless, the sick, the aged and the hapless, to the insatiable thirst of market forces.

We must be our brother's keeper, we must be our sister's keeper; we must love our neighbours as ourselves. As the Director-General declared, in quoting the Declaration of Philadelphia, "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere".

We should, as an integral part of the post-2015 agenda, redirect the attention of the world to meeting the objectives of the 1976 ILO Basic Needs Development Strategy in terms of full productive employment and guaranteeing the rights to food, shelter, education, water, electricity, communication and transportation. We also insist that social protection is fundamental.

We must build an all-inclusive world. We warn that, if the poor have nothing to eat, they will eat the rich. So it is in the collective interest of humanity, in the collective interest of its security and future for all of us that we collectively end poverty. The world can definitely not take care of everybody's greed, but it can and must take care of everybody's needs.

We are in a global village and what happens in any part of the world affects all other parts of the universe. So those who stoke the fires of violence in other parts of the world delude themselves that they will be immune from the consequences. Those who committed political infanticide against the Patrice Lumumba Government in the Congo and made it their birthright in the 1940s and 1980s to overthrow governments did not realize that they were cultivating the nursery of today's instability and terrorism.

We all need peace. Governments in general need peace to govern, although war can spin profits. But employers need peace to make profits. We workers need peace to earn a living.

As we march towards the ILO centenary, we must renew our commitment to work in tripartism and give birth to a new world.

On a final note, we wish to restate our support for the ongoing reforms in the ILO; but to be meaningful they must be all-inclusive and ensure that the ILO is one big family where all humanity, irrespective of region or level of development, has a sense of belonging. Hence the under-representation of parts of the world, such as Africa, in the ILO system should be addressed.

The OATUU wishes you all a fruitful 102nd Session.

Original Spanish: Mr DEL RIO (Worker, Dominican Republic)

The Autonomous Confederation of Workers' Unions (CASC) of the Dominican Republic extends its warm and fraternal greeting to all delegates of the world present in this assembly and welcomes the important Report submitted by the Director-General, Guy Ryder, outlining a new vision to mark the Organization's centenary in its constant pursuit of peace and social justice.

The Dominican Republic – my country in the Caribbean and one of many developing countries – continues to suffer major problems as a result of the world economic crisis. Much effort has been deployed through dialogue and negotiation to bring us closer to resolving the numerous problems facing our society, particularly as they affect urban and rural workers in the public and private sector, those who have retired, single mothers and the ageing population.

For our workers and for the country as a whole, the reduction in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, thanks to the efforts that we made, is good news. We have managed to establish and maintain major workers' organizations and we congratulate the business sector for its recognition of the right of workers to organize and to sign collective agreements on decent work.

We also welcome the efforts that have been deployed by the new Government of President Medina and by the Ministry of Labour to promote decent work and social justice.

Trade unionism and worker solidarity are a constant struggle, and we have thus spent 51 years defending workers, including the poorest and most needy, in order to offer them a life of freedom and social justice.

We are courageously continuing our struggle to make private and public workers' rights a reality and to ensure that ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98 are effectively complied with, along with the eight core Conventions, and that the Government applies the Labour Code, which acknowledges freedom of association as a fundamental right, as established in our country's Constitution.

The workers, particularly through the CASC and its affiliated organizations, are steadfastly pursuing their efforts to bring about a significant change in our society, especially for the workers, and as far as possible to organize the people. For we stand firmly by our slogan that the people can be saved only if the people are organized.

Before this assembly and before the world, we denounce the violations of the law by employers who engage in terror tactics and unjustified dismissals to prevent workers from organizing, as did the call centre company Alorica when it dismissed Secretary-General Natanael Franco simply for establishing a union affiliated to the CASC.

We could cite hundreds of cases of unfair dismissal that violate the right to organize of urban and rural workers in all the union federations.

We continue our struggle to obtain decent wages for all public and private workers, including those who have retired, so that they and their families can live in dignity as human beings.

We welcome the continuous training provided by the National Technical Occupational Training Institute (INFOTEP). The CASC is proud to have developed this project in support of our country's development.

As Dominicans and as a confederation, we continue to defend our workers' rights. And we will continue to promote Act No. 86/01 establishing the Dominican Republic's social security system, in which endeavour we have made considerable progress. The CASC has ensured that millions of workers in the informal sector and in domestic service receive benefits under the contributory social security scheme, thanks to the AMUSSOL-CASC mutual solidarity association whose creation marks a historic step for our country.

We have also established life insurance for this sector and for low-income workers, who now have the means to bury workers and members of their family with dignity.

We wish to express our solidarity with all the peoples of the world who, together with the workers, fight for their freedom and dignity and for their fundamental rights as human beings, as children of God seeking peace and social justice.

Mr MARDIYONO (*Representative, International Young Christian Workers*)

Allow me to address the Reports of the Director-General and Chairperson of the Governing Body on behalf of the International Young Christian Workers movement (IYCW). The IYCW was established in 1912, a few years before the ILO, with the mission

to liberate young workers and discover the deepest meaning of life and of living in full dignity.

The Report of the Director-General and the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body have enlightened us and bring new hope for decent work and life in dignity. As an international non-governmental organization (NGO), the IYCW has actively participated in the debate and made its relevant contribution to all the committees in this Conference.

I would like here to boldly highlight a number of concrete challenges. Almost 75 million young people are unemployed today. Behind this figure is a generation of individual human beings who run the risk of losing their dreams. Being unemployed means that they are unable to live in dignity. On the other hand, the world of work is facing an acute crisis in terms of decent jobs everywhere today. Young people are forced to work in precarious conditions, many of them in the informal economy in badly paid and unstable jobs. This inequality and lack of opportunity directly affects millions of young women around the world.

These global challenges call for collective initiatives, and I welcome the Director-General's proposal in response to them: the "green" initiative, the elimination of extreme poverty and the empowerment of women at work – initiatives that could be grouped under the title of "future of work initiative".

The ILO's constituents should work together, building a strategy of synergy and creating green and decent jobs for all. This can be done if we have an honest political, economic and social vision of the post-2015 development agenda.

To participate in this crucial process, we should ask "What can I do for you?" rather than look to our individual existence. Together, we must answer that question through constant and strong social and political dialogue at the national and international level and move forward to the realization of the most comprehensive and sustainable solutions possible, such as the creation of good, decent jobs for the youth so that young people and their families can enjoy a life of dignity. I believe that young people hold out the promise of changing society for the better. Young workers are worth more than all the gold in the world, as our founder, Joseph Cardijn, has said. Only the combination of good and decent jobs can offer a clear path out of poverty for working people in general and for young workers in particular.

Last but not least, the follow-up of the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), is still an important task for every one of us. I believe that the Governing Body of the ILO and the Director-General should together work on this for generations to come. Your solid and strong guidance is key to achieving the supreme goal of enabling human beings collectively to live in dignity and to save the world.

Through you all we can look forward with confidence to the kind of vision that the world needs.

God bless you.

Original Russian: Ms NORBAYEVA (Worker, Uzbekistan)

In the ILO Report under discussion, the emphasis is rightly on social dialogue. It is the most developed form of governance for achieving social justice, creating balanced labour relations and ensuring

social and political stability. The principles of social dialogue are enshrined in practically all ILO Conventions and Recommendations. These cannot be fully implemented without social dialogue, since many of their provisions require consultations between employers, workers and the Government.

In Uzbekistan, since independence, the democratization of our country and the implementation of market reforms, we have created a sound basis for social dialogue. We have adopted laws on trade unions and on rights and guarantees for their activities. Regarding non-governmental organizations, we have introduced a Labour Code that conforms to international standards.

We have ratified 13 ILO Conventions, including Conventions Nos 98 and 154.

In Uzbekistan, social dialogue takes place at four levels: national, sectoral, territorial and local. At the national level, we have concluded a general agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers, the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan. This agreement contains a set of provisions ensuring the future development and institutionalization of social dialogue and collective bargaining. In particular, the parties are set to adopt measures to promote the economy, with the setting up of round tables to discuss the most topical social and economic problems.

Currently, we have 86 sectoral, 14 territorial and more than 93,000 collective agreements at the enterprise and organization level. Collective agreements cover about 95 per cent of commercial entities and 97 per cent of workers are members of trade unions.

Collective agreements are the key means for safeguarding workers' interests, including in relation to occupational safety and health, organization of work and rest periods. Collective agreements also contain a range of social benefits and guarantees, such as providing financial assistance for war veterans, persons with disabilities, large families and single mothers with young children.

More specifically, social dialogue in Uzbekistan represents an achievement for the trade union movement based on a balance of the interests of all social sectors. The concept of social dialogue fits the mentality and values of the people of Uzbekistan, with the participation of the State and all social groups.

Taking account of the specific features of Uzbekistan, we have created the necessary conditions for the effective implementation of social dialogue. First, the right to organize is envisaged for workers in all sectors of the economy. Second, the social responsibility of companies obliges them to compile statistics on the implementation of labour agreements. Third, we have increased the autonomy of economic units to ensure collective bargaining at a local level. Fourth, the trade unions play an active part in the adoption of these legal provisions.

In this way, social dialogue in Uzbekistan defends the interests of all stakeholders in the economy and ensures economic growth and the development of enterprises. It also makes for better living conditions for workers and enables labour disputes to be avoided. We hope that we can work in close collaboration with the International Labour Organization.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.45 p.m.)

Sixth sitting

Thursday, 13 June 2013, 10.05 a.m.

President: Ms Familia

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

Original Arabic: Mr AHMED (Employer, Iraq)

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Iraqi Federation of Industries, which represents employers in Iraq, it is my pleasure to extend to you warm greetings on the occasion of this session of the Conference, this international forum of social dialogue that gives us the opportunity to exchange experiences with a view to improving our national capacities and to achieving sustainable economic and social development.

Allow me on this occasion to extend to the President of the Conference and his Vice-Presidents my congratulations on assuming the chairmanship of this Conference and to wish every success for this session.

I would like, at the outset, to express our appreciation of the Report of the Director-General, which addresses important issues, including the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which are enshrined in the Constitution of the ILO and the Declaration of Philadelphia.

Putting these issues on the agenda of this session of the International Labour Conference is the opportunity to seek solutions, to address challenges and obstacles and to benefit from successful experiences achieved by a number of countries concerning, in particular, the rise in unemployment in all its forms and the increase in rates of poverty and social exclusion, which are a source of concern for governments and the social partners and represent a definite threat to the peace and security of all humanity.

My country, Iraq, has a developed social protection system that covers a large portion of the poor and the unemployed, and has contributed greatly to limiting poverty. Minimum wages have been raised this year in the private sector to US\$200 per month, which shows that the country is moving forward, and constructive social dialogue has been initiated to achieve wage equality.

Equality in employment and in wages is guaranteed by the Iraqi Constitution, which also prohibits any form of discrimination in employment. The gap in wages between men and women is contained within narrow limits linked to the nature of the work.

Considerable efforts are being made to develop the private sector, particularly in industry, in the

framework of ongoing dialogue, with a view to fine-tuning legislation that contributes to ensuring an environment that is favourable to business in Iraq and to guaranteeing the viability of enterprises. Solenn promises have been made by the Government to launch favourable loans for small, medium-sized and large enterprises. These loans will create considerable work opportunities and will go towards reducing unemployment, checking violence and increasing capacity to combat terrorism and religious strife.

As representatives of the private industrial sector, we look forward to further legislation, policies and programmes being passed by the Government to support the private sector and turn it into a strategic partner in economic decision-making and in the reconstruction process in order to achieve true sustainable development.

The fact that we have solid and independent employers' and workers' organizations is very important for the creation of an environment that is conducive to work. Governments play a crucial role in strengthening the capacity of the social partners and ensuring their independence.

In keeping with this approach, the Government of Iraq has, in the framework of the Ministerial Committee set up in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, given the Federation of Industries the opportunity to conduct democratic elections to select its representatives, without any interference from the Government. The free elections held at the end of last year within the Federation of Industries to elect the employers' representatives, after an interruption of over ten years for reasons of which the Organization is aware, resulted in a new active and legitimate leadership with the prerogative to represent the private industrial sector vis-à-vis the Government, and Arab and international organizations.

The Federation of Industries is today in desperate need of technical cooperation programmes and projects to develop its capacities. We request the Organization and its regional office in Beirut to put in place a global capacity-building programme and to implement old promises that have not been kept. We do not know why, during the last ten years, the Organization has not provided any consistent support to strengthen the Federation's capacities.

We still look forward to the use of Arabic in the work of the ILO to ensure compatibility with the importance of the role of the Arab group in the Organization.

We appreciate the interest of the Director-General and the Organization in the Palestinian problem, in the framework of the fact-finding missions regarding the situation in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories. We believe that the time has come for the Organization to take a stand regarding the inhuman practices that the Palestinian people are being subjected to by the occupying Israeli forces. The Government and the people of Iraq firmly support the right of return of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, and condemn all Israeli practices against the Palestinian people.

Original Spanish: Ms LAOS CÁCERES (Minister of Labour and Employment Promotion, Peru)

On behalf of the Government of Peru and President Ollanta Humala, I bring you warm greetings from my country.

A year ago in this very same room, the President of Peru addressed the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. At that time, he spoke of his firm commitment to achieving true social inclusion with decent work. In view of this objective, state policies are now far more focused on creating productive jobs, respecting fundamental rights and improving social protection, all within a framework of tripartite dialogue.

In other words, we can confirm that the Peruvian Government's agenda is drawing inspiration from the ILO fundamental principles and practice of democratic dialogue.

The Peruvian Government has been promoting a policy of economic growth with macroeconomic stability and social inclusion, as well as a reform of the State that is currently being democratically discussed in the Congress of the Republic.

We have also been implementing the Youth Employment Action Plan 2013–16, which aims to ensure that young people build careers based on decent and productive work with social protection, improve their employability and strengthen their entrepreneurial skills.

On this note, allow me to recall the words of Mr Guy Ryder when he visited Peru at the beginning of this year. As he said, "There needs to be a link between the State, the unions and businesses in the common goal to reduce unemployment and in the search for quality jobs that are well paid."

In Peru, this approach is reflected in our formal employment indicators, which remain positive, and in order to ensure quality employment, the Government has placed particular emphasis on prevention and on guidance and oversight for compliance with labour laws and social security. Our priority this year is to set up the National Labour Inspection Authority, the new governing body of the system, which will reinforce our work in that area, with technical support from the ILO.

Within the framework of tripartite dialogue in the National Council on Occupational Safety, we have recently approved the national policy on safety and health at work, which will enable us to continue our progress in this area.

While we have made progress, we recognize that there are issues we still need to address, such as the high rate of informal work, child labour and the remnants of forced labour in some economic sectors. In order to reduce the level of informality, the Government has developed a comprehensive policy focusing on promoting business growth and improv-

ing capacity to comply with the regulations, particularly in micro- and small enterprises.

As for child labour, we should like to stress that eradicating it is a high priority for the Government because child labour is both intolerable and unacceptable. With the support of the ILO, we have approved the National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour 2012–21, thus formalizing one of the state's commitments. We have also launched multi-sectoral pilot projects to reduce child labour in Huánuco, and are planning to extend these projects to other regions of the country in the future.

With regard to forced labour, this week we have officially launched the Second National Plan to Combat Forced Labour, which will enable us to target the areas of the country where the right to work is still being infringed, and to take measures to remove victims and restore their right to decent work.

The Government of Peru reaffirms and guarantees the right to form or join trade unions and the freedom to exercise that right. As in other countries, there are some disagreements in that regard that are before the courts and some such cases are also before the Committee on Freedom of Association. We have signed a convention with the judiciary to monitor and expedite legal proceedings concerning complaints of violations of freedom of association.

I am also pleased to report that, in the next few days, we will publish the regulations on the Collective Labour Relations Act, which takes account of the main observations of the ILO.

Pursuing tripartism through the National Labour Council, we have agreed that the international instruments that are yet to be ratified by the State will be subject to a pluralistic examination, in line with the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), by the appropriate tripartite technical bodies.

Lastly, we are pleased that Peru has been chosen to host the 18th American Regional Meeting of the ILO, which will take place in Lima in 2014. I am therefore pleased to extend the invitation of the people and the Government of Peru for you to participate in this historic event.

We look forward to offering you the hospitality of a nation that goes back thousands of years, and is ready to welcome you and share achievements and experiences in an effort to contribute towards the true dignity and fulfilment of the human race through decent work.

Mr PEHIN DATO (Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam)

May I begin by extending my sincere congratulations to Mr Katamine on his election as President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I am confident that, under his wise leadership, this year's Conference will achieve its objective of addressing pertinent global issues and yielding promising results.

We gather here every year in this magnificent building, in the heart of the beautiful city of Geneva, to discuss issues that are important to us all. The changing demographic landscapes, the ever-increasing scarcity of resources and the need for economic diversification are prevailing challenges that we must all face. Therefore, we remain highly appreciative of the ILO's relentless pursuit of sustainable decent work and the importance of social protection and equality for all workers.

Indeed, Brunei Darussalam has always considered social welfare and protection as an issue of great importance. In all aspects of life, we have endeavoured to assist our citizens through, among others: the establishment of welfare policies and programmes by providing financial assistance to the economically poor and social needy; the implementation of financial schemes to employees, such as the Employees' Trust Fund (ETF) and the Supplemental Contributory Pension Scheme; the provision of small grants with flexible repayment periods, as well as basic training for entrepreneurs who lack financial means; and provision of health-care services and education.

On top of workmen's compensation insurance, Brunei Darussalam is in the process of introducing regulations governing compulsory medical insurance, whereby all employers must guarantee their foreign workforce.

Furthermore, the newest introduction to the laws and regulations pertaining to safety and health is the Workplace Safety and Health Order 2009, which will be enforced and implemented soon.

The main pillars of our National Vision 2035 also aim to ensure the highest standards of quality of life for all our citizens. Under the National Housing Scheme, all eligible applicants are guaranteed property of their own for a nominal monthly fee at 0 per cent interest, to ease the burden on average household finance.

As sustainable development and green jobs are also topics on this year's Conference agenda, we see the importance of intensively pursuing the proper conservation of our natural environment and cultural habitat. Brunei Darussalam has recognized this as a responsibility that should be in tandem with our pursuit towards a dynamic and sustainable economy and development with quality employment for our citizens, thus ultimately, quality of life is enshrined in our Vision 2035.

One such effort to realize this is the Green Port Initiative, whereby development of maritime infrastructures and promotion of maritime activities, such as shipping, fisheries, and offshore oil and gas exploration and production is planned, implemented and managed in accordance with an eco-friendly philosophy, thereby ensuring the nation's resources and maritime assets are preserved for future generations.

Brunei Darussalam Green Building Council and our Ministry of Development have already launched the Green Building Initiative and are already promoting the use of the Green Building concept for all government projects.

As part of the recurrent discussion on social dialogue, all of us recognize the relevance of a fair and open discussion forum where members of society may voice their concerns with their respective Government representatives. This remains an important contributing element to national and public welfare development.

Therefore, opportunities for policy-makers to improve access to employment opportunities, regardless of race, gender or even religion, should be actively pursued. We look forward to learning more from all member countries here today, such as good practices towards enhancing dialogue between all social contemporaries, in an effort to improve not only working conditions but the overall well-being of our workers.

I am confident that the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference will bring viable and positive developments that will further strengthen our awareness of the needs of workers at present and into the future.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express my admiration and gratitude to the ILO for its enduring efforts and achievements and for its continuous support in the betterment of the quality of working life, not only in the Asia-Pacific region but also globally. We look forward to following and learning from this auspicious Conference.

Mr THEIN (*Deputy Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Myanmar*)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President on assuming the presidency of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I am fully confident that his knowledge of the work of the ILO, diplomatic skills and wisdom will guide our deliberations a step further in realizing the values and objectives of the ILO.

My thanks and appreciation also go to the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, for his contribution before taking up his new office to a dynamic working relationship with Myanmar in our efforts to promote and protect the rights of our workers. I am confident that your vision for the ILO, coupled with genuine optimism, will make the ILO more compliant with future challenges.

Undertaking a process of change and reform intended to equip the ILO to respond better to the needs and expectations of its constituents is not an easy task. It is even harder in the face of ever-evolving realities and given the need to preserve tripartite constituency commitments to ILO values and goals. I would like to commend all stakeholders who have contributed to this important exercise.

To us, this self-reflection exercise of the ILO is key to shaping the bases for the proposed ideas for the ILO centenary initiatives, as outlined in the Report of the Director-General. My delegation considers these ideas timely and important in guiding and further consolidating the work of the ILO as it heads towards its centenary. As such, we fully support their serious consideration and subsequent realization.

Allow me to briefly apprise this august body of the progress achieved in Myanmar to bring about workers' rights in all aspects.

Political and socio-economic reforms in Myanmar are gathering momentum in our efforts to build a democratic society. In the reform process, good governance, rule of law, national reconciliation, rural development and poverty alleviation are being prioritized. The competent ministries and entities are taking measures on capacity building and enhancing legislation to help achieve these goals.

For its part, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is making vigorous efforts. These efforts include eliminating all forms of forced labour by or before 2015, facilitating the formation of labour organizations, creating jobs and other employment opportunities, especially for young people, and developing small and medium-sized private enterprises.

As the development of the local economy is a prerequisite for the socio-economic development of the country, foreign investment is being encouraged while creating an enabling environment for it. We

are contributing to the development of a legislative framework to protect the rights of Myanmar migrant workers, including their skills development and social protection.

Additionally, we are reviewing and amending existing labour laws to bring them into line with international commitments, and enacting new ones. With the technical assistance of the ILO, the Labour Organization Law, the Settlement of Labour Dispute Law, the Social Security Law and the Minimum Wage Law have been drawn up and are now in force. A law on employment and skills development will be the next to be enacted.

Eliminating all forms of forced labour, including child labour, is one of the priorities of the Government of Myanmar.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce to the Conference that Myanmar has decided to become a State party to one of the core ILO Conventions, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Against this background, it would be timely and prudent for the Conference to put an end to the remaining restrictions of its resolution adopted in 2000.

On behalf of the Government and people of Myanmar, including our workers and employers, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the European Union for its wise decision last May to reinstate the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for Myanmar based on our concrete efforts in labour and human rights.

We are very much encouraged by the understanding and support the international community has shown for our reform agenda. We are determined to continue our reform towards a democratic society. We firmly believe that the ILO will also continue to support Myanmar on this path.

Original Arabic: Mr EZZAOUIA (Minister of Social Affairs, Tunisia)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr Nidal Katamine, the Minister of Labour and Transport of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on his election as President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Director-General, in his Report this year, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, sets out numerous factors which led to changes in the world of work as well as the means which could enable the Organization to adapt itself to such changes through focusing on issues of great importance to its member States such as tripartism and representative legitimacy, and also through the commitment of member States to adopting seven initiatives proposed by the Director-General. These initiatives will surely obtain the support of the member States in view of their excellence and pertinence.

During this session, the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards has discussed the General Survey on collective bargaining in the public service which was prepared by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. It included for the first time the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154).

In this connection, it is worthwhile to highlight the attention paid by the Government of Tunisia to supporting union rights in public service and to

promoting collective bargaining in different sectors including public service. Thus, a law relating to the ratification of Convention No. 151 was promulgated on 1 April 2013, making Tunisia the first Arab member State which has so far ratified this Convention. The same law also includes the ratification of Conventions Nos 154 and 144.

The agenda of this session includes a general discussion on employment and social protection in the new demographic context. This discussion will provide an occasion for the examination of the characteristics of demographic developments and their implications for employment policies and social protection, as well as their impact on several issues such as social protection and the sustainability of social security schemes.

It is to be recalled here that a social contract was signed on 14 January 2013 in Tunisia, which was attended by the Director-General of the ILO. The aim of the contract is to undertake a comprehensive review of social security schemes in all of its branches based on a study which is being supervised by the social partners signatory to the contract and with the participation of the relevant professional stakeholders, in order to identify the real causes behind the deterioration in the financial and service situation of our funds, with a view to adopting the necessary reforms in its regard.

Social dialogue is another important subject which is being discussed within the framework of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008. The report *Social dialogue* contains several recommendations aimed at the promotion of a social dialogue inclusive of all workers, including: workers employed in unconventional types of employment; migrant workers; and workers in the rural economy. It also seeks to widen the scope of dialogue and collective bargaining beyond wages, by including other important issues such as: work organization; vocational training; and skills development.

In this connection, the social contract envisaged the establishment of a National Council of Social Dialogue before 2013, which enjoys administrative and financial independence. The setting up of this body is an absolute priority to all three groups of social partners, as it constitutes the main guarantee for tripartite dialogue, which is active and permanent.

On this occasion, I wish to thank Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, the ILO specialists both in Geneva and in the Cairo office, as well as the representatives of the ILO in Tunisia, for their technical assistance provided throughout all the preparatory phases of the social contract besides their current assistance in order to realize its aims, especially with respect to the establishment of the National Council of Social Dialogue.

Ms LIEW (Worker, Singapore)

It has been five years since the onset of the 2008 global financial crisis. Unfortunately, we are still not seeing the end of the tunnel. In fact, this 102nd Session of the Conference is meeting amid signs of a spreading European recession. The impact on workers has been devastating, and I agree fully with the Director-General that the problems of unemployment, underemployment, inequality and injustice are becoming more acute.

A number of countries have spent beyond their means, in fact over a long period of time, and are

heavily in debt. Bold, drastic measures must be taken to bring debts down to a more acceptable level and achieve fiscal prudence. As the saying goes, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” However, the fruits of labour, unfortunately, are usually unfairly distributed even in good times.

So, during these difficult times, while the tripartite partners come together to bite the bullet, governments should ensure that our workers are not disproportionately bearing the costs of the recession and recovery. I am glad that the Director-General has rightly pointed out in his Report, in paragraph 146, that the ILO must give priority to the situation of those who are most disadvantaged in the world of work.

In Singapore, the economy is undergoing thorough restructuring and entering a new phase of slower growth, which poses great challenges. We have to tackle the challenge of income inadequacy and inequality and also make sure that wages, especially on the bottom rung, can continue to grow.

The Singapore Government has put in place various forms of funding and schemes encouraging employers to make better use of technology and innovation, and to train workers to increase productivity so that productivity gains can be shared with the workers. As the saying goes, “You can bring a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.” So we urge the employers to continue to do their part and value every worker. Employers, in fact, should waste no time in taking full advantage of the schemes available to help companies to restructure and to adapt to the new operating environment.

The Singapore labour movement is committed to working with employers to “grow the pie” and to ensure that the fruits of labour are shared with all our workers. We are also committed to helping vulnerable workers, especially those in the lower income groups and elderly workers, as well as the increasing numbers of professional managers and executives who will form two-thirds of our workforce in Singapore by 2030.

To this end, the Singapore National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) has introduced a progressive wage model, which is: a wage structure that helps workers to climb the four ladders of: skills upgrading; productivity improvement; career advancement; and wage progression. The NTUC, together with the companies, has rolled out the progressive wage model in 12 industry sectors, including hospitality, engineering, transportation and others.

We are pleased that the Singapore Government, being the biggest employer as well as a service buyer, has set an example by incorporating the progressive wage model for the cleaning sector. It is now looking into the possibility of making it mandatory for the cleaning companies to adopt progressive wage models before they are allowed to operate.

The Government has also pledged to do the same for the security industry, and will take the lead in best-sourcing, another initiative of the NTUC, whereby contracts are awarded not on the basis of price alone or cheap sourcing, but also on other factors such as quality of service, training and the welfare of workers.

In conclusion, unions need to evolve with the times and find new ways to work with their governments and employers, and vice versa. Only then can the unions continue to remain relevant and

achieve the very purpose of their existence, that is, to improve the livelihoods of all workers.

Last, but not least, governments and employers should also adapt in the true spirit of social dialogue and tripartism – which are the pillars, and the unique advantage, of the ILO.

Ms SIOKA (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Namibia)

First and foremost, my delegation congratulates the President, as well as the Officers, on their election and assures them of our full support. Namibia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Africa group.

We commend the Director-General for the visionary leadership displayed in his Report. It addresses issues of importance, that is, unemployment, underemployment and the promise to take the Decent Work Agenda forward. The issues raised in the Report continue to be a priority of the Namibian Government.

Taking into account the ILO Recommendation last year, Namibia inaugurated a Wages Commission for Domestic Workers. This was brought about by the country’s desire to look into the plight of its vulnerable groups of workers, by the adoption of the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), the Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201), and our Labour Act. The wages commission on domestic workers completed its public hearings in all 13 regions of our country and we submitted our report last week to the Ministry of Labour.

The Labour Advisory Council requested its secretariat to investigate Namibia’s readiness to ratify the following Conventions: the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); and Convention No. 151. In this regard, Namibia is ready to ratify the above ILO Conventions. Furthermore, national tripartite plus consultations are ongoing and ratification of Convention No. 122, will be considered when the employment policy is updated. The Employment Services Act and the Employment Creation Commission Act have been enacted and are operational.

The Namibia Statistics Agency indicated a decrease in unemployment from 51 to less than 30 per cent, even though Namibia is not comfortable with the situation at hand. We are glad to inform you that Namibia has recognized the Namibian Informal Sector Organization (NISO) as a partner in creating more jobs.

Article 95 of the Constitution of the Republic provides for the promotion of the welfare of the people of Namibia. Efforts are being made to improve the old-age pension system significantly. Namibia has a small population of almost 2 million and, even though it is classified as a low and middle-income country, it is plagued by expanding poverty and unemployment.

Since its independence, Namibia has invested the largest part of its national budget into the education and health sectors. Monthly grants for the elderly, disabled, orphans and vulnerable children are in place. In 1994, the Social Security Commission enacted a law for maternity, sickness and death (MSD) benefits, which are paid out right now as I am talking. The MSD Fund covers approximately 343,000 persons, while the Social Security Development Fund provides grants for bursaries and vocational training programmes for youth and unem-

ployed persons. However, Namibia does not have unemployment insurance. The Social Security Act also provides for the establishment of a national pension fund and a national medical fund benefit.

Namibia reiterates the Africa group's call for the democratic reform of ILO governance through a timely democratic reform of the ILO, through the ratification of the instrument for the amendment of the Constitution of the ILO, 1986. Currently, African member States and the developing countries are marginalized and they do not enjoy equal voting in the ILO Governing Body.

In conclusion, I therefore urge ILO member States to consider ratifying the 1986 ILO constitutional amendment to give equity and fairness to the ILO as a world organization founded on sound labour relations.

Mr ASHIETAY (*Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, Ghana*)

I wish, on behalf of my Government, to congratulate the Director-General for his Report, which gives a comprehensive outlook on the ILO's appreciation of the world of work and measures being taken to reposition the Organization to deliver a better service to its constituents. The eight areas identified as being of critical priority under the programme and budget of change for higher value are indeed also a priority concern for my Government.

Ghana considers that the theme of the Conference "Building a future with decent work" is apt. I also share the Director-General's sentiments as regards the youth employment crisis. Creating decent employment for our teeming youth, constituting about 40 per cent of the global jobless population, remains a top priority for the Government of Ghana.

In an effort to address this problem, Ghana has established the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency, which runs programmes including modules that are segmented to deal with demand-driven skills training, placements and the transfer of start-up capital to beneficiaries. This programme has generated thousands of jobs for youth in Ghana.

The Graduate Business Support Scheme has also been established to address the challenge of graduate unemployment. Under the scheme, which is a public-private partnership, graduates of Ghana's universities and tertiary institutions are introduced to entrepreneurship and the successful ones are assisted in establishing their own businesses.

My Government considers training in employment skills, entrepreneurship development and the formation of cooperatives to be crucial for sustainable youth employment. The skills training institutions under my Ministry and the Department of Cooperatives are being repositioned and retooled to take up the mantle in this regard.

Social protection, an empowering social tool mentioned in the Director-General's Report, is also of critical importance to Ghana. We recognize that basic social protection is highly instrumental in safeguarding the welfare and future of workers, particularly those in the rural areas, who risk being thrown out of jobs and becoming destitute as the population increases and resources become scarce. The Government of Ghana, in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable groups, has put in place social protection programmes, such as the National Health Insurance Scheme, which deal with health care and exempts children, people aged

70 years and above, as well as the poor, from paying premiums.

Ghana has also reformed its pension scheme by introducing a three-tiered pension scheme to enhance retirement benefits for workers and also provides opportunities for those in the informal sector to benefit from the scheme.

The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme, which provides cash transfers to the destitute in Ghana, is also being implemented.

The Ghana Social Opportunities Project is yet another youth employment-related social protection strategy that uses labour-intensive public works to construct feeder roads and dugouts, or small dams for irrigation. It has also generated massive job opportunities and better crop yields with its subsequent improvement in standards of living for rural dwellers.

Ghana, as a country, continues to place special emphasis on gender equality and equity, and on women's empowerment, not only as a human rights issue but also as a prudent development strategy. This entails political, economic, social and cultural empowerment. In this regard, efforts are being made to increase the participation of female delegates to ILO meetings.

It is worth mentioning that Ghana is now a lower middle-income economy, a status which comes with its opportunities and challenges. In this vein, efforts are being made to ensure that the exploitation of oil and gas in Ghana, which commenced recently, continues to provide increased avenues for investment, industrialization and employment.

The formal labour force in Ghana is just above 14 per cent and totals about 1.5 million people. In order to ensure decent wages for public sector workers, a public sector salary rationalization is currently being carried out by the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission, as the lead agency in reducing salary differentials for those performing similar work.

Meanwhile, the Government continues to adopt the tripartite system and social dialogue to determine the national daily minimum wage, to ensure that workers are guaranteed reasonable remuneration while employers are not unreasonably financially burdened.

It is worthy of note that Ghana will formally establish a labour market information system with all the components to provide adequate data on unemployment, skill gaps, vacancies and industrial accidents. It is hoped this will enhance our policy formation and development planning.

Ghana has now created its first solar power plant to produce electricity in a sustainable and more environmentally friendly manner to ensure a more sustainable development. Recycling of waste is also being pursued vigorously. Organic farming is being promoted, while recommissioning of land ravaged by the sea is ongoing. As regards occupational safety and health, the Department of Factories Inspectorates is being provided with more funding and logistics to enhance its operations effectively and efficiently so that accidents at the workplace are drastically reduced.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Ghana's commitment to providing decent work in a congenial and safe environment and in a sustainable manner, while upholding the noble principles of equality, equity, fair play and human dignity.

On this note I wish to thank you for your attention and wish the Conference fruitful deliberations.

Original Spanish: Mr ARIAS PALACIO (Government, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

First of all, I would like to say that we welcome this first Report from the new Director-General, for he mentions his concerns for the increase in unemployment and underemployment that began with the crisis in 2008. We share his concerns and are most alarmed that the fashionable recipes for overcoming the crisis are to drastically reduce labour rights – in particular, social protection. We are very concerned that we keep hearing phrases from the past, such as “necessary cuts in public spending”, to justify far-reaching changes to social security and continuity of employment.

What is worse still is that these reductions and the weakening of labour rights have the seal of tripartism placed upon them. Increasingly, the workers of the world associate the word tripartism with cuts and reductions in labour rights. This is something the ILO needs to seriously think about. What is the role of tripartism in this crisis, if the only objective of social dialogue is to negotiate which rights are to be lost by workers to save the wallets of the bankers?

The Director-General indicates that the situation has been different in emerging economies, and indeed the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is one of those countries described as emerging. Perhaps, by that word, they mean that we are finally emerging from the mire in which years of exploitation had placed us, exploitation by the major powers and by the economic policies that ruled roughshod over us via the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Now we are starting to become different, because we are starting to enjoy political independence in our decisions, to understand that the rights and security of the people are much more important than the ideas of globalization which give primacy to capital over labour. With the start of the Bolivarian Revolution in 1999, we had a very successful process of discussion and dialogue which led to the birth of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and in this Magna Carta important labour achievements were laid down as constitutional rights and guarantees.

In our Constitution, we have the right to organize, and the State protects trade union activities. We have the right of collective bargaining, to the free election of trade union representatives, the annual revision of the minimum wage and universal, free social security.

Some countries, which are the showcases of world capitalism, have done things differently. But in our country, we have been strengthening social investment. I say “investment”, not “public spending”, because what the State invests in health, education and social security for the people is not spending. Thanks to this, we can be proud of the fact that our social indicators have flourished, and they are much more important for us than any other economic statistic. Now, as of April 2013, the level of unemployment has fallen to 7.9 per cent, which is a decrease of 0.7 per cent from last year, 2012. Unemployment among those who are looking for their first job is currently at 16 per cent, which is a significant reduction when compared with the rate of youth unemployment, which was above 28 per cent

before the Bolivarian Revolution. Formal employment now accounts for 60 per cent of all employment, which is the diametrical opposite of the situation before the Revolution, when the formal sector was stalled at 49 per cent. Social security has been one of the most important achievements of the Government led by Comandante Hugo Chávez Frías. Pensions have generally matched the minimum wage, and their regular monthly payment has been guaranteed, including an end-of-year bonus of two months’ payments. There are now 2.5 million pensioners, an increase of more than 700 per cent compared with the number of pensioners before the Revolution.

On 30 April last year, a law was passed, the Organic Law on labour and workers. This is a legal instrument which enshrines all the individual rights of workers and rights of organization and collective bargaining. It provides for the imprisonment of those employers who fail to comply with employment requirements, in particular, protection against dismissal. A year after the promulgation of this law we have the new working day, reducing maximum weekly hours of work to 40, and extending to workers, both men and women, the right to at least two successive rest days a week.

Our country has stressed the protection and improvement of labour and social security rights at a time when the economic crisis has been a justification in other countries for reducing and even abolishing them. In this war between capital and labour, we have placed our bets on labour, on labour rights, and the human rights of workers, be they men or women. Of course, we have been continually attacked by those who have seen their privileges undermined by policies aimed at protecting workers’ rights. No lie or libel has been spared when criticizing our country.

I do not want to conclude before I make a reference to a very sad event in the life of our country. On 5 March of this year our President in office, Comandante Hugo Chávez Frías, passed away. I am not going to ask for a minute of silence for a man who deserves a lifetime of applause for being the chief defender of the rights of workers, not just in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela but throughout the world. But I did want to just briefly touch upon what his legacy consists of in the context of the Bolivarian Revolution. Hugo Chávez Frías gave us a Constitution which incorporates the most important rights of workers as constitutional guarantees. He gave us a Government whose fundamental pillar has been the struggle of workers. He gave us the Organic Law on labour and workers, the most advanced law in the area of employment rights and worker protection and the protection of trade union rights and collective bargaining. Finally, before he passed away, he proposed to us, and this was ratified by the people, the first working class President, Mr Nicolás Maduro, who came from trade union struggles with the transport workers, and was steeled in the battle against the neoliberal policies that were inflicted on our peoples in the 1980s and 1990s. With a working class president and a Bolivarian Revolution which is essentially working class, we will continue our fight to build socialism, to build a society for workers, both men and women.

Allow me at the outset to thank the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, for his innovative and constructive initiatives to improve the administration of the ILO. We are optimistic that the conclusions reached at this Conference may help develop the means of dealing with the crisis prevailing in the world of work.

As admitted by the Director-General, the world has never undergone such rapid and vigorous changes in terms of technology and demography, so augmenting inequalities that have led to the deepening of poverty and economic stagnation, with popular uprisings in many different corners of the world. Among other things, there are the effects of persistent economic recession, the absence of social justice and people's aspiration to more decent working and living conditions. Challenges arising from cyclical crisis, meanwhile, have adversely affected different countries, irrespective of their level of development, and have led to recession, stagnation and eventually increased unemployment.

In the run up to the ILO's centenary, governments and social partners must seek and adopt new constructive and confidence-building initiatives, so as to cope with the challenges of the new world. It is imperative that the ILO's tripartite constituents attempt to jointly develop a coherent and convergent strategy to overcome the problems I have mentioned, to make the world of work a better, more humane, kinder and fairer one, in which all have a place and where all can have equal opportunity to realize their potential. It is incumbent on us to direct our national and international policies towards better management of our natural resources, decreasing pollutants and extending the horizons of social justice by tying the ILO objectives for social justice and the eradication of poverty and unemployment to the UN's post-2015 development agenda.

In line with the above, the Islamic Republic of Iran approves of the Director-General's governance initiatives and his structural reform for the purpose of integrating the programmes and outcomes of the Office. The promotion of social policies and the extension of social justice, sustainable development and employment are integral parts of the new policies of the Office.

To achieve all these, social inputs are the main engine of sustainable development.

Coherent social and economic policies and the contribution of the social partners are pivotal in coping with the existing crisis. In view of the need for the development and further extension of the social security network, Iran constantly develops and monitors social projection initiatives, the promotion of free public education, entrepreneurship, and the further promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through constructive collaboration and engagement with the social partners.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in the meantime, has succeeded in adopting social policies in a structural adjustment reform in line with its global, national and international economic policies. Eighty per cent of the country's population are now covered by a minimum social protection floor.

Among other initiatives, 1,180 cooperatives have been established so as to prepare the bedrock for capacity building all over the country. In the context of reliable relations, and in order to help the Gov-

ernment ensure sustainable productive employment, workers and employers have also established 8,000 associations in the country. Some 1.2 million households are already listed on social protection payrolls to help eradicate poverty.

Without global consensus for the extension of social protection it would be next to impossible to guarantee self-esteem and the integrity of millions of people. Among other things, the fulfilment of social policies is bound up with genuine dialogue and responsible interaction by governments with the workers' and employers' associations. The Islamic Republic of Iran strives to fully implement such goals in the context of its national policies.

Finally, the Report of the Director-General on occupied Palestine is, as usual, indicative of the miserable and heart-wrenching situation of an oppressed people, and the blatant violation of human aspirations as a nation by the occupier. The Islamic Republic of Iran thanks the Director-General and urges governments and social partners to continue providing support for the oppressed people of the Occupied Palestinian Territories by bitterly condemning the systemic violation of the United Nations Charter and the fundamental principles of the ILO, and the horrendous suppression of the liberty and dignity of the innocent people of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by the occupying regime.

Original Chinese: Mr WANG (Government, China)

The Chinese Government delegation appreciates the Director-General's Report to the Conference, endorses the centenary initiatives put forward by the Director-General for the ILO and supports the reform to boost the ILO's dynamism to achieve decent work and social justice.

Over the last five years, in the complex and austere global economic context, the Chinese Government has set the country on an unwavering course for comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development, the accelerated transformation of its mode of economic development and it has implemented a new employment strategy and a proactive employment policy.

Each year, over 11 million new jobs are created in urban areas and the urban registered unemployment rate has been kept under 4.3 per cent. The overall employment situation has remained stable. In 2012, China achieved universal basic old-age insurance coverage in both urban and rural areas, covering 788 million people. Basic medical insurance schemes in urban and rural areas covered 1.3 billion people. In this way, China has established the largest basic old-age and medical insurance systems in the world. The national coordination mechanism for labour relations is functioning better and workers' wages are rising steadily. The legitimate rights and interests of workers are under more effective protection.

Looking ahead, China is moving towards the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects. We will push forward the following work in the area of human resources and social security.

First, by further implementing the new employment strategy and a proactive employment policy, we are making job creation a priority goal in economic and social development, continuously improving public services for employment and devoting more efforts to upgrading workers' competences and employability in order to achieve better quality employment. Great attention is given to youth em-

ployment and university graduates are identified as priority targets.

Second, in our continued work to deepen the reform of social security systems, we plan to enforce social insurance law, increase the level of social insurance and make efforts to cover all eligible persons with insurance schemes to extend the benefits of social security to all population groups.

Third, we will enforce labour contract law, upgrade basic labour standards, improve working conditions and make efforts to resolve labour disputes and increase the remuneration of low-income workers. We will proceed to the gradual registration of eligible rural migrant workers as permanent urban residents so that they can enjoy equal access to all basic public services in urban areas.

At present, the world economy is weakened by slow growth and the underlying impacts of the international financial crisis are increasingly felt. China stands ready to work hand-in-hand with the tripartite constituents of other countries to actively encourage the ILO to deepen its reform, explore innovative ways of achieving social equity and justice, and respond to the challenges of the world of work.

To this end, we put forward the following proposals: first, a job-rich development strategy should be actively promoted and advocated. We should promote the idea that securing employment secures growth and should define employment as the basic foundation of economic recovery and sustainable development. The ILO should encourage the international community to establish employment as a core economic indicator. The ILO should emphasize youth employment as a key concern and support all countries in developing economic, financial and fiscal policies that are conducive to job creation, vigorously promoting and stabilizing employment.

Second, labour standards need to be implemented in line with national contexts. Labour standards are essential in protecting workers' rights and interests. The ILO should encourage each and every country to embrace the spirit of its 1998 and 2008 Declarations to establish and improve their systems and mechanisms for the protection of workers' rights in line with their national circumstances. Countries should also be encouraged to strengthen tripartite cooperation and labour law enforcement, and to implement international labour standards in a tangible way on the ground, thereby ensuring the protection of legitimate workers' rights and interests.

Third, the ILO's reform should be promoted. China supports the ILO in its efforts to enhance its capacity to address challenges in the world of work through reform. The reform of the functioning of the ILO should be geared towards increasing the efficiency of the Organization and carrying out its work through open and transparent tripartite consultations under a supervisory mechanism. Priorities should be established, programmes developed and resources allocated to further consolidate the ILO's professional authority and achieve the integration of emerging market economies in international mechanisms.

Fourth, work on vocational training should be stepped up. Vocational training and skill development are essential means of improving employability, and promoting entrepreneurship and decent work.

Original French: Mr TRENCH (Worker, Bulgaria)

Allow me first and foremost to congratulate the Worker Vice-President on behalf of the workers and employees of Bulgaria on her election to such a high office.

This year, unfortunately for Bulgaria and for the whole of southern Europe, the crisis has not only persisted but has taken on socio-economic dimensions that are ever more alarming. The workers have been particularly hard hit by the fallout of the economic recession.

In five years, our country has lost more than 420,000 jobs – about 15 per cent of the workforce. Income is stagnating and we are now the poorest country of the European Union, at the bottom of the list of 27 members.

We are up against vigorous attempts to erode our social legislation and collective bargaining rights, in a bid to weaken the hard-earned protection that the workers fought for many years to obtain.

The centre-right conservative Government has continued to amend the labour legislation adopted by its predecessors, to the detriment of workers whose jobs it has rendered more precarious by introducing more flexible forms of employment, such as working at home, or teleworking, in an effort to combat unemployment.

This has brought new ways of generating unstable employment: dismissals, new arrangements for annual leave, restrictions on carrying leave over to the following year, loss of paid leave for days not taken in the current year, a tax on interest earned on bank deposits, a series of changes in the legislation governing civil servants that affect their pay and salary, conversion into permanent regulations of what were originally temporary anti-crisis measures, the requirement that employers pay the first three days of sick leave instead of the social security system, stricter requirements for workers' and employers' organizations to be recognized as nationally representative, and compulsory declaration of assets and earnings for members of workers' and employers' organizations represented on the National Tripartite Cooperation Council.

By way of conclusion, one can say that the vast majority of the amendments to Bulgarian legislation made this year definitely undermine workers' rights and income.

Extensive poverty even among workers, speculative fuel and energy prices, higher prices for general consumer goods and the Government's lack of appropriate machinery and political will to adjust wages accordingly, together induced the workers and the rest of the population to engage in protests – unprecedented in recent years – throughout the country. As a result, the Government fell and premature elections had to be organized.

The highly alarming budget and public finance situation, major economic problems in the energy and health sectors especially, galloping unemployment, and political confrontation and polarization following the elections all combine to pose a serious challenge and grave problems that have to be resolved by the new executive and legislative authorities.

Consequently, the social partners are going to have a hard time finding a delicate balance between maintaining social peace and consolidating and improving the rights and interests of the workers.

In concluding, I would like to wish you all a fruitful discussion here at the International Labour Conference.

Mr SASOMSUB (*Minister of Labour, Thailand*)

It is my great pleasure to attend the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference as the Minister of Labour of Thailand. It is a great opportunity to perceive the vision of Mr Guy Ryder on the occasion of his first participation at the International Labour Conference as Director-General.

I really appreciate the overview and the initiative ideas of the Director-General to renew the capacity of the ILO, deliver its mandate of social justice and keep pace with both challenges and developments in the twenty-first century. I believe that not only Thailand, but a lot of member States will support his initiatives to meet the ultimate goals of the ILO.

The current Constitution of Thailand mentions that the State shall pursue the directive principles of state policy pertaining to the economy by promoting job opportunities for people of working age, protecting women and children in labour matters, promoting labour relations and giving workers the right to elect their own representatives, arranging the social welfare system, providing protection to ensure equal work, equal pay, benefits and welfare for workers without discrimination, and making arrangements so that people have savings to live off in their old age.

Moreover, the economic restructuring has been geared towards inclusive growth with quality employment opportunities for everyone in society. Social protection is designed to prevent risks in daily life. An analysis of current and anticipated risk factors reveals the need to strengthen the capabilities of society. Economic and social security, together with equality of opportunity and participation, will promote a society where people can keep pace with change and manage risks successfully.

In line with the new demographic context, Thailand is moving towards an ageing society through changes in demographic structures. That means that a higher proportion of the population are elderly, and a lower proportion are students and working-age adults. Rural to urban migration will contribute to rapid urbanization. The proportions of young and working-age populations have steadily declined.

The Thai Government gives priority to the urgent policy need to promote equality through a social protection system for all people, of all ages, in many areas, such as by: further developing the health insurance system by increasing the efficiency of the universal coverage of the health system, so that all citizens can have access to quality, convenient and equitable health care; and improving the quality of life of the elderly by providing public facilities to serve the elderly, by enhancing the country's readiness as an ageing society. We hope to encourage the elderly to be a productive part of society, considering that the elderly are highly experienced individuals and deserve to be a part of the country's development process.

Lastly, Thailand has launched the urgent policies of its Decent Work Country Programme, which encourages constructive cooperation among the tripartite constituents, and also increases social security benefits, so that those under the social security scheme can adequately access health care. The aim also is to improve and expand the coverage of the scheme to the entire informal sector of workers.

I will conclude my statement to this Conference by urging the ILO to provide more support to member countries and its constituents in the context of technical cooperation, with the aim of achieving its mandate in creating social justice for all.

Mr MISKIN (*Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment, Suriname*)

It is once again an honour and privilege for me to address you at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I wish to start by congratulating Mr Guy Ryder as the new Director-General of the ILO. I wish him luck and insight in leading the ILO to greater heights during his period as Director-General of the ILO. With great interest I took note of his views on leading the ILO to 100 years of playing a vital role in the world of work, in order to keep peace and create social justice for all. This is the right moment to reflect on our present realities, the way forward and how we wish to achieve our goals in the future.

We have been confronted in the past years with a global economic crisis from which many economies have not yet fully recovered, but we are trying to manage, through several measures. So, it is evident why the emphasis of this year's Conference is placed on: employment and social protection, for these have suffered the most during this period of crisis; sustainable development, by promoting decent work and green jobs, as a way forward; and social dialogue, as a means to achieve our goals in recovering from the crisis and rebuilding and improving our economies.

The Government of Suriname is very pleased to report progress on these issues that are being addressed by the Conference. There have been positive developments in our labour market. We can report that, due to positive economic developments and activities in our country that are providing more employment opportunities and an increase in the number of employed persons, it has to be noted that employment is increasing and the unemployment rate is within acceptable proportions.

With regard to social protection, tripartite partners in our country have agreed to the establishment of a national social security scheme and have made progress in their deliberations by reaching consensus during the past year on the introduction of a minimum wage system, a national health insurance scheme and a national pension benefits scheme. This, as a first phase of providing basic social provisions for all our citizens. The Government of Suriname is hoping that, after a successful execution of the first phase, it will be able to broaden the scope of the national social security scheme in the future.

In this regard, it should also be mentioned that the tripartite Labour Advisory Board, by consensus, recommended the adoption of public legislation in addition to general rules contained in the draft new Civil Code, which will regulate the issue of maternity protection along the lines of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

After long preparations, the Government of Suriname presented seven draft labour laws to the social partners represented on the Labour Advisory Board. The aim is to modernize existing laws and initiate new laws. The whole process of reviewing the national legislation is guided by the recent standards and principles of the ILO and concerns: a revision of the decree on the Labour Advisory Board; a re-

vised Public Employment Agencies Act; the introduction of a Private Employment Agencies Act; the amendment of the legislation on labour inspection; the amendment of the Freedom of Association Act; and the amendment of the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement Act. Also, a Minimum Wage Act has been introduced as a means of protecting vulnerable groups in our society from job exploitation.

The amendments and drafts of the new legislation have undergone broad national consultation and tripartite partners are in the process of finding consensus on the drafts laid before them. The adoption of the revised and new laws will also support the positive developments and renewed initiatives in employment and social security.

As I have presented, the abovementioned initiatives taken by our Government have been subjected to the intensive process of social dialogue and we are in full agreement with the Director-General when he states that the success of all initiatives will ultimately depend on the tripartite commitment of member States. The Government of Suriname is of the strong faith that the best results are reached when all parties involved can reach consensus on initiatives and measures to be taken in order to improve working and living conditions.

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation for the guidance and assistance the ILO has provided throughout the past decades and the Government of Suriname is looking forward to the future initiatives to be taken by the ILO towards its centenary.

Original Russian: Mr KULYK (Worker, Ukraine)

The Report of the Director-General entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment* is sufficiently comprehensive and objective in our view. It discusses not only what has been done but also how the ILO intends to respond to the new challenges of globalization. It is now that the new architecture of the global redistribution of labour is being formed.

Today's new geoeconomic challenges require from all countries, including Ukraine, decisive measures in almost all areas of life. Due to the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, a rather challenging economic situation has developed in our country. This year the World Bank forecasts that the growth of the Ukrainian economy will be just 1 per cent. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development forecasts it at 0.5 per cent, and the IMF at zero.

Trying to provide answers to these challenges, our Government has adopted a state programme to boost economic development for the period 2013–14. It reflects over 30 per cent of the proposals made by the country's Economic Council of voluntary and business organizations. In the words of our President, "The state programme should lay the foundation of a new model of economic development in the post-crisis world." Essentially, this is a recognition that the model of development devised over the past two decades and more on the back of cheap labour, has run out of steam. Here, we must recall the words of Victor Hugo, who once said, "It took a crisis to teach us the value of work" – these words are very appropriate.

That is why, today, the social partners are developing a new wage strategy for 2020 under the Declaration on Social Justice, which was adopted at our initiative. The vast majority of job vacancies

in Ukraine are offering pay levels of some €250–€300 per month. According to data from our Government's employment service, on 1 March this year, out of 60,000 vacancies, every fourth vacancy was offering only the minimum wage.

The main idea behind our state programme to boost economic development is to support domestic goods production by increasing demand on the domestic market. This is the goal of the state programme, and it is fully supported by our trade unions. One cannot ignore the fact that in our markets today, according to expert estimates, only 54 per cent of produce comes from domestic suppliers – the rest, 46 per cent, is imported.

This situation must be corrected without delay, because it is a matter of losing strategic sectors of our economy and therefore millions of jobs. It is no secret that many businesses in Ukraine rely on part-time labour. Furthermore, unemployment among those in rural areas is scarcely taken into account. Some 44 per cent of unemployed people in Ukraine are young people under 35 years of age. The state programme to boost economic development should be the foundation for carrying out the recently adopted programme to support employment and to stimulate job creation, which aims to achieve, by 2017, the average level of employment in the countries of the European Union. It is expected that the level of unemployment in Ukraine, calculated according to ILO methodology, will fall to 6.3 per cent in 2017, and among young people to 13 per cent, compared to the current 19 per cent.

As part of the programme, a new labour law has been adopted, to which the trade union side made 200 amendments. It reflects advanced lawmaking experience and best practice from many countries of the world. It wholly changes the approach to job creation, especially for those who are less competitive on the labour market, for example, youth, people with disabilities, those approaching pension age and those with special difficulty in finding jobs.

The trade unions and many voluntary organizations have proposed an alternative strategy to overcome the global socio-economic crisis. That strategy includes proposals for the regulation of the imploding banking system, for preventing fraud in tax and financial operations, for the redistribution of wealth, for guaranteed employment and training for youth, and for investment in public services. The adoption of those proposals, in our view, would allow us to duly commemorate the centenary of the ILO and to affirm that it remains dedicated to its main goal – which is ensuring social justice.

Ms DIMAPILIS-BALDOZ (Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines)

I congratulate the President on his esteemed leadership of the Conference. I also congratulate Director-General Guy Ryder and commend him for his incisive and forward-looking Report. The Philippines, with its tripartite constituents, supports and is ready to engage the ILO on its centenary initiatives outlined in the Report of the Director-General.

Achieving sustainable and inclusive growth that generates decent jobs continues to be the priority concern that the ILO's tripartite constituents must confront as they look towards its centenary of global leadership in the twenty-first century world of work.

The 7.8 per cent growth rate of the Philippines, the fastest in Asia, in the first quarter of this year,

has been preceded by an improvement in our global competitiveness and the achievement of a first grade investment rating. The positive growth, however, continues to present a formidable challenge to the persistent problems of unemployment and underemployment. But there are good indications that the quality of jobs and the country's decent work profile are improving.

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicator on employment to reduce poverty, expressed in terms of the ratio of self-employed and unpaid family workers to total employment, is narrowing. Wage and salary employment and full-time employment are both expanding. Mean hours of work are increasing. But the longer-term structural solution to the problem remains elusive.

The biggest growth is still in the service sector, where precarious employment is prevalent. While growth in industry, manufacturing and construction is high, the momentum needs to be sustained. Investment in agriculture has to increase. Climate change, mitigation measures and the promotion of green jobs have to be prioritized. Social protection for those at risk must be provided. Investment in human capital for a competitive workforce must continue. Migration has to be linked with development.

The tripartite partners continue to respond to these challenges with a combination of reforms to help create a positive climate for investment and improve the employment situation. Industry roadmaps to growth are being crafted to mainstream employment as central to a development strategy for inclusive growth. On labour policies, broad participation by the social partners in policy and decision-making processes has been unprecedented, propelled by the recent law strengthening tripartism and social dialogue. The single-entry approach providing fair, speedy and inexpensive solutions to employment disputes has been institutionalized by the passage of the law mandating a 30-day conciliation period for all employment cases, keeping arbitration as the last resort.

To protect workers' wages and benefits, 600 employment law compliance officers and inspectors will implement the new law compliance system, using a mix of developmental and regulatory approaches to cater for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. With technical assistance from the ILO, the system features real-time data capture and transmittal from the field, using electronic checklists stored in mobile devices and gadgets. With an additional budget of 286 million Philippines pesos, the new system covers joint assessment of compliance with general labour standards, safety and health, child labour, freedom of association, collective bargaining and maritime labour regulations consistent with the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), due to take effect this August.

As provided in the landmark ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), which the Philippines has ratified, the Kasambahay Law, securing full recognition of the basic rights and benefits of household workers was put into effect on 4 June 2013. Bilateral agreements, including standard employment contracts embodying the universally accepted terms and conditions of employment of household service workers, have been concluded recently with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Similar

agreements with other countries in the region are under negotiation.

Investment in our human capital continues to receive the highest budgetary priorities. The Kindergarten Education Act, the Enhanced Basic Education Act and the Philippines Qualification Framework are being implemented to address the deficiencies in our education and training system, making it more responsive to the demands of industry and on a par with international standards.

As for vulnerable groups, the call for adequate social protection is being heeded, using the ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

We recognize that part of our growth is still consumption-led, mostly through remittances from our migrant workers. We continue to focus on developing the local economy and we are now seeing investors who are able to match the salaries and benefits of our migrant workers and are returning home, making migration a genuine choice and not an inevitable necessity, placing less social cost on the families.

The Aquino administration continues to affirm our support for the ILO as it engages the tripartite constituents in building a future of decent work under a regime of social justice and social cohesion. For the ILO, the challenge is to continuously review the relevance of international labour standards to the fast-changing world of work, and to equip its constituents with the capacities to easily adjust and adapt, and make decent work a distinct reality in every workplace.

Lastly, we look forward to the crafting of the post-2015 UN development agenda, where the results of this Conference will surely find their rightful place.

God bless the ILO.

Original Spanish: Mr PARDO RUEDA (Government, Colombia)

Firstly, on behalf of the Government of Colombia, I should like to congratulate the Director-General, Guy Ryder, for the outstanding work that he has carried out in his first year in office. We thank him for deciding to support the efforts of the Government of Colombia to strengthen its industrial relations. We are confident that, with the process of change and reform that has begun at the ILO, the conclusions reached will increasingly benefit the member States of this important Organization.

The Ministry of Labour promotes industrial relations between workers and employers in a climate of trust and positive building of relations. It has been an arduous and difficult task, and an ongoing one, with immediate, midterm and long-term results, and calling for continuing effort, always in the context of tripartite consensus. We are developing a holistic policy based on the following components: strengthening freedom of association, the right to organize and collective bargaining, legislative advances in the recognition of rights, security for trade union work, the fight against impunity and effective social dialogue.

We have created a public employment system and have reinforced the labour inspection system by increasing the number of inspectors and training them. As for the strengthening of freedom of association, we have registered 815 new union organizations in the last two years, and 97 more this year.

I should like to emphasize that the collective bargaining that has been carried out this year between

the national Government and public sector unions under Conventions Nos 151 and 154 has been very successful, and covers about 1.2 million workers in the public service. We have developed a legislative agenda to increase sanctions for impeding the right to organize. We have legislated on safety and health at work and on teleworking, and have adopted a new law on labour inspection.

ILO Convention No. 189 has been approved, and a decree has been enacted to enable domestic workers to join the family benefit system. As for the fight against impunity, we have made significant progress, and to date 500 convictions have been handed down by the courts.

Efforts to reduce rates of impunity have been accompanied by a strengthening of the protection programme, with 617 trade unionists protected by the programme as of 30 April 2013. The Law on Victims has made it possible to make progress in compensating trade unionists without prejudicing their right to individual compensation. In terms of social dialogue, we emphasize the work of the Special Committee for the Handling of Conflicts referred to the ILO, which deals directly on the ground with conflicts in matters governed by ILO Conventions. In a total of 50 cases, 28 agreements have been reached. The Committee on Freedom of Association has acknowledged this work and praised it. This outlines and demonstrates the understandings derived from a government policy of commitment to social goals, decent work, the formal economy, the elimination of child labour, freedom of association and the right to organize.

I call on you to be aware of these significant advances, and on the entire international community to change its perception of a country that has chosen its direction of travel in industrial relations and is set to pursue its task, with the contribution of important institutions like the ILO, in order to achieve better levels of progress and development. This optimistic vision is consistent with the peace process that is moving forward in Colombia and which, when it succeeds as we all hope, will create more space for democracy, inclusion and reconciliation, which will ultimately benefit all Colombians, in particular those engaged in the world of production, employment and good industrial relations.

Mr SHAMENDA (*Minister of Labour and Social Security, Zambia*)

Zambia appreciates the Reports presented by the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO. The dynamic nature of the world of work requires an innovative process to preside over any eventualities that may arise. The ILO has demonstrated its capabilities as a body that can rise to the global challenges affecting the world of work.

Zambia applauds the work that the ILO has conducted resulting in, among other things, declarations, the Global Jobs Pact and international labour standards, when we were confronted with world wars, the effects of globalization and, most recently, the economic crisis. The ILO is measured against the implementation of these actions in order to attain the desired goals of social justice.

In Zambia, the 2010 statistics revealed that the population stood at 13 million with a projected increase of 3.1 per cent from 2010 to 2015, which coincides with the global demographic trends highlighted in the Report of the Director-General. This

means that the fears being raised are global and need collective answers. We need answers to the questions being raised on employment and social protection in view of the demographic trends that the world is experiencing.

The principles of Recommendation No. 202 have to be translated into meaningful actions by member States. Zambia has accordingly incorporated social protection, as a poverty reduction strategy, into its Sixth National Development Plan for the period 2011–15. A technical committee is in place to spearhead social security reforms including the extension of coverage to the informal economy. Social health insurance schemes will also be used to address the dual problem of inadequate finances in the health sector and inequalities in the provision and access to health services.

We are all faced with emerging challenges, which are not only limited to economic and financial crises. Climate change is causing uneven, unprecedented weather patterns resulting in economic disruptions. It remains a challenge to comprehensively address the existing gaps in the implementation of sustainable development in the aftermath of a deep economic crisis. In this regard, Zambia calls on the international community to secure additional financial resources for disbursement to developing countries in order to mitigate these challenges, taking into account tripartism, transparency and accountability.

There is also a need to scale up the implementation of affordable and sustainable technology, taking into account capacity-building programmes in close collaboration with local, national and regional institutions. In Zambia, we have partnered with the ILO and the IMF on a programme aimed at promoting employment for inclusive growth, especially targeting youth, within the context of macroeconomic policies and strategies for sustainable development. Furthermore, with technical assistance from the consortium of UN agencies led by the ILO, and financial support from the Government of Finland, we are implementing programmes and activities in the construction and renewable energy sector under the Zambia Green Jobs Programme. The programme aims at improving the livelihoods of rural and urban families through the construction of sustainable housing.

My Ministry has embarked on a process of re-branding with the renewed support of my Government, which has now reclassified the Ministry as an economic ministry. We have engaged professional staff that can deliver results that have an impact on socio-economic development. The ILO Country Office for Zambia is also working tirelessly through financial and technical assistance to ensure that my Ministry can be relied upon as the driver of labour market forces. We are also grateful to the ILO for its support of the study on social dialogue in Zambia.

The current labour law reforms aimed at overhauling outdated labour laws are also at an advanced stage and we are consulting social partners to ensure that the final product meets expectations.

Lastly, my Government has paid particular attention to ensuring gender balance as regards recruitment of women, with most of the key positions filled by women, including the participants in this Conference.

On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, and myself, allow me to congratulate His Excellency, Professor Katamine, for being elected as the President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. On the same note, I also wish to extend my congratulations to Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO, and his Office, for giving a very comprehensive Report that addresses the challenges and initiatives of the twenty-first century.

Since 2010, the Malaysian Government, under the visionary leadership of our beloved Prime Minister, has made landmark strides under its economic, social and government transformation programmes to leapfrog the nation into a high-income economy and to achieve developed country status by the year 2020.

Today, the successful implementation of the transformation programmes has also brought to fruition significant changes and progress in the Malaysian economy. Supporting and sustaining such success was a totally Malaysian effort based on a strong belief in social dialogue, sustainable development and social protection for the elderly. Acknowledging that social dialogue promotes democratic consensus building, national tripartite institutions, such as the National Labour Advisory Council, the Civil Service National Joint Consultative Council, and the more recently established National Wage Consultative Council, were prominent features in national consultations. Even at private enterprise level, social dialogue has been recognized as a crucial instrument in facilitating quality collective bargaining procedures. Together, such social engagements have brought about sound industrial harmony, which has significant bearing upon national development.

Demographic profiling has shown that, by 2030, the Malaysian workforce will face the challenges of an ageing population. In managing this issue, a national health initiative, that constantly and consistently monitors the health of the population, including the early detection of non-communicable diseases, was undertaken. A health-awareness and healthy lifestyle programme was pursued vigorously to prolong workers' capacity to continue working, even in old age. These efforts were complemented by the extension of the age limit coverage to 60 years by the Social Security Organization (SOCSO), realigning social security coverage with the national minimum retiring age. Besides old-age protection for workers, social protection in Malaysia also entered a transformational landscape with the dual introduction of the national minimum wage and the national minimum retirement age, benefiting no less than 11 million employees in the private sector.

The extensive use of fossil fuels for energy and its depleting supply, as well as its effects on global warming, have made green technology and green jobs better alternatives in sustainable national economic development. To this end, the Malaysian Government, through the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, the Ministry of Human Resources, the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation and the ILO will undertake a feasibility study on green technology human resources in Malaysia. Similarly, the Green Jobs Malaysia project will directly drive the national initiative shift to a low-carbon environmen-

tally friendly and climate-resilient economy. This, in turn, will accelerate job recovery, reduce social gaps, support development goals and realize decent work.

Today's Conference is a great beginning for a better tomorrow and, within the fraternity of ILO member States, Malaysia would ascribe to any constructive discussions, sharing Malaysia's experience in the process and in looking forward. I would like to thank the distinguished President for giving Malaysia the opportunity to address this very important Conference.

Ms NWE (*Employer, Myanmar*)

My name is Khine Khine Nwe, I am the Employers' delegate of Myanmar.

Employers from Myanmar and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry wish you a very good and pleasant morning. We are very grateful to the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, the Deputy Director-General, Mr Greg Vines, and to all in the ILO and to our social partners and to those who care for our well-being, with or without our knowledge. Thank you all for being very supportive in our times of transformation and for recognizing our progressive reforms that have been taking place for the past two years. With all the support we have today, Myanmar has proudly taken its stand on the global stage. As a nation in its vibrant, democratic youth, fresh and active as one can be, we are learning how to meet our needs in building a fully-fledged successful State where peace, democracy, decent work and sustainable development exist.

Challenges are usual in every reform – we are no exception. Being a latecomer to globalization, it is understandable that businesses in Myanmar still need to be properly equipped with the globally well-accepted standards. The good news is we are in the process. We are progressing; we are navigating our way into the mainstream on our own initiatives and with international assistance and cooperation. We are doing that. Businesses are set to be the food bowl of the country and the working people to be the breadwinner of the family – they are inseparable. We all dream of living in a peaceful, developed country with equality, with dignity, all over the nation. The duty rests on all social partners. Bearing this in mind, employers prioritize human resource development. We provide vocational training, livelihood programmes for newcomers to obtain decent jobs, skills training for workers on the job to obtain better pay and self dignity. The Employment and Skills Development Law, which focuses on employer-based skills training, is our proof. It is ready to be discussed in the upcoming parliamentary session.

We, the employers, believe that to pursue and provide work with quality, better understanding of ILO standards is crucial and compliance is essential. We work closely on this with the ILO local office, ACT/EMP and the International Training Centre of the ILO for training and workshops. With technical cooperation from international institutions and agencies, activities on the ground are also taking place in selected workplaces with the aim of establishing role models. Enterprises in Myanmar, small, medium and large, are responsible in their own capacity and are working increasingly to tend to the needs of the social partners, the community and the environment. There may be challenges and hardships to fully tend to certain necessities. Appropri-

ate time will remedy these obstacles. Nothing will stand in our way towards our dream of the nation, a nation with quality. Our will is strong, solid and concrete.

For the welfare of social partners, we have inclusive discussions on a social security scheme. For safety in the workplace, proper measures are advised through seminars and workshops and are taken accordingly. Nationwide activities still need to be done and plans have been discussed. In drafting the occupational health and safety law, extensive discussions were held among multi-stakeholders. The draft is now finalized. Creating discrimination-free workplaces for workers infected with HIV/AIDS is an ongoing public-private partnership programme – started a year ago – and the programme is very much on its way. Employers also endorsed the ratification of Convention No. 182. The Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry worked together with our Ministry of Labour for the right and fair treatment of our Myanmar migrant workers.

Myanmar is classified as a low-income country by the World Bank and a least developed country by the United Nations. The President of Myanmar, U Thein Sein, has a beautiful vision for Myanmar – to be free of poverty. The mission is to reduce poverty levels to 16 per cent in 2015 from 26 per cent, where we are now. That needs job creation – and we need it very urgently. In this context, discontinuation of paragraph 1(a) and (b) of the ILO resolution on Myanmar, adopted in 2000, is vital. External investments can push our growth and can help create jobs. The attractive Foreign Direct Investment Law, with rules and regulations for effective implementation, is in full force. Social and environmental measures are clearly stated in the Law. Proposals are scrutinized and analysed carefully, not to steer investors away but to guide them in the framework of the Law, to take into account social and environmental aspects and to invest responsibly. A working team has been organized to monitor this work on the ground. Again, in this context, discontinuation of the 2000 resolution, paragraph 1(a) and (b), will be of great help to attract investors abroad to help create jobs.

We are on the verge of fully opening up to the globe and the knots that have tied us up have been loosening. Every means of assistance is welcomed in this period of change for the better. Your support is our energizer. Myanmar is not a newborn but is born new again.

Ms OLIPHANT (*Minister of Labour, South Africa*)

Allow me at the outset to congratulate the President and his fellow Officers on their election and to wish them a successful Conference.

The South African delegation welcomes and commends the Report by the ILO Director-General and firmly believes that it is a timely contribution to the necessary deliberations that must take place about the future of the ILO, particularly as the Organization nears its centenary celebrations in 2019.

In 1944, the ILO adopted its Declaration of Philadelphia that for many was to serve as its post-war charter. The Declaration affirmed that “labour is not a commodity; freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress; poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere”. A clarion call was thus issued for the ILO

to be at the centre of global struggles for social justice.

As the Report notes, other declarations have also given the ILO essential direction at critical times. Today their message remains important and our comments are informed by this and our appreciation of the new challenges that have emerged both internally and externally as we approach the centenary.

We appreciate the opportunity presented by the Director-General’s Report for constituents to provide clear and ambitious guidance on initiatives that can carry the ILO forward to its centenary well-equipped, confident and committed to the mandate it was given a century ago.

The analysis of the context in which the ILO approaches its centenary is well presented and based on credible evidence alluded to in the Report. We agree that there are major forces transforming the world of work which necessitate a tripartite response and which we believe the Report has correctly identified.

We welcome the Report’s elevation of environmental sustainability among the major focus areas for the ILO. As correctly asserted in the ILO–OECD background paper to last year’s Meeting of G20 Labour and Employment Ministers in Mexico, and I quote, “Future economic growth with decent work and rising labour standards will critically rest on our ability to manage and restore the natural assets on which all life and economic activities depend.” This concern must find expression in all that we do and in our ability to influence other parties so that collective global action on this matter is expedited accordingly.

The Report presents some thoughtful introspection on the institutional challenges that the ILO must confront in order to improve its capacity to deliver on its mandate credibly and effectively. There is much-needed frankness here that ought to be welcomed by constituents and should inform our own individual assessments on how we can contribute towards a better functioning ILO that is responsive towards new challenges.

The suggested ILO centenary activities are a welcome contribution to discussions that need to take place so that we finalize agreement on activities that will lay a foundation for a much stronger Organization that should emerge at the centenary.

Our delegation has two major contributions which we wish to put forward regarding the Report. Firstly, in our view the Report is at times too humble in asserting the ILO’s contribution to achieving its mandate over time in the face of countless challenges. We believe that a positive development has been the resilience of the ILO in articulating the importance of social goals and objectives. This has been in the face of pressures based on economic arguments for the benefits of the market-led and driven solutions.

As recognized by many analysts, the recent global economic crisis has taken the shine off neoliberalism and market fundamentalism, which continuously questioned the role of labour market institutions that promote social justice.

We believe that this development bodes well for the policy coherence that has been continuously called for and an improved ability for the ILO to work together with organizations in the international system. To sustain such cooperation will require the ILO to improve its analytical capabilities

and continue to present fresh, strong progressive analysis on its mandate areas.

Secondly, we welcome the Report's discussion on changing contours of poverty and prosperity and suggestions on seven centenary initiatives that include: an end to poverty, women and work, and the future of work. These issues remain particularly pertinent for developing countries, such as our own country.

On 25 May 2013, the African Union celebrated its 50th anniversary and, I must say, the first post-colonial institutional expression of Pan-Africanism. The occasion took place at a time when the continent, at least 1 billion people, is largely upbeat about its economic fortunes and achieving socio-economic indicators that were previously thought to be unattainable. However, the continent continues to face immense challenges, many that fall within the ILO's mandate areas. As the ILO marches towards its centenary, we would hope that the continent and its people continue to benefit from a partnership, concerted efforts and strategies that will create jobs, eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

In conclusion, I would like to announce that the South African Government, after consultation with the social partners, has taken four Conventions for ratification to Parliament in the first quarter of this year. These are: the MLC, 2006, for which the Department of Transport is busy with amendments on the relevant legislation; Convention No. 189, for which the Department of Labour is intending to amend the Unemployment Insurance Fund to include domestic workers on maternity benefit; the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), and Convention No. 81. Parliament has ratified these Conventions recently and the instruments or reports will be deposited with the ILO in due course. What follows ratification is, of course, effective implementation and we look forward to technical assistance to be provided by the ILO when called upon to do so. Working together, we will achieve or we will arrive at our own destiny.

Original Arabic: Ms BOUCHAMAOU (Employer, Tunisia)

I would like to congratulate the President and the Officers on their election to preside over the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I wish them every success in the management of its work.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, for his Report entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment* and its appendix *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*.

Tunisia is undergoing a transitional phase during which we are trying to establish tripartite relationships aimed at realizing equitable development between all parties, provide job opportunities to youth, and improve economic indicators such as growth and competitive capacity.

At the beginning of this year, with the help of the ILO, we concluded a social contract, through which we endeavour to achieve sustainable social peace and professional relations based on dialogue, consensus, as well as support decent work, and achieve an economic revival.

We believe that social dialogue represents a useful tool, not only for resolving conflicts that may arise but also to prevent such conflicts, as it anticipates

difficulties and builds a climate of trust between the different social partners.

It is on the basis of this social contract that we began our work on the institutionalization of social dialogue through the revival of the National Council for Social Dialogue, which enjoys administrative and financial independence, and is composed of tripartite representatives, in equal numbers. It is to be recalled here that all parties in Tunisia are aware today that dialogue and collective contribution constitute the optimal method to reach consensus and results which are satisfactory to all. Consequently, we attributed a bigger role to the National Council for Social Dialogue which goes beyond a simple framework for collective negotiation to being a main entry point to all legislative work related to economic and social aspects. The National Council was also entrusted with the examination of a number of files collectively through social dialogue. This represents an important contribution to the development process in general.

One cannot speak of a successful social dialogue without having fully independent institutions which are representative of the actors in the labour market and in production. It is for this reason that we entrusted the National Council for Social Dialogue with an additional task: addressing the issue of union representativeness of employers and workers in accordance with national legislation, international labour standards and the principles adopted by each of the supervisory mechanisms of the ILO.

We hope that the ILO will continue to provide its moral and technical support for this programme in order to help in laying down new foundations for collaboration which help in meeting the expectations of both workers and undertakings.

Today in Tunisia, we are in the midst of discussing our new Constitution. On this occasion, I would like to indicate our request in specifying the right to work or the freedom to work in the Constitution. This means that no citizen shall be deprived, under any circumstances, of the freedom and right to go to work, if they choose to do so, without any pressure to be borne on them. To avoid any misunderstanding of our request, I would like to reiterate that we did not use that slogan in response to the right to strike which we respect, as it is a fundamental right specified in international instruments on human rights. We also believe that the freedom to work is also a fundamental right for every Tunisian citizen, whose options we have to respect, provided he does not transgress the right of any other party.

Allow me to draw your attention to the issue of demographic change at the international level, which has become an urgent and necessary issue because it will surely help in deepening human thinking, analysis, and the study of the perspectives of employment and social protection set in the context of an ageing population. This is especially necessary in the developing world. By contrast, enormous pressures are exerted on the labour market in poor countries, or countries in transition, which are known by a young population in its majority. This is an issue which requires reflection and solutions.

We thank you for your attention and wish you good deliberations.

Original Italian: Mr BELLUZZI (Minister of Labour, Cooperation and Information, San Marino)

This is the first time that I have the honour of participating in the International Labour Conference

and I would like, at this 102nd Session, to assure you that the Republic of San Marino is making every effort to achieve the objective we have jointly established – to rapidly improve the socio-economic situation of our societies, with the help of the ILO.

For almost a century, the ILO has been striving to accomplish its mission: to secure comprehensive and lasting peace by working tirelessly for social justice, equal opportunities and the dignity of the individual.

For all of us, the Report of the Director-General constitutes an important step that will help us to overcome the challenges ahead at a time when the world is undergoing both an economic and a moral crisis which is testing the solidarity that is needed between countries and generations.

The Republic of San Marino is in the region of the world that has been hit hard by the economic crisis since 2008 – a crisis that is still proving difficult to overcome. The crisis is currently worsening, exacerbated by financing problems and specific difficulties linked to our relationship with Italy which, for geographical and other reasons, is one of our main partners.

The Government of San Marino, which has now been in office for six months, is doing what it can in terms of economic and financial policy to promote domestic investment and attract new foreign investment in order to consolidate our situation. We are, however, aware of the need to restore our economy rapidly as this is the only way to boost employment.

Our Government is doing all it can to protect the most vulnerable members of society who have been hit by unemployment or left without social protection.

In San Marino, we are doing everything in our power to improve and reform the labour market. We are proceeding on the basis of a social dialogue in which all the partners are invited to participate. We want to ensure with this framework that we achieve results that are accepted by all parties.

We are doing everything in our power to help people, particularly young people, to have access to the labour market through various means, including incentives for companies. We are also trying to actively help those who are having difficulty finding a job, especially young people. Young people who have just finished their studies are having great difficulty finding a first job.

Women are often at a disadvantage compared to men in terms of access to the labour market and we are striving to take measures to remedy that situation. We are also trying to set up training opportunities and open them up to all those who need them in order to ensure that everyone has the chance to develop their skills.

The Government of San Marino is endeavouring to fight informal work, as such work is unacceptable for anyone wishing to protect workers' dignity and rights, and help entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs often find themselves in difficult situations when faced with competition from companies that do not declare their workers.

My country is of the opinion that there can be no defence of human rights and the rule of law without respect for human dignity. We want a State that stimulates job creation and income generation, one that belongs to its citizens and is at their service. We want a State that has transparent rules of law that function in the interests of the public good.

In order to demonstrate our desire for transparency and openness to the world, we have translated our current labour legislation into English. It can be found on the home page of the Ministry of Labour website.

In order to give a clearer picture of the current situation in my country, I would like to emphasize the fact that all our decisions concerning the world of work are systematically taken in consultation with the organizations that represent the employers and the workers. The Government's approach is to hold a responsible, constructive exchange of views with these organizations and with the different professional organizations in our economy.

I can therefore confirm that my country unreservedly supports the ILO in its efforts to continue strengthening, at the global level, the tripartite consensus system in which governments and workers' and employers' representatives work for the greater good of all.

The current ILO Strategic Policy Framework will come to an end in 2015. Today, we are all required to lay the groundwork for a programme that will establish the direction for the next six years and open up the way for the Organization's second century.

This is why I wanted to underline the link between my country's political and economic vision and the strategy we could adopt on a global scale at this crucial historic moment. We should therefore do everything we can to establish fairer globalization and sustainable and balanced development in which the most vulnerable people in society are protected. Our economic growth should be based on equity and should promote social progress.

In conclusion, I hope we will take the opportunity we have been given to provide our Organization with a direction, an objective and strategic content that is up to the task of helping to establish social justice by fighting ever more effectively against inequality and discrimination.

Mr THAILUAN (*Worker, Thailand*)

On behalf of the Thai workers, I am greatly honoured to have the opportunity to speak to all of you today.

I would like to start with the double standard of employment in Thailand which has spread all over the country, namely the subcontracting of workers. Currently, there are more than a million subcontracted workers in the country; they are mostly employed by multinational companies that invest in Thailand and they have no career prospects. These workers have to perform exactly the same tasks and occupy the same positions as permanent workers. However, their wages, welfare and remuneration are substantially different from those of permanent workers. Altogether, subcontract workers receive some 40 per cent less in benefits than permanent workers. In addition, they are hired with no prospects of career growth or skills improvement. Working hard, they encounter more risk and danger than permanent workers do as a result of undeveloped skills.

Many of you may have wondered what labour leaders do to solve these problems. I would say that, as such a leader, I have put my best efforts towards solving the problems. We have amended and revised the Constitution so that these workers can receive the same benefits as permanent workers. However, the law has not been enforced. In prac-

tice, the Government does not put any pressure on the employer, so employees have to struggle to protect their rights by themselves. As a result, subcontracted workers remain at a disadvantage regarding their right to employment benefits by comparison with permanent workers. They also do not have the right to protect themselves owing to the lack of official support from the Government.

Secondly, I would like to report to you about developments in the area of occupational safety. Recently, the Thai Government enacted the Safety, Occupational Hygiene and Workplace Environment Act, which was separated from the Labour Protection Act. An Occupational Safety and Health Committee was established under the Act, as was the Occupational Safety and Health Bureau. Furthermore, a fund to help promote a safe and healthy work environment was created in order to subsidize employers. However, the Government does not actually provide funds so the authority is not able to ensure implementation in accordance with the law. Consequently, occupational injuries and diseases still remain the same and are likely to increase on account of insufficient government support.

Thirdly, I would like to talk about the progress of establishing unemployment insurance in Thailand. At present, employees from all over the country appeal to the Thai Government to support the establishment of unemployment insurance in order to provide allowances for laid-off workers. Nowadays, both domestic and foreign investors pay only partial benefits or none at all when laying off workers after shutting down their businesses. As a result, unemployed workers, especially women, who previously worked for more than ten years have difficulty in finding other jobs. Hence the workers need these allowances but, not having received them, they have asked the Thai Government to create an unemployment insurance fund, which requires employers to place an initial payment to ensure that unemployed workers will receive unemployment insurance after being laid off. Although workers have been urging the Government for two years, by May Day 2013 there had still been no response from the Government. In conclusion, I express the hope that the ILO will continue to monitor any action taken by the Thai Government in support of the country's workers, and I will report on any progress at the Conference next year.

Original Spanish: Ms MUÑOZ (Employer, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Allow me to begin by congratulating the President and Vice-Presidents and the other Officers of the Conference, on their election to direct and guide the work of this 102nd Session of the Conference, which is taking place at a time of crisis for the world of work. The Venezuelan Employers look forward to a successful outcome of this Conference. Its achievements will be our achievements.

In his Report, the Director-General stresses the need for social dialogue to manage change and to find a way out of the crisis. He is right, and it is the constituents of this Organization who have to make a commitment to ensure that social dialogue becomes a reality in our countries. That is not always the case, however, and for the past ten years my own country cannot be said to have set an example.

The Director-General calls on us to examine the main factors that drive change in the world of work. There is no doubt whatsoever that one of the major

factors is enterprise, seen in the wider sense of the word, which is in fact a trilogy composed of the worker, the employer and the consumer in the world of sustainable business.

Attacking private initiative, confiscating assets, invading properties and choking the system with laws promulgated without consultation and in ignorance of unionist structures is not the way a country can make itself stronger and ensure that current and future generations entering the world of work will be able to find decent employment.

Once again, I use this rostrum to call on the Venezuelan Government to change its policies so that we can move from this suffocating economy of low productivity, handouts and exclusion, to a productive economy that is sustainable, developed and forward-looking.

At this very moment, the vast majority of Venezuelans, workers and employers, are clamouring for a different type of country, in which there are more enterprises, more decent work and more harmony – in other words, for the Venezuela that we all deserve.

When the Director-General asks how we are going to create jobs, the employers of Venezuela and those of the world reply: “With more and better sustainable enterprises generating more and better decent jobs.”

I would like to mention one specific idea in the Report of the Director-General, namely, the initiative that has to do with the ILO's direct relationship with enterprises.

The ILO has at its disposal the institutional machinery to engage with these enterprises so as to guarantee objectivity and efficiency in our agreements and attain the goals of the Organization. Failing that, we run the risk of undermining the very foundations of our institutions and of addressing only specific interests. This has been common practice in some of our countries, and notably in Venezuela where, at this very moment, meetings are being convened not with employers' and workers' organizations but with specific companies, where the future of those organizations is sacrificed to individual interests in complete disregard of the interests of the people in general and of the defence of values and principles.

We therefore reject our Government's social dialogue policies and call for a return to social dialogue between actors on the Venezuelan labour market so as to tackle our labour problems properly and make possible the country's economic and social development.

The absence of real social dialogue is everywhere apparent. The mere fact that, for over 12 years, the Government has ignored the views of the employers, and of the trade unions too, regarding the annual increases in the minimum wage is clear evidence that it has so far evinced no intention of engaging in real dialogue.

An extreme example of this attitude occurred in May 2012 when the Government promulgated a reform of the Labour Code without adequate consultation. It claimed that it had received some 19,000 proposals in the space of three months, yet no one knows what these proposals were, who made them, what issues they covered, not to mention all the other irregularities that surrounded the whole reform process.

I conclude with the hope that, before the end of this year, the high-level meeting that Venezuela has

agreed to in order to solve the problems that have plagued social dialogue in our country will finally take place.

Mr POTTER (*Employer, United States*)

The United States Employers' delegation congratulates the Director-General on his first Report to the Conference as the ILO approaches its centenary in six years. It is positive, hopeful and pragmatic.

An overarching issue in his Report is the need for sustainable job creation to reduce unemployment, inequity and poverty. There is an urgent need to prevent the ongoing global economic malaise from becoming a long-term crisis of confidence. Everyone, from all corners of the earth, should have confidence in the future.

Expanding economic opportunity, raising productivity and increasing growth are crucial for alleviating poverty. Private enterprise and investment have created millions of jobs and pulled millions of people out of poverty. The key elements facilitating enterprise and job creation are a stable macroeconomic policy with low inflation rates and an economic environment that encourages investment in sustainable enterprises and competitive markets with a level playing field.

Productive and sustainable employment is the prerequisite for decent work, wealth creation and social justice. It must be the basis and the cornerstone for any ILO action. Any discussion about improvement of working conditions and ILO standards needs to take into account its impact on job creation and enterprise sustainability. The best safety net is an economy that creates jobs. As a consequence, the ILO has a critical role to play in making sure that economic growth leads to job growth. This is no simple task and policies will have to be adapted to different circumstances in different countries but the ILO can, and should, play a leading role in promoting employment and helping its member States develop the policies that can unleash the enterprising spirit of their citizens.

The day after the Director-General's election last year, Guy Ryder said to the International Organisation of Employers' General Council: "The success of an enterprise is also a success for a worker." Indeed, there cannot be a sustainable business without a sustainable community, just as there cannot be a sustainable community without sustainable businesses to generate jobs and income, especially for young people. In his Report, the Director-General proposes an enterprises initiative to establish a platform for ILO engagement with enterprises. Over the past eight years, my own company has engaged with the ILO on a number of issues with positive outcomes. Experience has shown, however, that the rules for access and partnership with the ILO are not entirely clear, resulting in a less than straightforward process, conflicts within the ILO and sometimes lack of alignment with established employer institutions in and outside the ILO. Companies want to see a clear, straightforward process that respects existing employer institutions but is not unduly cumbersome or bureaucratic.

The Director-General mentions in his Report the increased attention being given to global supply chains. Global supply chains or supply chains in general, however, are not something new or inherently different from what has existed for a very long time. It has been true since the beginning of domestic and international commerce, going back centu-

ries, that both small and big companies are suppliers to somebody. The difference today is that the Internet and social media have made supply chains more visible to the public. All companies in supply chains are subject to the laws and ratified standards of the countries in which they operate. To address gaps in national and local standards, many companies have put together labour inspection regimes to conduct human and workplace rights' audits. My own company conducts more than 2,000 audits each year that require corrective actions for the problems found. Not all suppliers in the same industry supply global firms; some are entirely domestic. Ultimately, the primary responsibility for enforcing the law and labour standards falls on the Government.

The ILO must work with its member States to close the gaps between national law and practice and the obligations undertaken in the context of voluntarily ratified standards. Addressing these gaps should be a top priority of the ILO and highlights the urgency that the ILO supervisory machinery be updated to meet contemporary realities "fit for purpose" for the ILO's next 100 years.

When an ILO member State ratifies an ILO Convention it takes on a human rights obligation to protect its citizens. States violate their international human rights obligations, even with respect to ILO technical standards, when they fail to take steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress violations. States should consider the full range of preventive and remedial measures, including policies, legislation, regulation, collective bargaining, and a free and unbiased judiciary. States have a duty to protect and promote the rule of law. This commitment must be made at the highest political level that results in a well-funded system of labour administration, an adequate and serious system of labour inspection and an independent judiciary.

In conclusion, the Director-General's Report strikes the right note. It recognizes the ILO's past successes and strengths, sees the trends and challenges, and challenges this institution to improve its game and become a more relevant organization that truly makes a difference in the lives of working men and women.

*Original Russian: Mr ALIMUKHAMEDOV
(Government, Uzbekistan)*

President Islam Karimov has developed a new economic model to transition to a socially oriented economy. The model is based on five well-known principles that advocate: the de-ideologization of the economy; the State as main reformer; the rule of law; a strong social policy; and gradual reform. In the future, we hope to enter the ranks of developed countries, deepen economic and political reforms, modernize the country and create a civil society, thereby securing decent lives for our citizens.

As a Member of the International Labour Organization, Uzbekistan has ratified a number of Conventions including: the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); the Minimum Age Convention 1973 (No. 138); Convention No. 182; and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). We are implementing comprehensive measures to comply with them. To facilitate the process we have set up, and are continually developing, our legislative basis in the area of labour, employment and social protection.

The agenda of this 102nd Session covers almost all the areas of implementation of the Conventions

adopted by Uzbekistan. First and foremost, this has to do with ensuring employment for our citizens – the key factor for achieving a growth in the income and living standards of the population. The measures that we are taking in this sphere, particularly against the backdrop of the financial economic crisis and recession, are in line with the main provisions of the report entitled *Employment and social protection in the new demographic context*.

Despite the serious ongoing global economic issues, in 2012 we continued to develop our economy at a decent pace, we ensured the stable growth of our population's living standards and strengthened our position on the global market. Our GDP rose by 8.2 per cent, and we achieved macroeconomic stability and a balanced economy. Demographically speaking, our population of over 30 million people is not facing the problem of an ageing population, faced by over 100 countries around the world, and connected to a deficit of a labour force. At the same time, the relatively swift growth in labour resources means that we have to create an adequate number of jobs and resolve the worklessness issue, particularly for those people who are entering the job market for the first time. To do this, we have an effective business–college system which allows some 50,000 graduates every year to find a job.

In full accordance with the Global Jobs Pact adopted in 2009 by ILO member States to accelerate economic recovery, every year the Parliament of our country implements a special programme for the creation of jobs and the employment of our population. By 2013, we aim to create more than 975,000 new jobs. The measures that we are taking to create these new jobs are focused on diversifying the economy and are furthering the expansion of employment.

Over the last 20 years, the number of employed persons in Uzbekistan increased to more than one-and-a-half times the previous figure, i.e. by more than 3.7 million persons. The unemployment level, according to the ILO, is unacceptable if it makes up about 5 per cent of the economically active population. Job creation, providing jobs for young people and graduates, and setting up a far-reaching social protection system are key in fighting against the worst forms of child labour.

In Uzbekistan, child neglect, leading to the worst forms of child labour, is a thing of the past. We find unacceptable the ideas that are bandied about regarding the alleged forced mass labour of children in the cotton market in Uzbekistan, to be used as an example of shameless economic competition, when in fact Uzbek cotton has secured itself leading positions on the market due to its high quality. Millions of under-18s around the world carry out work which is appropriate to their age and type of education, provides them with safe working conditions and does not infringe on labour law. However, there is now a growing global concern about the worst forms of child labour; these should be stamped out.

In the light of the above, we would propose that other ILO member States draw on our positive experience in resolving social and labour-related problems. Of note here is the anti-crisis programme, job creation programmes, and also the decision in the 102nd Session to reflect the progress that we have made after the implementation of the Conventions that we have adopted, for example, on the worst forms of child labour, securing employment and

social protection, and the development of social partnership.

Original Spanish: Mr ARCINIEGA (Worker, Ecuador)

I would mainly like to refer to the Reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, in view of the interest they have elicited at this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. It addresses important issues relating to present realities, and renewed commitment to tripartism in the run-up to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the ILO, and the no less important process of change and reform with a view to responding better to the needs of the constituents. New technologies, new kinds of production and production processes, along with demographic change, mean that we have to look objectively at the application of international standards and Conventions and see how they are protecting the weaker side in the employment relationship, faced with the threat to social justice caused by an increase in inequality and rising poverty amid prosperity, which means that the recovery of balance and convergence in production and employment patterns requires more participation by the tripartite constituents in both action and proposals for meeting the challenge of ensuring that in this century we manage to achieve social justice for everyone.

I have to emphasize that, in our country, although there have been efforts made to improve living standards for Ecuadorians, especially those with disabilities, as concerns compliance with Conventions Nos 87 and 98, which have been ratified by the Ecuadorian State, there has been a marked deterioration because of the employment policies that have been implemented in Ecuador. These policies began with a rule approved by the Constituent Assembly in 2008, which opened the door to unilateral revision by the Ministry of Labour (now the Ministry of Employment Relations) of all the collective bargaining agreements in the public sector. This is contrary to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Since then things have got worse, through a range of legislative, administrative and judicial steps which have resulted in greater inequality before the law for public workers, public employees and civil servants, as well the gradual elimination of trade unions and collective bargaining in the public sector.

We have seen compulsory redundancies, administrative penalties and punitive evaluations of performance.

Looking at the constitutional mandate which is referred to in article 326, paragraph 8, of the Constitution we see that the State is supposed to promote the creation of organizations of workers and of employees in accordance with the law and to promote their democratic, participatory and transparent functioning, with regular elections for leadership positions.

As far as the promotion of this by the State is concerned, this is not happening. As far as trade union freedoms are concerned, there is a violation of Convention No. 87 of the ILO, which as you know is the governing instrument for trade union organization. Allow us in this lamentable situation to highlight the General Survey produced by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations concerning labour relations and collective bargaining in the public service, in which the Committee demonstrates its support for the basic principles set out in the instru-

ments relating to labour relations and collective bargaining in the public service. We hope that its message will reach the ears of our Government.

Mr JENNINGS (*Representative, UNI Global Union*)

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Minister of Labour of Zambia, a former colleague, and the Minister of Labour of Zimbabwe, who I know has pressing engagements, and the Minister of Labour of South Africa, my new friend, with whom we are organizing our World Congress in Cape Town. We were former colleagues and I must take some joy in making sure that the Ministers of Labour are once again waiting to hear the voice of labour from the comfort of their chairs back there.

On behalf of UNI Global Union, I congratulate the President. We welcome the outstanding Report from the Director-General. He is right to alert us to a predecessor's observation of communities having "dangerous explosives" that 50 years later remain with us: unemployment, inequality and rupturing social contracts.

The World Economic Forum 2013 risk report warns of the dangers of severe income disparity. We have already seen social explosions, from Tahrir to Taksim, London, Paris and Stockholm. Precarious jobs and incomes and youth unemployment mean precarious societies. We welcome social dialogue as a means to resolve such tensions. It is a principle that Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey should be practising there.

The Director-General has a magnificent seven ideas. We have five suggestions.

First, for a world more "ILO" than "IMF". The ILO must have a stronger place in global decision-making. Why? For if you remain quiet, there will be silence. You have won a seat at the G20. You must be the global solutions-provider for jobs, a living wage, gender equality and inclusive growth. The IMF has apologized for getting its economic analysis wrong in Greece. Research by the austerity economists, Reinhart and Rogoff, has been found to be full of errors. ILO, strengthen your policy capacity, be independent, authoritative and commanding. It is required. To beat inequality, the workers of the world need a pay rise. Take this as a wage demand from the global labour movement. Every worker should be covered by a collective agreement. Time for a pay rise from the bottom up, and not as we have seen this last decade, from the top down. When the Troika austerity assassins go to work in pursuit of lower unit labour costs, the ILO is obliged to go in to pick up the pieces after the Troika wrecking ball has done its job. You can stop the destruction of labour market institutions and collective bargaining at its source. The Troika should have prior consultations with you to make sure that the advice that they give is in conformity with ILO standards.

Second, the ILO has a new department for enterprises. The ILO should now create, in this spirit of initiative and adventure, a new department to grow unions, a place to provide organizing skills and capacity. Why? Because too many workplaces are on the front lines of union-busting behaviour. There is nothing fair about this fight. Corporate muscle unleashed against the desire to organize. ILO, let us free the world of union-busting. Walmart, the world's largest private sector employer, is exhibit No. 1, and I am pleased to say that, at last, the

workers of Walmart in America, who have no right to form or join a union in that company, are now rising up. Give them the opportunity to organize. Prosegur, a Spanish security giant, sacked 300 security guards in Paraguay for going on strike and then blacklisted them and prevented them from seeking further employment. T-Mobile of Deutsche Telekom, encouraged by employers' federations, twisted freedom of expression to sanction union busting in the United States. DHL in Turkey sacked the Employee of the Year because she joined a union. Madam Merkel, whom I have met, this is not social dialogue and social partnership as practised in Germany. Please help us take steps to correct this behaviour. Every day, a thousand devices to halt union growth, a victimization of ordinary working people. Even here in Switzerland there is inadequate protection of workplace representatives.

Third, support social dialogue, support action to build global partnerships through global framework agreements. There are now over a hundred of them in place. This is consistent with the 2008 Declaration and the Ruggie "due diligence" principles. Director-General, put an initiative in place. Global partnerships, a pillar of a strengthened sectoral dialogue. We reformed the ILO sectors, now let us build content.

Fourth, we would like the theme of the 2015 session of the Conference to be the supply chain. The recent massive loss of life in Bangladesh and Pakistan garment factories means the time for excuses is over. UNI Global Union, IndustriALL Global Union and non-governmental organizations now have a global accord in place for factory safety with leading global brands. We are breaking through with the aim of improving lives, and we thank the ILO for their speedy intervention in Bangladesh on the workers' rights issue, and for chairing the talks to implement the accord. Over 50 global brands have signed up, covering more than a million people and almost one third of the factories. And we are astonished and saddened and angered that Walmart and GAP are the refuseniks, and that they stand in isolation and are not supporting this accord. As we are concerned about the stand taken by the Bangladesh manufacturers, cutting corners costs lives.

Finally, we welcome the suggestion of a new initiative on the future of work that UNI Global Union is organizing in the new world of work. Let us get the best brains in the room to shape a socially responsible, sustainable world of work, built on the idea of "Including you", the theme of our World Congress in December 2014, in Cape Town. ILO, let us get ahead of this change.

Original Arabic: Mr BENLARBI (Worker, Morocco)

On behalf of the Moroccan Workers' delegation, I would like to greet you all, and to convey my appreciation and respect.

We hope that this session of the Conference will be a springboard for renewal so as to enable the International Labour Organization to address this very complex global crisis, and to continue to defend the values, founding principles and aims for which it was established: the values of freedom, social justice, democracy, fundamental human rights and equal opportunities, from a perspective which safeguards peace, security and stability. This in turn requires the development of its performance and the adoption of bold and meaningful decisions, because

the historic changes we are witnessing call for historic decisions.

On behalf of the Moroccan Workers' delegation, we will focus on four points which we consider to be the most important concerns of the Moroccan working class.

The first point has to do with the nature of the crisis of the savage capitalist system, and its serious repercussions on the social situation in the countries of the world in general, and in the countries of the South in particular. We thus need a structural reform of this system because humanity is currently experiencing a most complex and difficult crisis due to the market economy system which deprives citizens of their economic and cultural rights, denies them their freedoms and deprives them of the social dimension which represents the very essence of their existence. It has also pushed people in to a multifaceted cycle of marginalization, poverty, unemployment, job losses, dismissals and layoffs, and closures of businesses and undertakings, in addition to similar problems engendered by globalization. This has brought humanity to the brink of social catastrophes threatening peace, security and stability.

You are very much aware of the scale of unemployment, poverty and dismissals of workers worldwide.

You are also aware of the unemployment, poverty and famine affecting the African continent.

You are also aware of the methods used in formulating decisions in the World Bank which were described both by Joseph Stiglitz in his book, *Globalization and its discontents* and by Alvin Toffler in his books, *Powershift* and *The third wave*.

We, the Moroccan working class, believe that this social crisis is the result of an unfair, savage economic system. Thus, it is of prime importance, historically speaking, to undertake a full structural reform of the system which has caused this crisis. It is also unacceptable to resolve this crisis to the detriment of the working class.

The second point which is of central concern to the Moroccan working class relates to the need to preserve and maintain national unity with respect to its territory, human population and civilization, especially in the Moroccan Sahara provinces which were liberated from Spanish colonization. We thus refuse to give up, to bargain or to be blackmailed when it comes to the unity of the national territory. Accordingly, we call on all the relevant parties to set up a strong Maghreb federation as an economic and developmental necessity. We also call on the Spanish Government to acknowledge the right of Morocco in restoring its usurped lands.

The third point concerns the relationship between the working class and the Moroccan Government. Set against the backdrop of global changes, we call on the Government to engage in a serious, productive and fruitful dialogue, and to review its unjust unilateral decisions. We also call on the Government to implement all of its decisions and agreements, especially with respect to the 26 April Agreement and Agreement No. 37, the repeal of Chapter 288 and the full observance of freedom of association.

Original Farsi: Mr SADATI (Worker, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Let me first extend my gratitude for the opportunity given to the Iranian Confederation of Workers' Association to present its views to the Conference.

Iranian laws and regulations governing labour relations, including the Labour Code derived from the Constitution and civil law, cover large and small industrial enterprises and other workplaces with respect to social security and insurance.

Labour standards evolved during the last century to address fundamental rights in the form of the present ILO Conventions, instruments and Recommendations. There are, however, important questions to be addressed by the international community and the ILO, issues such as: democratic changes; the scarcity of natural resources and environmental hazards, leading us to explore green jobs; the efficient utilization of resources; the depletion of potable water supplies; global warming; and damage to the ozone layer. All this is happening in this information age with all its problems, and the problems in establishing sound labour relations need to be tackled at the international level in a viable manner, while minimizing the effects of economic and financial instability caused by the manipulation and exploitative policies of the major financial powers.

Iranian workers believe that worker-employer relations should be based on a win-win outcome, and that real jobs should be a combination of the workers' efforts and expertise, employers' capital investment, and legal frameworks formulated, monitored and implemented by governments while observing equal rights. Nevertheless, in spite of the progress made in improving international instruments and their implementation, there are still serious concerns relating to the exploitation of workers and the denial of their rights.

To what extent has the ILO been able to eliminate such exploitative and restrictive policies from labour relations? Surely we can still see that the workers in developing countries continue to still suffer from austerity and economic and social deprivation, due to the application of adverse and destructive international policies of sanctions and blockades?

The valuable role of the ILO in dealing with the challenges of fostering employment and green jobs, implementing environmental and work standards, as well as in combating the destructive political and economic blockades imposed at the global level, should be expanded.

Job creation and minimum social support are important factors for economic growth and prosperity. In this regard, after passing through a tough period of political and economic sanctions, now, with the help of God and by empowering our workers, we have been able to take steps towards the path of economic growth. Perhaps the big challenge for Iranian workers would be acceptance of Conventions Nos 87 and 98. Accordingly, during the past two decades, tripartite activities and cooperation have progressed, though still not enough.

As the representative of Iranian workers of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the ILO at its 102nd Session of the Conference, I would like to request the ILO to increase its technical assistance to the Iranian social partners. This will lead to the increased empowerment of the social partners. Our first priority for ILO assistance would be to increase professional training on international standards and the proper approaches to them, through the experience of other countries in localizing these standards.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.25 p.m.)

Seventh sitting

Thursday, 13 June 2013, 2.40 p.m.

President: Mr Rahman

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

Original French: Ms SENDAZIRASA (Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Security, Burundi)

On behalf of the Government of Burundi, which I represent at the International Labour Conference on this very important occasion, let me say that this is a valuable opportunity for us to speak on the Report of the Director-General of the ILO.

This is also an opportunity for us to share the commitment of the Government of Burundi and its social partners concerning the different issues dealt with in the Report of the Director-General.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General on his election, and we wish him every success. We would also like to congratulate the President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Government of Burundi has noted the content of the Report and fully shares with the ILO all the concerns linked to decent work and social justice for all. Of course, social justice is not easy for countries in post-conflict situations, such as Burundi, but we are resolved to take serious measures to normalize and stabilize our country in order to consolidate social peace. To find sustainable solutions to certain major challenges, such as youth unemployment and women's unemployment, social protection coverage for all the population, and governance based on social dialogue between all partners in the world of work, the Government of Burundi, in cooperation with its social partners, has set up inclusive strategic frameworks which allow it to identify all the priorities of the Government for the short, medium and long term.

In all these frameworks, the issues of unemployed young people and women, and social protection floors, have played a very important role thanks to the synergy of the social partners in the preparation of all of these strategic programmes.

In the implementation of the priorities of the strategic framework for growth and combating poverty for 2012–16, and the Decent Work Country Programme 2012–15, our Government has mobilized all the technical and financial partners to support its priorities.

In the area of social protection, since 2010 we have had a national social protection policy in place, the main goal of which is to extend social protection coverage to all the population. Schooling is free for all primary school students and has been

since 2007. We have free care during childbirth, and children under 5 years old have free health care. Given this commitment, the President of the Republic of Burundi has just put in place a national committee for social protection, chaired by himself. This committee is decentralized down to the grass-roots level, where the provincial and local committees for social protection are in charge.

In the same vein, the President of the Republic has initiated a weekend of community works in order to enable communities themselves to contribute to the building of social infrastructure to meet all the needs of the population. All high-ranking officials, including the President, work with the rural population in this programme, which has enabled us to build in five years twice the number of schools and health-care centres that we have had for 40 years.

We are convinced that, at this pace, the plan for extending social protection coverage to the entire population will become a reality in the near future in my country. All these achievements in the areas of social protection and community development have gained for the President of the Republic, Pierre Nkurunziza, an award for exemplary community development at the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held in Yokohama, Japan from 31 May to 3 June 2013.

In the context of the campaign against child labour, a national plan of action against the worst forms of child labour has been introduced for 2009–15, and much progress has been achieved since 2009. In order to implement the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the Government, in cooperation with its social partners, has commissioned surveys to ascertain the true situation of children used for hazardous work.

With the support of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the ILO, we have carried out a mapping study to help us detect which sectors are clandestinely making use of children in our country, and a list of the worst forms of child labour has been developed with a view to national legislation and to help the courts to sanction persons who are found using and exploiting children. This summer, an investigation into domestic work by children is planned in order to obtain proper statistics on children working in the domestic labour sector. In the area of youth employment and women's employment, the Government has adopted an approach for job promotion and creation based on growth sectors. With the sup-

port of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the technical cooperation of the ILO, the Government of Burundi has signed a funding contract of at least US\$6.5 million for the creation of rural youth employment for a period of four years, with a target of 20,000 youth jobs in rural areas. With this approach, a youth creation component will be indexed in all investment projects developed in key sectors such as energy, the environment via green jobs, and public works via building and construction.

Alongside these medium-term projects, Burundi has already begun the process of establishing a consistent and inclusive employment policy, in order to harmonize this with the social protection policy which is already in place. Our country is at a phase of development and stabilization after a long period of social crisis. Unemployed young people are potential victims of various political tendencies, and such youth can readily become a two-edged sword. Aware that our projects require the involvement of all the social partners, we are strengthening social dialogue in order to debate, in a peaceful social climate, all these issues arising from the world of work.

This is why, since 11 May 2011, the social partners in Burundi have had a national charter for social dialogue to govern their relationship. On 19 February 2012, the President of the Republic established a national social dialogue committee. In June 2013, a presidential Decree was issued naming the members of the committee.

These are the major projects and developments taking place in our country. In all of this, nothing would be possible without the support and expertise of the ILO in all areas. Of course, we have seen some progress, but a lot remains to be done. The ILO will always be a bulwark for us in achieving the objective we share with it, that of ensuring decent work for all. Long live the global partnership for social justice. Long live ILO–Burundi cooperation, and God bless you all.

Mr MOHAMED (*Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Mauritius*)

I would like, at the outset, to congratulate the Director-General on his first Report to the Conference, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*.

The Director-General is right when he reflects, in his Report, on the future direction that the ILO must take. It is time for a new direction, a new orientation. A lot of us here today may ask: “Why now?”

The ILO will soon celebrate its centenary, in 2019, which is not very far off. It is time to reflect on what has been achieved by the ILO. It is opportune at this moment, therefore, for me to congratulate all former Directors-General of the ILO, and their staff, past and present, for the formidable work that they have accomplished along the years.

It is time for us to come up with strong resolutions, strong resolutions on the way forward. The question that one must ask is the following: “How can the ILO better fulfil its mandate and meet the aspirations of its constituents?” The world has changed and the question still resides: is it not time, therefore, for the ILO to rethink its working mechanisms?

Since 1919, the year of the inception of the ILO, almost a hundred years have passed, almost 200 Conventions have been adopted, hundreds if

not thousands of kilometres of paperwork have been printed. The ILO is known for the amount of work and excellent reports that it publishes, with hundreds if not thousands of remarks from the Committee of Experts on the violation or non-violation of Conventions.

The question is not if things are better, because it is undoubtedly a fact that things are better, and there are millions of workers around the world who have a lot to thank the ILO and its staff for, who should thank its former Directors-General for their excellent work and for uplifting millions of workers around the world.

The first question that has to be asked is: “Is this enough?” The second is: “What next?”

A Convention cannot be ratified merely for the sake of ratification. Its implementation, in essence, should leave no stone unturned in translating its underlying principles into national legislation and practice.

The Director-General is right when he refers to the supervisory role of the ILO. The ILO must review and consolidate its supervisory mechanism.

Mauritius has adopted 45 ILO Conventions, including the eight fundamental Conventions. Mauritius is the first African country, and the third worldwide, to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). I am proud, as Minister of Labour, to say it out loud: the first African country, and the third worldwide, to ratify the Convention.

Our employment laws have been amended after lengthy consultations with trade unionists, employers and the ILO. Our national tripartite constituents signed the Decent Work Country Programme in November 2012.

We have come up with innovative measures, statutory measures that further consolidate the protection that our national legislation gives to migrant workers.

After all this, there is one issue that I really question myself about time and time again. In spite of Mauritius having done all those excellent deeds, having followed all that has to be followed in terms of Conventions, having implemented laws and encouraged collective bargaining, there are other countries, as well, that have done the same.

That is why, in my humble view, it is time for the ILO to review its supervisory mechanism in order to develop a new mechanism where it comments on, recognizes and underlines the good work done by countries like Mauritius and many others.

It is time for the ILO to change and for change to be introduced responsibly. The time is now.

In conclusion, I would like once again to thank the ILO for its continued collaboration with the Republic of Mauritius. Once again, I would like to assure the Director-General, and the staff, of our continued commitment and belief in the ideals of the ILO.

Original Arabic: Mr ABU EL RAGHEB (*Employer, Jordan*)

On my own behalf and on behalf of the employers in my beloved country, I would like to congratulate Dr Nidal Katamine, Minister of Transport in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on his election as President of this Conference. I would also like to express my happiness for his participation today in this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, which is being held this year against the backdrop of exceptional circumstances which the entire world is experiencing, in view of the persis-

tent consequences of the international economic crisis and the winds of protest which are raging in our region, the Middle East, and whose impact is reflected on the three social partners, including governments, employers and workers.

I would also like to congratulate the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Mr Guy Ryder, and all of his staff as well as the ILO Regional Office in Beirut, and its Director, Ms Nada Al-Nashif, and all the employees on the good collaboration and response to our problems, as well as any action aimed at improving working conditions in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

I would also like to thank Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja, who is the Employer Vice-Chairperson, and all the members of the Employers' group for their fruitful and persistent efforts which helped make this session of the Conference a success.

Since the establishment of the State of Jordan, we have always closely supported our brothers and sisters in their suffering, especially in the context of the repeated influx of refugees, by welcoming them, and more recently, those from Syria. This placed numerous additional pressures on all of us, the social partners, which in turn posed certain challenges, such as creating a balance, providing services, regulating the labour market and providing jobs, among decent practices. This was done through integrated packages of legislation, regulations and targeted programmes aimed at achieving the required balance.

In spite of these important challenges and difficulties, the Kingdom continues to play a major and historical role in consolidating the concepts of work and its values; in safeguarding the achievements of the workers; and in ensuring decent working conditions which are in conformity with human rights and with international charters and relevant Conventions, under the direct guidance of His Majesty King Abdullah Bin El Hussein. Thus, work is under way on the review of all labour regulations, and the reform and restructuring of the employment and vocational training sector in the Kingdom. Efforts are also being made to ensure the implementation of all decent work programmes and to continue the fight against child labour, as well as the regulation of the labour market in all of its branches.

These efforts translated into the launch of the National Employment Strategy, which obtained the blessed consensus of all three partners, as employers played a prominent role in developing the strategy and the adoption of all measures aimed at its implementation on the ground, particularly in regard to the institutional and regulatory framework and the factors of supply and demand, with the aim of creating a suitable working environment in conformity with international practices.

Under the institutional and regulatory framework, the Strategy contains important pillars related to the allocation of tasks and the structuring of the labour-regulating institutions, and the formulation of legislation aimed at improving the work environment in the Kingdom. On the demand side, the Strategy includes numerous objectives at the macro-level related to improving the lives of workers and their working conditions, by stabilizing macroeconomic indicators.

On the supply side, the Strategy contains targets related to the structuring of education, vocational training, migration policies, women's participation

in the economy, and all matters which impact the supply side.

Today, I can tell you that my country, Jordan, endeavours to improve the workers' standard of living, as well as their working conditions and environment. We are all partners in this area, and we will continue with this approach in spite of the challenges encountered, which exceed our resources.

This may be a valuable occasion to ask the ILO and the international community to help my country and employers, including the chambers of industry, and various organizations, to play an enhanced role in view of the difficult circumstances experienced by this explosive part of the world.

We would also call on the ILO to increase its efforts to support workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories in securing a decent living, and to collaborate with international organizations in order to put an end to the construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

In conclusion, I cannot but thank you profoundly for your attention, and wish you every success for the deliberations of this session, and progress for the ILO.

Original French: Mr SALIM (Worker, Comoros)

It is a great privilege and honour to address this distinguished body on behalf of the workers of Comoros.

As regards the Director-General's Report, the Confederation of Workers of the Comoros (CTC) notes with satisfaction the efforts that are being made, it being understood that they are in line with the commitments entered into by the Director-General at the time of taking office.

I hope that the reforms envisaged by the Director-General will continue to enable our Organization to face the economic challenges that are afflicting the whole world, especially the workers and vulnerable groups of people.

We note with regret that the austerity policies orchestrated by the international financial institutions have shown their limited capacity to curb the global economic crisis. Several reports echo this conclusion.

It is for our Organization, with its undisputed expertise, to face these institutions and convey the message to them that tripartism has proved its worth and that it alone can provide real solutions through genuinely participatory social policies which will be at the cutting edge of a real economic recovery with the creation of decent jobs.

Today, Africa is experiencing a rate of economic growth of more than 6 per cent. We may conclude that it is coping well in the face of the global economic crisis. At the same time, we note that young people in Africa are badly affected by unemployment despite the continent's riches. For this reason, we urge the African Union to work together with the ILO to establish a solid basis for ensuring that the wealth of Africa is used, first and foremost, to cater for the needs of young Africans.

Comoros has already been a Member of the ILO for 35 years, since 1978. It is time to review the progress made in terms of observance of the ILO Conventions and other ILO instruments.

Allow me to point out that, since gaining independence, Comoros has not experienced stability because the process of decolonization is unfinished. Mayotte, the fourth of the Comoros islands, which is under French administration, is a source of ongo-

ing destabilization for the other islands forming the Union of the Comoros.

In the last five years, social dialogue has made progress in Comoros. In a tripartite framework, we have been able to adopt a Decent Work Country Programme, revise the Labour Code, validate a national policy on social dialogue and a national employment policy, establish the Labour and Employment Advisory Council and assign funding for the establishment of an employment office. The workers of Comoros have actively participated in these achievements, and the ILO has played a key role by providing technical assistance and cooperation.

The Comoros Electricity Company is in a situation which gives cause for concern. I have the assurance of the Comorian authorities that this situation will be settled through social dialogue. I will therefore take this opportunity to commend the pledge that has been made by the Comorian authorities. We also welcome the fact that tripartism is making progress in Comoros.

We hope that at the next session of the Conference, Comoros will have the honour of reporting positive results thanks to the social policy that it is pursuing under the auspices of the Minister for Employment, Labour and Vocational Training.

Ms MUGO (*Employer, Kenya*)

On behalf of the Federation of Kenya Employers, I welcome the concise and practical Report released by the Director-General. This marks a step change in the Organization and allows focus on areas of priority. Employers remain committed to playing their role in promoting social justice through the world of work and creating a better place for future generations. As the ILO makes strides towards its centenary celebrations, it is time to take stock and to give thought to the recommendations made in the following areas, among others.

On demographic change, the projections are that economic growth will slow down. The key question is, how will countries achieve a balance between high unemployment, and poverty reduction and job creation? The philosophy of job-rich growth may not necessarily imply growth in decent or green jobs, unless governments undertake deliberate measures to slow down population growth. The indication that the world population is slowly but surely on its way to hitting the 9.3 billion mark by 2050, and that most of this population growth is taking place in developing countries, is food for thought. Africa's population is the fastest growing. Hence the pressure for providing jobs, let alone decent jobs, will be most acutely felt there. The ILO's future work must, therefore, focus on helping its constituents contribute to job creation. And discussions of employment creation must not emphasize green jobs alone.

Regarding the impact of the adoption of information and communications technology (ICT) on employment, the developing world is fast embracing technological innovation in an effort to bring down the cost of production. In the light of rising competition and the resulting fight for enterprise survival, a balanced approach is needed in order to ensure that the adoption of ICT does not result in mass unemployment. Governments need to prioritize manpower surveys to inform planning, as well as curriculum reviews to address the perennial mismatch between skills supply and labour market demand.

Efforts should be made to work closely with industry and establish links with learning institutions, in order to ensure that education and training is aligned to the needs of industry. The ILO should play a lead role in replicating success stories where this has happened to enhance school-to-work transition.

Regarding the relationship between wages and productivity, available evidence indicates that wages should be tied to productivity, but governments in developing countries have failed to invest in the productivity concept, with the consequence that wages are increasingly outstripping productivity. The Employers' call for ILO support in spearheading productivity-based wage increases is now more urgent than ever before. This will help countries such as Kenya contain the spiralling public sector wage bill. This huge public sector wage bill places an upward momentum on private sector pay levels as well. The demand for higher wages, beyond what developing countries can afford, is equivalent to a slow but sure economic suicide. This trend needs to be reversed.

Regarding the aspect of promoting enterprise sustainability, it is a fact that most developing countries are characterized by a large informal sector where observance of legal requirements, enterprise sustainability and labour standards are alien concepts. The ILO needs to work with social partners in developing countries to build capacity towards formalization. The formal sector is highly regulated and overtaxed to support the entire economy, when the reality is that close to 80 per cent or more of the working population in developing economies are in the informal sector. We cannot continue to talk about enterprise sustainability, the creation of green or decent jobs and observance of ILO labour standards in this House, when the challenge of finding a lasting solution to informality continues to elude us.

The realization of ILO objectives needs tripartite involvement now more than ever before. The sustainability of enterprises and job creation should take centre stage in our discussions, in order to give the burgeoning youth population a chance to earn a living. Only then can we secure the future for generations to come.

Original French: Ms LEHTO-KOMULAINEN (*Worker, Finland*)

First and foremost, allow me to congratulate the President on his election.

I would like to begin by thanking the Director-General for his Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, as well as for his Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, which is still a matter for concern.

The adoption, promotion and monitoring of international labour standards have been at the heart of the ILO's mandate for 94 years. This international standard-setting system is unique and precious. We, the tripartite constituents, have a duty to preserve, strengthen and, if necessary, to adapt it to the new global and structural challenges we face.

Last year, we had the huge privilege of receiving Aung San Suu Kyi here at the Conference. It was a great moment for us. At the same time, it was real proof that our supervisory system is working well and has stood the test of time, even in the most difficult conditions. We should be proud of this system.

Freedom of association, the right to organize and the right to collective bargaining are fundamental labour rights. These rights must be respected and implemented. Back in the 1920s, the ILO showed us that the right to strike is an integral part of freedom of association. This right is important to safeguard and to promote the interests of workers.

It is vital that both workers' and employers' organizations are truly free and independent, and that they can function in full security. This is one of the preconditions for true social dialogue.

According to the Report of the Director-General, the ILO has a constitutional obligation to promote collective bargaining and social dialogue. In Finland, as with other Nordic countries, we have a long tradition of collective bargaining and collective agreements; they form the basis of our social system. Our country has been able to deal with the complications associated with the financial, economic and social crises and I am sure that this will remain the case in the years to come.

The Report invites the ILO to innovate. With regard to standards, we must, in particular, examine new forms of work, without forgetting the situation of the unemployed. Who among us does not know someone who has lost their job?

The recurrent discussion next year on employment must deal with unemployment in a concrete manner and come up with proposals. One of the initiatives put forward by the Director-General relates to relations with enterprises. What are the real responsibilities of multinational enterprises? Some do not take account of decent work and, even if some participate in voluntary initiatives, they do not all respect the rights of workers to organize and carry out collective bargaining. This is the case in their international supply chains.

There is a remarkable link between the end to poverty initiative and the women at work initiative. With regard to wage differences between men and women, this is a problem that remains to be solved in my country too.

To conclude, violations of trade union rights, impunity, forced labour, discrimination and child labour still exist, and workers and their families still need the ILO.

Our Organization deserves respect, as to respect it is to respect our joint and individual work. We have made the ILO what it is today. Together we will go even further tomorrow.

Original Arabic: Mr SUWALEM (Minister of Labour and Capacity Building, Libya)

I would like to extend to the President, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Libyan delegation, the appreciation and greetings of the Libyan people and the Government of Libya, headed by Prime Minister Ali Zeidan. I wish him every success at this Conference.

You are well aware that Libya has undergone a dark and long period during which it witnessed oppression, poverty and underdevelopment. After the popular uprising which took place in Libya, which ended in the victory of the glorious 17th of February Revolution, a number of challenges emerged. For example, about 50,000 workers lost their jobs and activities as a result of the withdrawal of investment companies and companies which implement projects in Libya. Furthermore, increasing numbers of graduates are seeking work and there has been an influx of large numbers of illegal mi-

grant workers, which coincided with Libya's liberation.

The Ministry of Labour and Training has taken several implementing measures to address the challenges. These include, first, the payment of salaries to national workers at companies which withdrew from the country. Second, the identification of jobseekers and the launching of a training programme for the training of 60,000 jobseekers inside Libya, as well as the dispatch of numerous jobseekers abroad to receive training courses in English, on information technology as well as vocational training. A few jobseekers were also able to take up jobs in the public and private sectors. Third, the promotion of dialogue with the private sector through the organization of several symposia and conferences aimed at achieving complementarity and shared objectives. Fourth, the regulation of the labour market and the fight against the illegal trafficking of workers and illegal migration. This includes the regularization of migrant workers through contractual arrangements inside Libya, for whom the contractual conditions apply, with a view to meeting the needs and requirements of the labour market in Libya, and the repatriation of workers found to be in violation to their countries of origin. In this connection, we are currently working on identifying the means of collaboration with neighbouring labour-exporting countries, so as to realize the interests of all parties.

With respect to updating legislation, the Ministry has embarked on the formulation of a new Labour Code and a law on trade unions, involving the three groups of social partners, so as to reach equitable legislation that safeguards workers' rights and their union organizations, and observes international labour standards, UN Covenants and instruments related to human rights.

As for international Conventions, the Ministry has replied to the comments of the ILO Committee of Experts, and it sent nine replies to the ILO. Work is currently under way on replies to the rest of the comments.

With respect to the Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, one has to recall the violations committed by the Israeli authorities against Arab workers, which include the denial of trade union freedoms and the flagrant violation of Conventions as well as of civil, political and human rights, especially aggression against children and the usurpation of lands through building settlements on the lands of the Palestinian people throughout decades of occupation.

Consequently, after this long period, the international community should act to secure civilians and protect their rights. It is in this connection that we call on the ILO to set up a permanent standing committee which will follow up on the situation of Palestinians, including workers and employers, and be responsible for their welfare. The work of this committee will end with the end of the occupation.

In conclusion, we cannot but express our appreciation and deep gratitude to the international community, civil society organizations and friendly governments for the assistance and support provided to the Libyan people.

We thank you for your attention, and wish every success to our Conference.

This is the first time that I have addressed this august assembly and I would like, on behalf of the Burkina Faso delegation and on my own behalf, to welcome the holding of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on building a sustainable future with decent work. We would also like to congratulate the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO for their excellent Reports.

Burkina Faso fully endorses this vision, which focuses on employment and social protection in a new demographic context and on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs.

Employment and social protection in the new demographic context are major challenges for the development of our States, given the rising unemployment and poor social protection in many of our countries. The steady increase in unemployment means that we have to have a specific policy for dealing with it.

At the Extraordinary Summit on Employment Creation and Poverty Alleviation which was held in September 2004 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Heads of State and Government of the African Union made a commitment to promote employment to combat poverty. In line with the conclusions of that high-level meeting, Burkina Faso has increased its institutions to promote work and has set up national institutions. There is an annual forum for young people and, since 2012, a programme has been in place to promote youth work and women's work.

In September 2014, we will welcome the "Ouagadougou Summit +10", which will bring together Heads of Government from African States. We shall assess the progress that has been made in the ten years since the adoption of the Declaration and Plan of Action for the promotion of employment and poverty alleviation. This will also be an occasion for us to look at the post-2015 agenda for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and at the challenges facing the international community today in that area.

Burkina Faso is very happy to host this continental follow-up event ten years after the commitments were entered into in 2004, and will invite the ILO and the African Union to take part in this extraordinary summit meeting.

With regard to social protection, the severity of the current crisis is such that we have to strengthen our policies; it shows just how urgent it is that we have social justice in our countries.

Burkina Faso has resolutely embarked upon the extension of social protection, by adopting a national policy in September 2012 under which we can provide a social protection floor as called for in the recommendations adopted in October 2010 in the Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor.

Our country has undertaken to introduce a universal health insurance system by 2015, under which every citizen will be entitled to the minimum health care they need to have a decent life. We have begun to formulate a strategic framework of social welfare institutions in order extend health insurance to the entire population.

The resurgence of social crises throughout the world shows, yet again, that the challenges cannot be dealt with unless all those involved first coordi-

nate their activities. That is why our Government is very happy that the agenda for this session includes the recurrent issue of social dialogue, and hopes that the Committee's conclusions will strengthen social dialogue and the machinery for resolving social conflict in our countries.

It is vital that we share our experience, and work together to devise programmes and policies based on the pursuit of a fair globalization, the protection of vulnerable economies from external shocks and respect for the environment. It is important that we strive towards a development that can create more jobs and sustainable companies that respect workers' rights, equality between men and women, and the protection of vulnerable people.

I have faith in our ability to meet the challenge of implementing this pact founded on the Decent Work Agenda.

Our separate States must all make the firm commitment to come up with concrete, realistic and sustainable responses to these problems of employment and social protection in the world.

Mr LOKUGE (Minister of Labour and Labour Relations, Sri Lanka)

Allow me to extend to the President our warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. At the outset, I wish to extend our congratulations and appreciation to the Director-General for his impressive and insightful Report in which he has highlighted a positive, influential and successful path towards the ILO's centenary.

I appreciate the reform introduced by the Director-General, with a strong focus on seven areas of critical importance and 19 outcomes to achieve the decent work objectives and social justice. Further, the Government of Sri Lanka recognizes that the ILO and its constituents need to take up the challenges of tripartism, standards and coherence within the ILO and enterprises, as emphasized by the Director-General in his Report.

Apart from its role of setting standards on working conditions, the ILO serves as a think tank by conducting research on emerging issues in the world of work in general and, in particular, by monitoring member States' compliance with those standards and providing them with appropriate assistance.

The ILO also serves as a catalyst by fostering a multilateral alliance with other agencies so that they can collaborate on social and labour policy issues and bring about social justice. The role played by the ILO in the discussions on the post-2015 agenda is especially commendable.

Thanks to its tripartite nature, the ILO has been at the forefront in upgrading the standard of living of both men and women workers. It is my firm belief that social dialogue based on tripartism can make a significant contribution to countries' overall development.

Sri Lanka's National Labour Advisory Council and Provincial Labour Advisory Councils, and the minimum wage fixing mechanism established under the Wages Board Ordinance, are examples of our tripartite labour market institutions. Without a proper understanding of the true meaning of tripartism and social dialogue it would be very difficult for us to build a harmonious relationship between the workers and the employers, so as to improve

working conditions and productivity, which are crucial for our socio-economic development.

We are proud to say that since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 our policy has been based on social development, free education from primary to university level, free health care for all and other welfare measures that have raised the country to 92nd place on the Human Development Index.

Recognizing the importance of balanced and inclusive growth, we have implemented rural development programmes, such as *Gama Naguma*, *Maga Naguma* and *Pura Naguma*, within the framework of *Mahinda Chinthana* – the vision for the future headed by His Excellency the President. *Gama Naguma* is designed to improve the life of rural communities that have been left behind by the rapid development of the urban areas. While the *Maga Naguma* programme focuses on road construction and other projects to connect villages and small towns in rural areas, the *Pura Naguma* programme aims to provide small rural towns with all the facilities needed to serve as a marketplace for village products.

The results are quite impressive. For example, in the northern and eastern parts of the country, fishermen are returning to the sea and farmers to the fields after having been unable to do so for nearly three decades. The theme of these programmes is central to the goals of the ILO.

Allow me to voice my appreciation of the extensive support and cooperation that have been extended to Sri Lanka by the ILO, particularly through such recent initiatives as the formulation of national human resources and employment policies, the study of social protection, the preparation of a labour inspection policy and the implementation of a labour inspection system.

I trust that these initiatives are in line with the ILO's objectives and look forward to further technical assistance from the Organization. In conclusion, may I reiterate the importance of the initiatives proposed by the Director-General as we approach the ILO's centenary. I trust that the implementation of those initiatives will make a significant contribution to the world of work.

Mr TANOMVORSIN (*Employer, Thailand*)

I bring you greetings and good wishes from the employers of Thailand.

I come here today to voice my views and opinions on the labour situation in Thailand. As a tripartite partner and as an Employer representative, I am pleased and proud to report to the Conference that there has been an extended period of industrial peace in Thailand, a rather unusual phenomenon. In fact, labour leaders, whatever their shades and orientation, seem to have become more patient and reconcilable. Now employers treat them as partners, like family, so we are equals in the tripartite format.

Turning to a more substantive subject, I am proud to say that nearly everything in Thailand at the moment is on the plus side. First, the Thai economy in 2012 grew by about 5.5 per cent in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), and is expected to grow at the same rate in the years ahead. The new minimum wage of 300 Thailand baht (about US\$10 per day) throughout the Kingdom, which came into effect on 1 January 2013, will increase the purchasing power of workers and improve their standard of living. They are happier about their social welfare.

Second, while we depend very much on migrant workers in the various sectors of the economy, we have no worries with regard to child workers, for nearly all children are in school, where they enjoy free education up to the age of 15 years, plus free books and uniforms and, to keep abreast of the time, free tablet personal computers.

Third, regarding decent work, given the shortage of labour, government protection and the promotion of corporate social responsibility, you can rest assured that employers are competing with one another to raise employment standards in order to attract workers which, as I say, are in short supply.

With Thailand's infrastructure projects in transport, communications and energy throughout the country and to connect to all the other countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – a total investment of approximately US\$74,000 million for high-speed trains connecting the North–South economic corridor extending through China, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore and the East–West economic corridor extending through Viet Nam (Da Nang), Laos, Thailand and Myanmar (Tavoy) – there will be huge opportunities for new jobs. The ASEAN Economic Community, with a combined population of approximately 600 million, will come into effect in 2015.

This will open up vast opportunities for trade and investment, with more liberal free trade arrangements. In addition to trade and investment, there will be more activities in such areas as tourism, communications, health care and education among the 10 +3 member countries, which will create a demand for huge numbers of workers. New and additional skills will be needed, for example, in linguistic literacy and communication technology.

As for the green campaign, I can assure you that Thailand is only too aware of the disastrous consequences of inattention to the protection of the environment. In fact, our green campaign has been instigated and promoted by the revered King and Queen of Thailand. With broad public awareness and nationwide support, the campaign is a major item on our national agenda that has been pursued energetically for over a decade.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a pleasant stay in the great city of Geneva. Thank you, and God bless you all.

Mr SIMEONOV (*Employer, Bulgaria*)

Permit me, first of all, to congratulate the President on his election to this responsible position, and to wish him and his deputies a successful administration of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Report of the Director-General addresses the future of the Organization and the social dimensions of an important task for the global economy: the achievement of growth. The other items on the agenda of the International Labour Conference are also of great importance and the timing is crucial for the ILO. Times of economic hardship bring about escalating social tensions, and the growing popular dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs is more than obvious. This gives the ILO a unique opportunity to, once again, find the role that was assigned to it when it was established – to be a focal point and a forum for all the representatives of the partners that determine the social status of society – employers, trade unions and governments. All

serious confrontations worldwide and between countries have their social dimensions and background. To miss this opportunity would be a serious disadvantage for society and would increase pressure in other ways that would be incompatible with the most important thing for society – peace and conflict-free development.

That is why the interested Bulgarian employers' organizations, and the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in particular, did their best last year to neutralize the previous Government's attempts to intervene in tripartite dialogue and to violate the freedom of association of employers' organizations in Bulgaria. Conflict and confrontation were aroused by the adoption of discriminatory changes in the law on tripartite dialogue, intended to exclude the oldest organizations that, on the employers' part, had designed this dialogue in its modern form. Our response was immediate. Firstly, a veto of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria was called for, followed by a ruling of the Constitutional Court of our country denouncing the discriminatory amendments in the Labour Code as non-constitutional and classifying them as a flagrant violation of the principle of freedom of association. It seems that the lesson was not clear enough and, on the last day of its mandate, the National Assembly passed another anti-constitutional amendment, namely the obligation for members of collective and supervisory bodies of officially recognized social partner organizations partaking in the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation to declare their property online which, according to the firm conviction of leading legal experts, is another violation of civil rights, the basic principles of market economy and the equality of economic entities in a normal competitive environment. It is no coincidence that the Government, which treated the social sphere and the social partners in such a way, had to step down before the official end of its term, under pressure from street protests. It is also no coincidence that the political party that has put forward the latest changes did not get the confidence of the voters and will not be represented in Parliament in its current configuration.

Let me assure this forum that we are determined to do all that is in our power to bring these provisions into compliance with the Bulgarian Constitution, whether by a change in the law, for which we have the support of all the political parties in the new Parliament, that convened for its first session on 21 May 2013, or once again through the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria. No doubt the ILO's experience in this case will also be very useful as, it should be noted, was the support of the International Organisation of Employers and, in particular, the then Secretary-General, Mr Antonio Peñalosa.

As organizations of Bulgarian employers, assisting our members in their daily work, we constantly keep in contact with them and make sure that their standpoints on the economic environment and the urgent measures taken by the Government reach their addressees in time and are implemented in practice. There is no alternative to the pursuit of the economic recovery of countries. It is the only way to restore social peace and create a more adequate and constructive atmosphere for cooperation and dialogue.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the determination of the organizations of Bulgarian employers to work

to strengthen the authority and the role of the ILO, and of the Conference, as the most important forum for achieving this purpose, which is vital to society and the world as a whole.

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

On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I would like to echo those who have preceded me in congratulating the President and all the Officers and delegates on their election and on the way they are conducting their work.

Above all, allow me to take this opportunity to assure the new ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, of our support for, and confidence in, the weighty task that he now faces to pragmatically defend the interests of our tripartite institution in order to increase its influence in world forums.

Upon reading the Director-General's Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, I noted with interest and appreciated the seven ideas for initiatives for a forward-looking and strategic response to the current crisis in its various forms, including an initiative relating to the structural reform at the ILO.

First, we have to pursue the reform process which has been under way since last year relating to the standards review mechanism, with the aim of improving the corpus of ILO instruments relating to labour and social policy.

Second, we have to think about the future of our Organization just a few years before its centenary. For this reason, we agree with the proposal to set up an advisory group tasked with drawing up a report which will be discussed at the 2019 session of the Conference.

The other subjects discussed by the Conference are also highly relevant for us. Regarding the question of employment and social protection in the new demographic context, we think that if the dominant features of the demographic context are declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy worldwide, resulting in an ageing population, it is now that we must seek innovative solutions.

The question of sustainable development, in relation to decent work and green jobs, also demands our attention since it involves a growing scarcity of resources, worsening pollution levels and climatic upheaval.

Preserving the natural environment and ensuring access for everyone to decent work appear as the major challenges of the twenty-first century. As constituents, we must examine employment prospects, net job creation and the revamping of existing jobs to ensure a transition to greener enterprises in support of the ILO programme concerning green jobs for promoting decent work.

As regards the recurrent discussion, social dialogue and tripartism, the trends and possibilities connected with social dialogue actors and institutions must be better identified in order to evaluate realities and needs. Here, too, our institution must fully play its role in order to "eliminate the danger that poverty anywhere constitutes to prosperity everywhere", as the Director-General said at the opening of this session of the Conference.

A few days ago, many of us read the *World of Work Report* recently published by the ILO. For Africa, the report confirms that the quality of employment is still a source of concern throughout the

region and the proportion of informal work stands at nearly 54 per cent.

Youth employment also remains a major concern. Most young people are in undeclared, badly paid employment or are long-term unemployed and the transition from school to the world of work is littered with obstacles.

The credibility, even the very survival, of the foundations of democracy and global governance will depend largely on how the crisis and the issue of youth employment are handled. Even though the report indicates that the middle classes have made some progress in Africa, it unfortunately confirms that serious poverty and inequality remain, as do economic and political instability.

The challenge consists of accepting persistent structural weaknesses, proposing a stable macro-economic framework and adopting labour market policies to improve social inclusion. Among other things, this calls for making improvements to social protection policies, especially in the informal sector, and improving and promoting participatory and inclusive social dialogue.

For governments and employers' and workers' organizations, and for enterprises and community organizations, social dialogue institutions are essential for reaching consensus with regard to economic growth, productivity, education and vocational training.

By signing the Decent Work Country Programme with the ILO last March, my country once again underlined its commitment to the ideals of the International Labour Organization. This is a major step for the tripartite actors, motivated as they are by the desire for social cohesion, the primacy of our common values and the promotion of decent work.

All of this has been possible thanks to the determination of the President of Gabon, His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, who, in his strategy for the development of the country, gives pride of place to human capital and respect for fundamental rights.

In the context of social protection, the Government is currently working on the challenge of ensuring a minimum "basket" of old-age benefits, in addition to universal social coverage and universal health care, which I announced at the last session of the Conference, as well as the restructuring of the National Social Security Fund and the National Health Insurance and Social Guarantee Fund.

The conservation of one third of our national territory and the drawing up of a law and a national strategy concerning sustainable development are all projects on which my country has embarked in order to reflect current realities and respond to the need for changes, so that economic growth, decent work and social protection can all coexist in harmony.

Original Arabic: Mr MAJDALANI (Minister of Labour, Palestine)

May I preface my remarks by saying how pleased and how proud I am to participate in this Conference. On behalf of the delegation of my country, Palestine, and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election and on the trust that has been placed in them to guide this Conference.

I would also like to thank the Director-General of the ILO and his staff for all the excellent work that has gone into the preparation of this Conference.

The occupation and settlement policies pursued by Israel have continued to hamper the growth and

development of the Palestinian economy and society, leading to an increase in poverty and unemployment among the Palestinian people. The measures taken under the occupation policy last year included the suspension of clearance revenues by Israel as a collective punishment of the Palestinians following the decision taken at the United Nations in November to accept Palestine as a non-member observer State. This has had an adverse impact on the ability of the Palestinian Authority to provide services to its people.

As Mr Guy Ryder said in the preface to his Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, "the restrictions arising out of the continuing occupation and expanding settlement activity are effectively blocking the Palestinian economy, and importantly its private sector, from further significant progress. In this constrained situation, there is a risk of serious erosion of confidence in the capacity of the institutions for a Palestinian state to deliver on the strategies for economic growth with decent work and respect for fundamental rights."

The Government of Palestine is sparing no effort to deal with the consequences of these occupation policies, and to mitigate its impact on our people, which aspires to a just peace, social peace and economic stability. Despite our limited resources, and despite the increasingly heavy burden and serious challenges we face, the Government of Palestine is meeting its obligations and commitments. The difficult circumstances it has faced have not prevented it from seeking to reduce unemployment and poverty, and to create jobs for the unemployed and an environment which is favourable to investment, through a series of measures, laws and programmes.

It was with considerable interest and appreciation that we read the Report of the international mission on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. This Report reflects a high degree of objectivity, in terms of methodology, analysis and conclusions. We certainly appreciate the effort that has been invested in preparing this Report, and reaffirm Palestine's commitment to promoting respect for international labour standards and to enhancing decent work.

This Report is seen as a clear and unequivocal international condemnation of the Israeli occupation, and of the violations and restrictions it imposes on the defenceless Palestinian people. We agree with the idea that what is needed is not to relax the Israeli blockade and violations, but to put an end to the occupation.

The Palestinian people appreciates the support of the majority of States for the resolution of 29 November 2012 of the United Nations to grant Palestine non-member observer State status. Again, it is counting on your support and invites you to uphold Palestine's request to become a full Member of the ILO. Your support will not only ensure justice and equity, but will also confirm that the international community must impose its will on the Israeli Government, and require it to accept peace based on application of the decisions under international law in regard to the Palestinian issue.

More than ever, our people is determined to continue its struggle to achieve a just and balanced peace and secure all its national rights which are guaranteed in international law, chief among them, in the first place the creation of an independent State, with its capital the holy city of Al-Quds, the

return of our refugees and the release of all prisoners held in Israeli jails.

A just peace remains a noble objective and we are working towards that goal.

Mr HASSAN (*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia*)

I would like to congratulate the President and the two Vice-Presidents on their election to preside over the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all tripartite delegations from Africa on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity/African Union, which was celebrated on 25 May 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia warmly congratulates the new Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, and wishes him success. Ethiopia also welcomes the Report of the Director-General, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*.

In this Report, the Director-General has raised a number of transformative and thought-provoking ideas on the world of work and the responses required from the ILO.

I congratulate the Director-General for his excellent Report addressing the challenges and opportunities with regard to job creation, social protection, social dialogue, migration and sustainable development.

I would like to commend the part of the Report dealing with tripartism and representative legitimacy, and in particular his emphasis that the strength and the legitimacy of tripartism and its actors depends on mutual recognition and respect of rights and roles.

I also share this optimism that the Organization's normative work could emerge strengthened from current debates if we ensure that all constituents of the tripartite structure are equally engaged and heard to uphold the relevance, impartiality and coherence of the ILO's standard-setting system.

Ethiopia also supports the seven ideas of the Director-General for the ILO centenary initiatives.

Ethiopia supports the agenda on employment and social protection in the new demographic context, which provides important prospects to explore appropriate employment and social protection policy responses to the new demographic context. We need to develop a full understanding of the new global demographic transition and the implications for ensuring the coherence of employment and social protection policies which would provide new opportunities regarding possible ways for integrated, long-term perspectives.

The recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social dialogue under the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization is very timely, given the important role that social dialogue plays in achieving social justice and peaceful workplace relations.

We support the progress that the ILO is making in the tripartite work on social dialogue. The Government of Ethiopia is firmly committed to tripartite social dialogue as an essential instrument for ensuring a peaceful social climate and development.

The Government of Ethiopia is also committed to achieving full employment, and is determined to continue improving the employability and productivity of Ethiopian workers through education and training.

Ethiopia's education sector development programme is designed to ensure equitable access to general, technical and higher education levels, and also ensures that these education levels have strong linkages and interrelationships.

At the same time, the country's labour market remains open for foreign investors in order to achieve our various development goals and meet the present needs of the national economy.

Ethiopia's policy approaches also equally focus on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of growth for inclusive and sustainable development.

The Government of Ethiopia has integrated social protection strategies with economic policies to further strengthen an informal social protection system, expand formal employment opportunities and increase access to social services as some of the measures aimed at nurturing an inclusive growth strategy.

Consistent with the report of the Conference on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, the Government of Ethiopia is implementing a five-year growth and transformation plan which includes natural resource management, a food security programme and climate change initiatives to ensure sustainable development and attain middle-income status by 2025. The Government has also endorsed a climate-resilient green economy strategy.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the ILO's contribution and support to the Government of Ethiopia towards ensuring sustainable poverty reduction through the integration of decent work priorities with the national development agenda.

The Decent Work Country Programme for Ethiopia 2013–15 has been developed with the assistance of the ILO country office and it will be finalized shortly to allow its implementation. This programme focuses on decent employment creation and provides the space for the realization of principles and rights at work.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Ethiopia's commitment to the ILO ideals of social justice and lasting peace.

Mr PHINSAVANH (*Government, Lao People's Democratic Republic*)

Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to congratulate the President on his election to the Chair of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to address this distinguished gathering.

As a Member of the International Labour Organization, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has always remained true to the International Labour Organization's fundamental principles concerning social protection and promotion of employment. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has also diligently fulfilled its obligations, as demonstrated by its involvement in the study and adoption of the International Labour Organization's Conventions and its implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme in relation to promoting skills development and youth employment. We are also revising the labour legislation and drawing up new legislation on social security which is due to be finalized this year. Moreover, the Government is actively engaged in the process of developing a national so-

cial protection policy giving due consideration to public interventions which provide basic services to vulnerable groups in society.

The five-year Labour and Social Welfare Development Plan has clearly recognized the key role of social development in enhancing people's living standards, poverty eradication, economic growth and good governance. This comprehensive development plan also includes a special focus on mainstreaming youth employment in development policies and strategies, expansion of employment services, job security and stability, and enhancing safety and health at work. The plan has also given emphasis to micro- and small-scale enterprises, supported by technical and vocational education, and training programmes to facilitate the transition from school to work.

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the follow-up mechanism of the International Labour Organization to the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, since it represents an important promotional and practical tool to advance social progress and to address failure to respect fundamental rights at work. The Lao Government has integrated these and the country's related international commitments into its National Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development Plan for their comprehensive implementation.

On behalf of the Lao Government, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the International Labour Organization for its continued financial and technical assistance and support accorded to the Lao People's Democratic Republic and, in particular, for projects such as the improved social security system, the prevention of violence against women and child trafficking, and the child labour survey. All these projects are of the utmost importance and vitally necessary for our country's social protection and socio-economic development.

Once again, I would like to wish the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference every success.

Mr SULAIMAN (*Minister of State for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda*)

I congratulate the President on his election to chair and guide this great assembly; commend the Officers for their administrative support to his work; and applaud the new Director-General of the ILO, Mr Guy Ryder, at his maiden Conference, and the entire International Labour Organization for its creativity and vigilance in defending social justice and a fair globalization in the transformation of the world of work.

Uganda's delegation agrees with the report on employment and social protection, which indicates that the continuing economic slowdown, in 2013 and beyond, has implications on unemployment and underemployment for different groups of people. Coupled with an increasingly ageing population, environmental degradation and climate change, the crisis has had negative impacts on the labour market, the supply of labour and skills, productivity, innovation, decent employment and social protection.

Uganda, in the last decade, has witnessed an average growth rate of 6.5 per cent per annum. This translates to a total GDP in 2011–12 of 39.6 trillion Uganda shillings as compared to 3.5 trillion shillings in 1986. This growth rate has contributed to

reducing the poverty rate from 52 per cent in 1992 to 31 per cent in 2006, and 24.5 per cent in 2009–10.

On the other hand, the high population growth rate of 3.2 per cent per annum has subsequently led to an increase in the labour force, estimated at 13.4 million in 2009–10. Uganda's population is projected at 35.4 million as of the middle of 2013. This demographic trend shows that Uganda's population is growing and young, with approximately 56 per cent of the population under 18 years of age.

What is the Government of Uganda doing? On 18 April 2013, the Uganda Vision 2040 was launched with an underlying theme – “A transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years” – explicitly putting emphasis on employment, human capital development and improvement of the productivity of the labour force, including promotion of workers' rights. A national programme of action on employment to guide the implementation and realization of the aspirations of the national employment policy has been developed. A pilot cash transfer programme was launched in 2010 and has reached 7,150 beneficiaries. Based on the evidence that has been generated, a draft national social protection policy framework has been developed. On 25 May 2013, a national tripartite charter was signed to intensify social dialogue and tripartite consultations.

The recurrent discussion on social dialogue under the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, in addressing the economic downturn and ensuring job-rich economic recovery, is, therefore, applauded.

Uganda being part of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa, a second phase of the Decent Work Country Programme has been completed through a consultative process with the social partners. My delegation therefore proposes that Decent Work Country Programme indicators be reviewed to take into account the emerging new issues in the labour market and the economy.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for the technical and financial support to various development programmes.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Uganda to the ILO objectives, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Decent Work Agenda.

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

It is a great pleasure and a pleasant task to address you from this podium, and I would like to start by extending my warm congratulations to the President of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on his election and the excellent way in which he is presiding over our work. I would also like to congratulate all the Vice-Presidents.

The International Labour Conference offers the tripartite constituents of the ILO the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of workers' living standards and the productivity of enterprises, combat poverty through the adoption of relevant standards and contribute to their application through the supervisory mechanism. This dynamic process indicates the will of these actors from the world of work to promote the conditions for real social justice.

With a view to achieving these goals, the Government of Cameroon, in consultation with the so-

cial partners, has developed a Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, setting out a shared vision to bring Cameroon up to emerging country status; in other words, a democratic country, united in its diversity, ensuring sustainable development for all.

The goals pursued by Paul Biya, our Head of State, are to bring Cameroon into the group of middle-income countries in the near future, reduce poverty to a socially acceptable level and achieve the newly industrialized country status. All this aims to strengthen national unity, pursue the process of democratization and consolidate the stability of our country in a prosperous economy.

The steps taken by Cameroon in the area of labour are consistent with the fundamental pillars of the ILO, which are standards, employment, social security and social dialogue. Among these priorities, employment remains our main concern.

Our strategy aims to bring greater transparency to the world of work; increase the supply of decent jobs; align the supply and demand of jobs through relevant and adapted vocational training programmes; and provide support for business start-ups to create green jobs to better integrate young graduates, who make up a large proportion of the workforce. Here, we could also mention the launch of many structuring projects in the areas of infrastructure, energy production and mining, which are creating thousands of jobs for young people. In this way, we hope to reduce unemployment levels by half and bring informal employment down from 90 to 50 per cent by 2020.

With regard to social protection, to ensure the well-being of our population and to absorb the effects of demographic transition, Cameroon has established programmes to promote social security coverage for as much of the population as possible, to bring current coverage up from 10 to 20 per cent by 2015. In the area of standards, the 44 Conventions ratified by my country are up to date and the process is ongoing. With regard to social dialogue, the National Labour Advisory Committee has reviewed a bill on trade unions. Under this law, the creation of public and private sector unions would be subject to a simple declaration procedure, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). Lastly, we consider environmental sustainability to be a prerequisite for the sustainability of enterprises.

Cameroon supports all the reform initiatives set out in the vision presented by the Director-General of the International Labour Office, including those on governance, standards, relations with enterprises, green initiatives, the eradication of poverty, initiatives for women and initiatives on the future of the labour market, which together aim to promote the image of the Organization and to strengthen its action against injustices wherever they occur.

The ILO's centenary should be an opportunity to reaffirm the values that the Organization defends, through its determination and capacity to pursue its work in the future. Moreover, it must clearly establish its commitment to those who are most vulnerable, left by the wayside by globalization.

*Original Spanish: Mr GONZÁLEZ HERNÁNDEZ
(Employer, Dominican Republic)*

The Employers' delegation of the Dominican Republic would like to extend its greetings to all the participants in this International Labour Conference,

which is of great significance given the global economic and social context. We received the Report of the Director-General with great satisfaction and we wish to reaffirm the importance of the ILO as the only body with a mandate focused on the world of work and on tripartism, seeking balanced social agreements that will help create sustainable development in our societies.

In recent decades, we have witnessed major economic, social and technological changes that have led to variations with repercussions on our countries' domestic affairs. On the one hand, the liberalization of markets and the trend towards globalization have led companies to seek higher levels of productivity and efficiency, while the situation of stagnation faced by developed countries is making us reassess the way in which we generate wealth, through the development of a balanced, inclusive and sustainable distribution model. In the Dominican Republic, we have to address this challenge in the context of high levels of unemployment, a growing trend towards informality and a legislative framework that is not adapted to the country's level of development.

The Employers of the Dominican Republic support the criteria set out by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), regarding the social role of companies. We would like to see a flexible, balanced and effective ILO, equally valued for its assistance by governments, workers and employers. As constituents, we hope to use tripartite consensus to reduce poverty, promote social responsibility in companies and reassess vocational education and training.

The labour market in our country has two barriers to the creation of employment and, therefore, well-being. First, the informal sector is growing steadily and is linked to low education and training levels among workers, the high mobility of workers between companies, the small scale of companies, poor access to credit and a hostile environment for companies. These factors make it difficult to achieve the universally recommended solution to our legal labour framework of increasing productivity. We hope that, together with the ILO, we will be able to address this situation and show that, in many cases, the high cost of employment in the formal sector and the implicit subsidies of the informal economy, due to the modalities of aid programme funding, create incentives for informality.

Second, but no less important, there are signs in the Dominican Republic of the imperative need to adjust our labour legislation, international standards, social protection and public policies, to ensure that these are all up to date, fair and balanced. We will not grow or develop with provisions that are out of context, inflexible and out of touch with the times and with social and labour relations. Our intention is not to ignore rights but to adjust the labour legislation for the protection of formal employment of the majority through modern provisions that promote and support investment and the creation of wealth.

Furthermore, it should be noted that we, the employers of the Dominican Republic, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic and Act No. 87-01, support and promote the right to social security for all. However, social security services should be based on a financial balance that can guarantee sustainability over time.

Finally, it should be recalled that sustainable peace can only be achieved by promoting justice and well-being in our societies. This well-being is based on effective compliance with public and private policies that encourage institutionalism, transparency and the creation of formal employment in sustainable companies. To this end, we reaffirm that the tripartism promoted by the ILO requires and depends on the consolidation of the employer sector as an essential element in the creation of wealth and stability in all countries.

Original Arabic: Mr AL-RUBAIEE (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq)

On behalf of the Republic of Iraq, its Government and its people, I would like to wish the distinguished participants, the International Labour Organization and its Members every success and progress towards a future characterized by peace, friendship and the collaboration of all humanity.

I would like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, on his election to this important post.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation of the Programme and Budget for 2014–15 for its long-term vision and for its examination of the most important issues confronting the world, as well as the key concerns of the Arab group.

The issues pertaining to the Arab region that lie at the heart of the concerns of the International Labour Organization and the Arab Labor Organization (ALO), have been extensively discussed in studies and research, as well as at conferences and meetings. In fact, these discussions have proved to be fruitful and have reflected the very essence of the demands.

In this connection, the proposals made by Arab member States at their coordination meeting on 12 March 2013 during the 317th Session of the ILO Governing Body, and which took place at ILO headquarters in Geneva, reflected the real will of the Arab group. As for the agenda items which were discussed, they lie at the heart of our guidelines and related to: (1) increasing the use of the Arabic language in the activities of the Organization; (2) increasing the employment of Arab officials in ILO bodies; (3) ILO technical cooperation for the benefit of the ALO; and (4) ratifying the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO, with respect to increasing African representation.

With respect to the State of Palestine, we strongly condemn the occupation and the violations of the Israeli forces against the Palestinian people in general, and against workers in particular, and we strongly support the membership of the State of Palestine in international agencies and organizations without delay.

In our country, Iraq, the legal foundation for the majority of labour aspects has been laid. Thus, 11 labour laws have been formulated. For example, voting took place on the new Labour Code in the Council of Ministers, and it is currently in the final stages of adoption by the House of Representatives. Furthermore, a law on concessional interest-free loans, in support of income-generating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), was formulated in 2012. It will enter into force next week, and the unemployed who are to be the beneficiaries will be selected through an electronic program. The main document on the National Employment Policy was also voted on by virtue of Decision No. 83 of 2011,

which was prepared in collaboration with the ILO, the social partners and lecturers at Iraqi universities. This document links two strategies: the Poverty Alleviation Strategy (2010–14) and the National Development Strategy (2010–14), which is a plan aimed at reducing unemployment to 7 per cent. In 2012, the unemployment rate was indeed reduced to 11 per cent.

With respect to vocational training, we have designed 55 new training packages. Some 115,983 trainees benefited from such training between 2004 and the end of 2012, and graduated from the training centres in Iraq. As for the number of vocational training centres, there are 34 of these, with three more under construction. In this connection, we have to mention that we have incorporated modern programmes in to various training areas, such as “Knowing the world of business”.

With respect to the social protection network, the number of male and female beneficiaries who receive social insurance allowances exceeded 1 million families. This is in addition to the food supply card, which is a monthly food basket provided to more than 33 million Iraqis. In the same vein, advanced technologies are being used in the project on the social protection emergency network.

With respect to promoting trade union freedoms, the Higher Ministerial Committee, under our chairmanship, carried out the election process for associations, trade unions and federations. We have finalized the main structures for the tripartite social partners through the establishment of the General Federation for Workers’ Unions, the Federation of Industries, and other federations and professional associations through free and democratic elections.

It is through its continuous efforts to create a welfare-based society, that the ILO is requested, within the limits of its mandate and potential, to find practical solutions which could be implemented with more force, impact and commitment, provided that they are for the benefit of society, its freedom and its welfare. The ILO is able to do this through its serious efforts. Finally, I wish success to all workers at every level.

Ms BANGONESENGDETH (Employer, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

On behalf of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Lao employers, I have a great pleasure in attending the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and support the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry has created jobs, promoted employment and actively contributed to the business sector. We have also helped workers to get stable jobs and increase their income, encouraged them to achieve self-fulfilment and enhanced their effective contribution to the production, investment and export capability of enterprises in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as the employers’ organization, plays a key role in tripartite labour relations, notably in the revision of the Labour Code, the Social Security Act and other regulations concerning employer, worker and business sectors, inasmuch as some regulations do not yet facilitate the operation of sustainable enterprises. The business sector needs to participate

more actively in formulating and revising legislation, in order to protect the interests of both employers and workers, notably through the creation of sustainable jobs, an improved livelihood for workers, better pay, a good working environment and an enhanced capacity to contribute to the country's socio-economic development.

In this regard, the Lao business sector has contributed actively to the economic integration of the ASEAN communities in 2015, by encouraging enterprises to be competitive on the international market, to promote skills training, to acquire know-how and to improve their workers' living conditions. It has also encouraged national and foreign enterprises to provide universal social security, to contribute to society, to support informal activities, to contribute to skills training, education and occupational safety and health, to provide a better working environment and to promote decent jobs based on national legislation.

As an employers' organization, we are fully confident that Lao enterprises will all contribute to skills training as a means of meeting their own needs. We are also very supportive of the full implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry will continue to collaborate with the Government in implementing the ILO's cooperation project under the Decent Work Country Programme, combating child labour, ensuring safe migration, and developing labour relations so that women workers can engage in all kinds of business and be better accepted by society.

On this occasion, the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry would like to express its sincere thanks to the ILO for its continued support of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in its development of industrial labour relations. We trust that the ILO will increase its financial support to enhance the capacity of Lao employers to be represented at regional and national meetings, so as to enable the ILO's member States to achieve their goals.

Once again, on behalf of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we Employers would like to wish success to all delegates to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Mr DEVENDRA (*Worker, Sri Lanka*)

At the outset, please allow me to make a few comments regarding the present political and economic situation in our country.

Since the end of the civil war in 2009, which not only took the lives of thousands of our people, many of them innocent civilians, but also caused severe damage to our economy, the country has been able to make strides towards economic development, particularly in the area of infrastructure.

According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's annual report for 2011, the economy grew by 8.3 per cent in 2011 – the highest growth recorded in post-independence history – generating a growth momentum of over 8 per cent in two consecutive years and achieving a per capita GDP of US\$2,836. Inflation remained at single-digit levels for the third consecutive year, while unemployment declined to 4.2 per cent, the lowest level recorded. Migrant workers' remittances reached US\$5.1 billion and

foreign direct investment exceeded US\$1 billion for the first time.

Although the above economic indicators attempt to present a rosy picture of the state of affairs of the country, the actual living standards of the majority of the ordinary people have witnessed a steady decline. Wage increases granted by the Government to state sector employees and those obtained through the tripartite machinery available to the private sector have in no way matched the steep rise in the cost of living. In April this year, further to a substantial increase in the electricity tariffs announced by the Government, some trade unions called for a general strike in the whole country. The strike was unsuccessful due to several factors, which included the whole politicization of the issue and the unusual support given to the strike call by a large number of foreign-funded NGOs. However, the fact remains that the results of the economic development have failed to trickle down to ordinary people, which has resulted in a widening of the gap between rich and poor.

Hence, we call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to give immediate attention to adopting measures for a more equitable distribution of wealth to the vast majority who constitute the working people of our country.

The general discussion on this year's agenda on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs is of particular interest to us. The emergence of Asia as an economic giant in the twenty-first century brings with it many issues concerning sustainability and the consequent effects on the environment. As Worker representatives we are very concerned about reaching developmental targets, while giving new attention to questions of sustainability. We firmly believe that sustainable development, decent work and green jobs are firmly interlinked and therefore we should take a holistic attitude towards addressing these issues. Some development agencies and donor countries who are promoting green jobs in developing countries do not see a link between green jobs and decent jobs. We are totally opposed to this line of thinking and we believe that green jobs should also be decent jobs.

This brings us to the issue of fundamental principles and rights at work, which forms one of the four pillars of the Decent Work concept. Although Sri Lanka has ratified all the relevant Conventions, the implementation process has been rather slow. This is illustrated by the fact that, 13 years after the local labour law was brought into line with the Conventions, only a handful of employers have been prosecuted by the State for violations of the right to exercise freedom of association. Although unions have continuously campaigned for a more proactive role by the authorities, the Government machinery has been moving at a slow pace.

Another issue of serious concern to trade unions are the methods adopted by some unscrupulous employers resulting in the rapid increase in precarious forms of work including labour subcontracting, which, under current labour law, is not illegal. Since the Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198), was adopted in 2007, we have campaigned for national legislation banning the practice of labour subcontracting, which forms an integral part of the business of the enterprise. Although tripartite agreement was reached several years back, the Government has failed in its duty to bring the legislation before Parliament. I therefore

take this opportunity to call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to act immediately on this contentious issue and resolve it.

Mr VARELA (*Employer, Philippines*)

On behalf of the Philippine Employers, I would like to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I am confident that this Conference will bear productive work under your leadership. I should also like to congratulate the Director-General, Guy Ryder, who inaugurates his first International Labour Conference with an incisive and cogent Report that serves as a roadmap to steer its constituency, especially the developing economies, in the right policy direction in dealing with the critical forces that impact on economic and social developments, particularly in the world of work.

The Report presents the new realities in the world of work, as they are shaped and transformed by a number of critical forces defined in the Report. It highlights how these forces are to be managed in a synergistic fashion by the ILO and its constituency to produce beneficial outcomes. To this end, the Report examines these forces to assess how their dynamics can be oriented and directed to achieve the Decent Work Agenda.

In view of the fact that these forces are the causative factors that determine economic and social development, let me enumerate them: the impact of demographic change; the transition to environmental sustainability; the onward march of technology; the changing contours of poverty and prosperity; growing inequality and the challenge to social justice; rebalancing, convergence and recovery; and the changing nature of production and employment. In its analysis of these forces, the Report points out that the individual and social impact of each of these forces varies considerably among countries, between developed and developing economies, depending on each country's way of, and capability for, dealing with them.

Nevertheless, the Report indicates that the emerging pattern is that the more advanced and developed economies are better equipped to take advantage of these forces in sustaining the living standards of their people, consistent with the four strategic goals of the Decent Work Agenda. It also indicates that enhancing the capabilities of developing economies to respond to the challenges created by the different impacts of these forces constitutes not only a serious challenge for the country concerned, but also for the ILO and its constituency. It appears that the main critical challenges facing developing countries, especially fragile and conflict-affected States, involve demographic and economic issues, resulting in a vicious cycle of slow or erratic growth and chronic unemployment, ultimately leading to endemic poverty. The state of play has geopolitical implications for the global community. As the Report points out, the Declaration of Philadelphia states that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere".

It is in the context of the Report of the Director-General that in our country, the Philippines, the Government, upon the assumption of office of President Benigno Aquino III, mobilized the full resources of the country to achieve sustained and inclusive growth in order to address the two most

critical and interrelated issues of jobless growth, and chronic and unmitigated poverty.

As defined in the Philippine Development Plan, inclusive growth is sustained growth that produces large-scale job creation, draws the vast majority into the economic and social mainstream, and reduces mass poverty sustainably on the basis of the following five strategic pillars: macroeconomic policy; infrastructure development; strengthening the financial sector and capital mobilization; enhancing peace and security for development; and protecting the environment and natural resources. It should be noted that these pillars are consistent with the agenda in dealing with the forces identified in the Report.

I am pleased to report, also, that our Government's efforts to achieve inclusive and sustained growth are paying off. Last year, our economy grew by 6.8 per cent making the Philippines Asia's fastest growing economy. The first quarter of this year was even better, as the economy grew by 7.8 per cent, as well as a five-point gain in the 2013 world competitive ranking. These positive developments show the Aquino Government's consistency in stirring economic activities and ensuring strong macroeconomic fundamentals.

In closing, the recently concluded National Conference of Employers, organized by the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), focused on inclusive growth as its main theme. It elicited valuable insights and recommendations from various stakeholders on how to expand and extend the net of economic growth to include all sectors of Philippine society, particularly the marginalized. The action plan shall be closely and continuously monitored by ECOP and its partners, and periodically reviewed to determine progress in its implementation.

With these initiatives, the journey towards inclusive growth in the Philippines has begun.

Original French: Ms BALDE (Minister of Labour and Public Services, Guinea)

Taking the floor before this assembly, I would first of all like to transmit the warm greetings of the people and the Government of Guinea and, in particular, those of His Excellency, the President of the Republic, Alpha Condé. On their behalf, and on behalf of my delegation, I would also like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of our session and to assure him of my delegation's full cooperation.

The items on the agenda of the current session provide clear evidence of the will for renewal and tripartite commitment that has always characterized the ILO. We therefore welcome our Organization's choice of fundamental objectives, which are in line with the realities of a constantly changing world. These objectives, policies and programmes are supported by innovative partnerships based on values and goals with which all tripartite constituents can identify.

My country welcomes our Organization's determination to identify ways of resolving problems and creating synergies for action to provide the right responses to the many challenges we face, including employment, social protection, social inequality, the impact of demographic change, transition towards environmental sustainability, the issue of poverty and technological progress.

In a world facing difficulties generated by the financial and economic crises, we must turn our attention to employment and social protection in the new demographic context, social justice and addressing the aspirations and concerns of the world of work, given their acuity in all countries and in developing countries in particular.

In view of the significant demographic changes in our country after decades of structural adjustments, Guinea has entered a new dynamic that is promoting the development of opportunities for socio-economic development. In doing this, the significant emphasis on good governance has led to laudable macroeconomic results, the consequent mobilization of financial resources and the net increase in production capacities due to development projects and programmes, which are perfectly aligned with the poverty reduction policies and strategies that have been initiated by the Government.

Considering the emergence of the phenomenon of poverty affecting a large proportion of the population, my Government has decided to commit itself resolutely to poverty reduction through innovative policies and programmes targeting the world of work, young people and women. To this end, and despite real difficulties, various initiatives and structural reforms are under way to liberalize public- and private-sector initiatives and to increase human resources capacities, through recruitment, training and the integration of young jobseekers in the world of work. In addition, many bold inter-sectoral reforms have been initiated, including a social protection policy programme, which was approved through tripartite agreements in December 2012.

The challenges are multiple and varied, requiring continued efforts from all parties. However, such difficulties will not dampen the political resolve of the Government and its social partners to provide an adequate response, within our means, to the issues of employment and social protection in Guinea.

These important developments have been made possible by the strong sense of responsibility and the spirit of sacrifice of our social partners which, by indicating their total commitment through participatory and inclusive dialogue, have supported and assisted the Government's efforts for the progressive implementation of its employment and social protection policy.

With regard to social protection, my delegation shares the vision and opinions expressed in the Report of the Director-General. My Government has always considered social protection to be a fundamental human right and a key goal in its policies in this area. The main objective of this Government initiative is to set up a social protection mechanism, over time, for civil servants, the expanding informal sector and, in particular, for vulnerable groups of men, women, and persons with disabilities, allowing them to benefit from social security provisions and compulsory health insurance. In order to deliver on these goals, my Government requests the support and assistance of the ILO.

I cannot conclude without expressing our solidarity with the Palestinian cause and thanking the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body for their leadership at the head of the ILO, and for their diligent support of our country in the achievement of its many sectoral objectives.

Ms MPARIWA (*Minister of Labour and Social Services, Zimbabwe*)

Let me begin this address by extending my sincere congratulations to the President and the other Officers for their election to steer the work of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The ILO has for a long time been the envy of all multilateral institutions, possessing working methods which, while long established, are at the same time arguably the most advanced. Moreover, when we reflect on the inhuman suffering of the working class just before the establishment of the ILO, and contrast it with the rights and welfare gains of our time, it is clear that in the last century our Organization has been at the forefront of civilization. It is, accordingly, timely that the Director-General chose to draw our attention to the centennial epoch that now beckons.

However, we presently face seemingly insurmountable challenges across the whole spectrum of our work as the ILO. As noted by the Director-General, some of these challenges relate to changes within the labour market. The Government of Zimbabwe also finds it necessary to add to these dimensions such macro-factors as war, disease, pervasive poverty and, not least, the failure of the international system to manage global affairs with credibility and fairness.

My Government is of the solid view that the ILO is well placed to yet again rise above all adversity, as it did in 1919, and be the beacon of new hope. The need for multilateral coherence cannot therefore escape our attention as we plan for the future. We accordingly call on the ILO to resuscitate, with greater vigour, the quest for coherence and closer partnership within the multilateral system in order to promote world peace and equitable development.

For the ILO to find sustainable momentum, it must first achieve harmony among its constituents. As part of the way forward, the divisive aspects relating to the ILO's supervisory system should be attended to urgently, transparently and wholeheartedly. My Government trusts that the outcome of the current discussions will result in a supervisory system that is more inclusive, transparent and democratic, in order to ensure the confidence of all parties.

Like many other countries, Zimbabwe continues to grapple with the challenge of rising unemployment. Yet, my Government is of the view that, over the next few years, the area of employment is one which will define whether we shall approach our centennial celebrations with enthusiasm or with empty hands. Clearly, the ILO cannot continue to be defined by past glory, but rather by its contribution for the future. The clear and present danger to our relevance lies in the scourge of unemployment and, in particular, youth unemployment.

My Government looks forward to making its contribution in search of a lasting solution, including through policies and programmes aimed at social equity and the deliberate economic empowerment of people. To improve the well-being of its labour market, my Government will also use the avenue of its new Constitution which, among many new guarantees, extends the fundamental ILO right to freedom of association, to organize and to collective bargaining to workers and employers in both the private sector and the public service.

As I conclude, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the aspirations of the ILO will always remain the aspirations of the greater majority of the world population. And, to say the obvious, we constitute this greater majority only on a tripartite basis as the governments, employers and workers. If we, therefore, remain united around our common purpose – that of social justice – as defined long ago in 1919, and as relevant as it is even today, then there is more work and more to be achieved over the next era.

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

I would like to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the Conference. I also extend my congratulations to the Director-General of the ILO on his first year at the head of our Organization.

I would like to take this opportunity to transmit the warm greetings of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Joseph Kabila Kabange, Head of State, and of the Prime Minister, Augustin Matata Ponyo, Head of Government, to all the delegates at this Conference.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is committed to decent work and attaches particular importance to improving conditions of employment that respect the health and safety of workers.

To tackle the problems arising from the world economic crisis in the economy described by the Director-General in his Report, we endorse the strategic framework for the six years following this session of the Conference.

I have taken due note of the items on the agenda and would like to share some information with this distinguished assembly. Regarding international labour standards, the Congolese Labour Code was recently partially amended to adapt it to developments in the world labour market. The restructuring of our labour inspectorate is under way and, with the support of the ILO and the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC), a workshop has examined and endorsed the national training programme for labour inspectors. By the end of the year, our Government will have established two labour tribunals in the capital and others will follow at the provincial level.

On the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, the Government, represented by the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Public Health, along with the social partners, signed a tripartite undertaking to conduct an awareness campaign on the prevention of occupational hazards.

In 2011, my country prepared an action plan to combat the worst forms of child labour. And, in October 2012, the Prime Minister and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Children and Armed Conflict signed an action plan to combat the recruitment of children and to protect them from other serious violations of their rights by the armed forces and security services.

The youth employment support project currently being implemented in the province of Katanga, with ILO technical assistance and funding by Belgium, is clear evidence of our Government's commitment to the UN Secretary-General's call to action.

As for social protection, two bills – one concerning the Social Security Code and the other establishing basic criteria for health-care insurance – were approved by the Government following their examination at the 30th Session of the National Labour Council in November 2012. They are both currently before Parliament. Work began on the formulation of a national policy on social protection in October 2012.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose renewable energy potential is evaluated at 45 per cent of the world's reserves and 774,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power, is in the process of formulating an environmental policy.

I am convinced that tripartite or bipartite social dialogue is the ideal means of resolving problems in the world of labour.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the Decent Work Country Programme that will shortly be signed in my country.

Mr PYAKUREL (Worker, Nepal)

It is a matter of great honour to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. Taking this opportunity on behalf of all Nepalese workers, especially those organized under the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre, let me extend best wishes to all the delegates and dignitaries at this august gathering.

In just over half a decade from now, the ILO is marking the centenary of its foundation. As a witness of various ups and downs of this unique Organization, the Nepali working class has both encouraging and gloomy experiences to share. We can say firmly that the world is not what our predecessors had dreamt of nearly 100 years back. The crucial questions are: "What could we learn from the past?" and "What would be the possible options for turning the UN specialized agencies from slow-moving animals into vibrant institutions for the betterment of our world of work?"

In this context, I would begin by acknowledging the Report of the Director-General, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. "What, then, are the forces transforming the world? What do they imply for the ILO and its capacity to deliver on its mandate?" are the interesting questions asked by the Director-General in the chapter entitled "A world transformed: Work in the twenty-first century". I endorse the emphasis that the Director-General places on the following six headings in his Report, namely: the impact of demographic change; the transition to environmental sustainability; the onward march of technology; growing inequality and the challenge to social justice; rebalancing, convergence and recovery; and the changing character of production and employment.

Nepal has been undergoing a difficult political transition. Despite the change attained through the people's uprising of 2006, the formulation of a new statute through the Constituent Assembly unfortunately remained a dream. The first Assembly was dissolved without formulating the new Constitution. Thus, the political stalemate is still lingering. However, a big question remains: "When will the election of the expected new Assembly take place?" The issue of ending political instability and trekking towards prosperity is intertwined with much uncertainty in my country.

Experience dictates that in the absence of rights for the toiling masses there is no political stability. Where there is political instability and the absence of good governance, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Without sustainable development, economic growth is not possible, and without job creation and social protection, inequality prevails and poverty cannot be alleviated. The employment deficit cannot create a favourable environment for decent work.

Today, both older people and young people are high-risk groups in our country. Almost 3 million persons between 18 and 40 years of age are working abroad, most of them in vulnerable situations. They are trapped in precarious jobs, which lead only towards poverty, not prosperity. As large numbers of young people leave the country in search of jobs abroad, one can easily imagine that only ageing parents with small grandchildren remain in most of the villages of Nepal, waiting for their sons and daughters to return home. I feel very sad to mention this, but these are the most challenging situations that have been facing our country.

We, in the Nepalese trade union movement, galvanized under the common forum of the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC), have proposed solutions to this under the heading of "Change by building workers' power". We think workers' power can be built by providing social security for all, decent wages and benefits, worker representation in all peoples' representative bodies, and ensuring job-led development policy. To achieve these, the ongoing political transition should end immediately, and that is why we have demanded that the date for the election of the Constituent Assembly be declared now.

Internalizing the salient points of the Director-General's Report in the context of Nepal, I would list the following points as immediate tasks: voting rights for Nepalese migrant workers in the countries where they work; ensuring workers' constituency for 10 per cent representations; operating the social security scheme via immediate enactment of social security fund legislation; conclusion of the process of reform of existing labour legislation, including establishment of the National Labour Commission; increasing wages and benefits for all employees, citing the current revision of the minimum wage; and continuing the campaign to ratify: Convention No. 87; the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102); the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151); Convention No. 189; and the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177).

Finally, may the ILO always be a common symbol of unity and inspire workers of the world regardless of principles and ideologies.

Ms HASSEN (*Minister of Labour and Human Welfare, Eritrea*)

I wish to express my gratitude for having been given the opportunity to deliver a speech on behalf of the Government of Eritrea on this historic day. I would also like to commend the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General for the clear messages contained in their Reports.

The strong belief, both of the people and the Government of Eritrea, in the basic principles and rights at work are deeply rooted in our laws and practices. Eritrea firmly considers that promoting, establishing and protecting the freedom, liberty and dignity of workers is a process achieved only over time. It is a

long and challenging process that requires diligent attention. To that end, we are on the right path and are endeavouring to overcome our difficulties.

Eritrea has made progress across different sectors. It is one of the four African countries on track to attain the MDGs in the health sector. The Government has also achieved major developments in education, the justice system, food security, human welfare, transportation and sanitation. This clearly demonstrates the Government's commitment to eradicating poverty.

Notwithstanding its achievements, the Government recognizes the challenges it faces in the area of smooth labour administration and labour standards. These challenges basically emanate from inadequate resources of skilled manpower and institutional capacity. Despite these challenges, the Government of Eritrea is fully committed to the promotion and protection of all rights, in collaboration with the social partners and other stakeholders on the basis of mutual interest.

I would like to draw to your attention the illegal occupation of Eritrea's sovereign territory by Ethiopia and the unjustified United Nations sanctions, which are an impediment to our peace and security and hinder the promotion of decent work and labour standards. Once again, Eritrea calls on the ILO and the international community to take the necessary measures to withdraw Ethiopia from the occupied land.

Finally, despite all these challenges, Eritrea is working steadfastly on its own capacity to realize the full enjoyment of decent work opportunities. In this context, Eritrea urges the ILO to provide its technical assistance.

Mr AREMU (*Worker, Nigeria*)

I bring fraternal greetings from the Nigeria Labour Congress to the President, as well as to the ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder, who until last year was a formidable voice in the global trade union movement. We thank the tenth Director-General of the ILO for his Report, which is concise, clear and accessible. There is an old proverb that says that "he who does not look ahead, always remains behind".

We commend the Director-General for his comprehensive, forward-looking, realistic Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. The strength of his vision lies in his profound appreciation of current realities in the world of work, as well as in its proposals for a future of positive change. Two issues are of special interest for us in the Nigeria Labour Congress: the war against extreme poverty, and sustainable development.

The Report rightly deals with the issue of extreme poverty and prosperity. Today, it has become the fashion to lament the plight of the poor, but it was the ILO that first commendably raised the alarm about the danger global poverty poses to global order and harmony. And that was at a time when it was not fashionable, and was even risky to do so.

The Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 says it all: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." We agree with the optimistic view of the Director-General's Report that poverty is clearly surmountable.

The Report rightly singles out the case of China, whose dramatic development has taken millions out of poverty. It is encouraging to read that progress

has been made in the global struggle against poverty. The Director-General's Report is even frank enough to point out the danger of the emergence of the new poor – ironically, in a number of middle-income countries. This new contrast of poverty and prosperity compels us to take another critical look at the Declaration of Philadelphia, with a view to putting into reality the vision of the founding fathers of the ILO.

The poor need jobs. They need income, food, housing, schools, electricity, roads, credit; not recommendations and conclusions. Six years from the ILO's centenary, poverty anywhere remains a danger to prosperity everywhere. It is not by accident that the zones of the world that breed terrorism are also zones of poverty. We are therefore encouraged by the Report of the Director-General, who declares war against extreme poverty and want. It is, however, time for the ILO to be even more vocal and loud against the extreme wealth of the few in a few nations of the world. There seems to be a linkage between the prosperity of the few and the misery of the many. Many millions of youths and women lack jobs. Many workers do precarious jobs for minimum wages. Many young women and children are pushed into prostitution and child labour. All these unacceptable deprivations take place in a number of member countries of the ILO. We must reverse this trend. The global widening of income inequalities undermines the struggle for social justice. Mahatma Gandhi said it all: "The world has enough for everybody's need, but not enough for everybody's greed."

As it approaches its centenary, the ILO must, through the instrument of social dialogue, demand that global wealth be redistributed so as to eradicate poverty. Let us moderate the extreme prosperity of the few and redistribute global wealth by means of tripartite social dialogue. It is only common sense. We have taken enough from the poor. It is now time for the extremely rich also to shed some of the excess weight of their wealth by reinvesting in sustainable, labour-intensive industries, public sector institutions, public schools and the creation of decent jobs. There is a saying that: "The alcohol that is insufficient for the whole town ought not to intoxicate one man." In the 100 years ahead, the ILO should be celebrating the wealth of the nations and peoples of our planet, not lamenting the poverty of the many and the prosperity of the few. We must replace the "well-having" of the few with the well-being of the many.

We agree with the conclusion of the Director-General's Report that the key solution to poverty is decent jobs. Nigeria has a proverb that says it all: "Work is the antidote or remedy to poverty." However, without sustainable development there cannot be decent jobs. In many African countries we have to reinvent development before we can even talk of sustainability.

There is a new form of underdevelopment and industrialization in Africa. African economies are becoming a dumping ground for imported, finished goods in exchange for exports of raw materials – just like in colonial times. Many African economies are actually outside the whole development process. The drivers of growth in the continent are the extractive sectors, and economies that depend on the extraction of raw materials without adding value are inclined to be corrupt. The ILO's priorities should include the promotion of economic diversification

in those of its member States that are currently dependent on the exportation of raw materials. Countries should be encouraged to create "value-adding" green jobs, which in turn create quality jobs through appropriate macroeconomic and industrial policies. We need sustainable enterprises to create sustainable jobs.

As the ILO celebrates its centenary, we need a binding Convention on sustainable development. Only sustainable, decent value-adding activities can guarantee decent jobs and environmental sustainability. That is why the Nigeria Labour Congress and its affiliates are not only marching for decent jobs and decent wages; we are also on the streets to realize the ILO's vision of sustainable development.

To conclude, I once again congratulate the Director-General on his vision and count on all the ILO's tripartite members to make it a reality through their critical and tripartite commitment to, and cooperation with, his centenary reform agenda.

Long live the ILO! Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Ms HOLST (*Representative, Education International*)

Education International represents 30 million teachers and other educators in about 400 organizations across the globe. We are the world's largest Global Union Federation, and the voice of the teaching profession. We promote the interests of employees from early childhood education through to higher education and research. We promote quality education and we promote equity in society.

Education International is satisfied that the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR) is now one of the six policy departments of the ILO, and we understand that further proposals will strengthen the Organization's role and impact in ongoing initiatives involving Global Union Federations and employers.

There is no doubt that a sectoral approach to the ILO's work is effective in bringing decent work closer to workers. Each sector is different, and synergies with other ILO programmes are called for. At the same time, the uniqueness of each sector must be part of finding the best solutions.

Education is one of the largest sectors, and the ILO's sectoral activities on conditions of work and labour rights for teachers concern millions of workers. But education is not only about decent working conditions for teachers. Education is a decent work strategy in itself, and education will be a key post-2015 development goal.

The ILO does important work on education in general, including combating child labour through education, preparing tomorrow's workforce through skills and training policies, promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining for public servants, promoting education rights for indigenous peoples and focusing on specific areas, such as early childhood education. The ILO review should include a strategy to cluster more formally the ILO's education-related work, linking it to the area of critical importance on jobs and skills for youth. A mechanism could be created to allow sectoral Global Union Federations and employers to provide input into such efforts.

Education International is also encouraged by the emphasis that the ILO Director-General has placed on social dialogue in his Report, and by the discussions on collective bargaining in the public services, discussions held in both the Committee on the Ap-

plication of Standards and in the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Dialogue. We hope that this Conference will come out with a renewed commitment by member States to the understanding that fundamental rights, such as freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, rights that lie at the heart of social dialogue, apply to teachers in both the public and private education sector. A well-functioning social dialogue is crucial to decent work, but it is also crucial to achieving quality education for all.

Teachers should be key actors in both designing and implementing educational reform. That will only happen where there is respect and dialogue, and where unions are acknowledged as the voice of teachers.

However, Education International deplores the General Survey's failure to reflect adequately the degradation of public service labour relations and social dialogue mechanisms.

Austerity packages are used to justify the revocation of collective agreements and wage freezes, as well as the increased use of short-term or temporary contracts. These forms of employment weaken the ability of workers to exercise their trade union rights and dissuade them from joining trade unions, by making them fearful of their employer.

Education International invites the ILO to foster policy coherence within the UN agencies so that the IMF and the World Bank respect international labour standards, and so that the staff of financial institutions are trained to respect social dialogue and the values of tripartite relations.

Original Arabic: Mr ARAFA (Government, Lebanon)

On behalf of Mr Jreissati, Minister of Labour of the Lebanese Republic, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Labour of Jordan on his election as President of this current session of the Conference. I would like to express our high appreciation of the exceptional efforts made by the International Labour Organization, represented by its Director-General, in providing an impetus to the exceptional initiatives to support social justice in all parts of the world. I cannot forget to mention the Director of the ILO Office in Beirut, Ms Nada Al-Nashif, and her team, for supporting Lebanon in the reform strategy which we drew up in order to develop our options with respect to labour regulations and social protection, through the elaboration of an integrated structure for the national project on decent work and social protection.

It gives me great pleasure to remark that the three themes of this session relate to such concepts as furthering research on employment policies, and social protection based on demographic changes in the first place, and on the importance of efficient and lasting development for the concept of decent work and for what has been termed as "green jobs", in the second place. Lastly, one has to mention the examination of areas for social dialogue based on a constructive and equal collaboration between both parties to the social contract: employers and workers, under the aegis of the State.

It is worth highlighting that these issues are of paramount importance given the social imbalances we have witnessed in the last decade due to the deterioration of the international financial system. This required, in turn, the restructuring of national, regional and international economies according to a liberal model, which should be carried out, how-

ever, pursuant to the rules of equality and equal opportunity, with a view to securing a decent and honourable living, which leads to a stable society. For poverty leads to radicalism, and savage class differences lead to tensions and wars. It is to be recalled that the economic dimension continues to represent an institutional building block for peace to be attained if we succeed in reconciling quality production, efficient marketing and the protection of the dignity of humanity. For peace is based on safeguarding rights, justice and equality.

Lebanon is paying great attention to the issues of this session, for it is undertaking reforms in the administrative, legislative and services fields, in addition to increasing the cultural awareness of public opinion.

These reforms, which are based on a national philosophy, are also based on the standards laid down by the ILO and the ALO. This is reflected in the establishment of a consultative framework between the different administrations of the Lebanese State, the employers' and workers' groups on the one hand, and on the other hand, with civil society organizations, without ignoring the close collaboration with the UN bodies and the World Bank.

It is within this framework that we continue to deploy efforts to realize reform projects at the sectoral level with respect to developing a vision, which will be completed according to available resources. In this context, we have completed an integrated project for the restructuring of the Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Authority. We have also launched the New Entrants to Work programme for young persons and laid down the foundations of an employment policy, which has been lacking so far in Lebanon. We have finalized the proposed legal amendments, and have carried out a study on the pension and social protection systems. Furthermore, we are in the process of ratifying Convention No. 87. We are currently: formulating draft laws which provide for the work of agricultural workers, and male and female domestic workers; regulating the recruitment agencies; as well as signing bilateral agreements with countries which have their foreign citizens working in Lebanese territory. We are also facilitating the administrative procedures for the work of Palestinian refugees, in addition to formulating a draft decree on the restructuring of the labour inspection sector with a view to improving its work. Currently, we are seriously seeking a mechanism to launch once again the Economic and Social Council, as social dialogue should be widely applied, besides finding the necessary incentives for the conclusion of collective labour contracts between both partners of production.

In this connection, allow me to solicit the sectoral assistance of the ILO with respect to Syrian refugees, especially with respect to developing a vision which will protect Lebanese workers in the types of employment, occupations and handicrafts which are restricted to the Lebanese, away from any racial consideration.

On behalf of Lebanon, and in my capacity as Minister of Labour, I would like to express my profound gratitude to you, to your secretariat, to the ILO Regional Office for Arab States for your support, hoping that Allah will make us succeed for the sake of human dignity, and for the peace and stability of our societies.

It is a great honour for me to be present here at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. The Organization that I represent in my capacity as Secretary-General, the European Confederation of Executives and Managerial Staff (CEC) which is the European association representing managers throughout Europe, has a long tradition of participating in the sessions of the International Labour Conference, through its international branch, the CEC, originally founded in 1951. We have always believed in the importance of international cooperation in the field of social affairs, and we very much favour the opportunity offered by this meeting, as the most relevant arena for such cooperation.

For the CEC, this Conference is an unparalleled forum in which to meet other representatives of civil society together with governments, and to exchange opinions and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the improvement of mutual esteem and understanding among the various components of organized civil society.

The presence of the CEC at this session is even more meaningful this year, as it is dealing with a topic that the CEC has covered extensively, that is, demographic change and its impact on the current social and employment-related features of our societies. The year 2012 was chosen by the European institutions as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, because of growing concern about the effects that demographic trends will have for the people of Europe.

CEC European Managers has commissioned a study aimed at predicting the future availability of managers in some European countries. The results of this study depict a rather gloomy future for the European managerial workforce, as they show that the decrease in the number of available managers will be proportionally higher than the decrease in the available workforce, owing to a shrinking population. The study calls for an immediate reaction from both policy-makers and stakeholders in civil society. Managers are an essential component of the workforce and they play a determining role in helping businesses, and therefore our societies, to overcome the crisis. It is therefore vital for our economies, when they restart the engines, that the leaders they need are ready and available in sufficient numbers.

Managers are ready to bear their share of responsibility, and to make their contribution to a problem that calls for awareness and concerned intervention on the part of all involved stakeholders. For this purpose, the CEC has added some additional insights to the study I have mentioned. It has not simply tried to look into the future, but has also offered concrete solutions and policies which, if they are adopted, can effectively promote a longer, more fruitful and rewarding presence of workers in their jobs. These indications have been gathered into guidelines based on the experience of thousands of affiliates and which represent our position, and offer every involved party some practical suggestions on how to deal with these issues from the bottom, close to where such practical policy indications can be most useful. These suggestions all arise from the need to mainstream age diversity and intergenerational equity in all policies associated with the

workplace. They include organizing mixed-age work teams, arranging modular working space to allow for workers of different age groups to use the same equipment and launching internal mentoring programmes to increase the transfer of knowledge.

By bringing its contribution to the global discussion on ageing workforces, the CEC has demonstrated that managers are on an equal footing with all the other representatives of social forces, are fully integrated into the societies in which they live and operate, and deserve the same level of consideration and acknowledgement of their representativeness from both governments and other social partners, because the challenges that await us demand the commitment of all economic forces.

Original Spanish: Mr ANRO (Representative, Confederation of Workers of the Universities of the Americas)

It is a great honour for me to be back again with a chance to take the floor on behalf of the Confederation of Workers of the Universities of the Americas (CONTUA), the Confederation which brings together 23 trade union organizations in 19 different Latin American countries.

The work at the Conference this year has been very important for our sector, the public sector. Now, more than 30 years since the approval of Convention No. 151 and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), the analysis by the Committee of Experts and the presentations by the representative of the Workers' group in the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Coordinating Secretary of CONTUA, Marcelo Di Stefano, gave us an overview of the high level of non-compliance by the majority of governments in our region who continue to deny the rights of civil service workers.

In Latin America, we find ourselves at a particular juncture, when governments supporting progressive policies in line with the demands of the trade union movement exist alongside others of a markedly neoliberal stamp, which promote the downgrading of the rights of civil servants and the privatization of public services.

Among those governments adopting neoliberal positions, we might mention this year the current situation in Peru, where there have been general strikes and demands presented by civil servants, headed among others by our affiliate, the Federation of University Workers of Peru (FENTUP).

In Mexico, the Government has pushed through a new federal labour law which aims to reduce services and limit the scope of collective agreements.

In Ecuador, the legal system does not defend the workers and is allowing the State to force civil servants to sign letters of resignation as if on a voluntary basis, which is a form of dismissal imposed by the State.

In Colombia, regrettably, the fundamental rights of trade union leaders continue to be violated. Just in the last few weeks, leaders of our trade union sector had to leave their towns within 48 hours, under threat of being faced with paramilitary groups.

As for Costa Rica, its President was here in 2012 and she said she was going to endorse the labour reform process, at which the whole Conference applauded. The law was finally approved, but she rejected two of its articles, replacing them by a text which prohibits the right to strike in the public sector, and especially in the universities.

In Panama, the situation where public sector unions are not recognized continues unchanged. The Government has not met its commitments to change, which were expressed in this very room in 2012 in order to pacify the trade unionists, all of us having left the room when President Martinelli spoke. Through Damian Castillo, General Secretary of the Association of Employees of the University of Panama (ASEUPA) we have condemned the persistent refusal of the Government of Panama to comply with Convention No. 87 and recognize the trade unions.

In Brazil, these are times of struggle for our affiliate, the Federation of Unions of Brazilian Universities Workers (FASUBRA) whose members went on strike last year and have launched public awareness campaigns, working intensively with the public on the ground and in the trade union movement to combat the privatization of the university hospitals.

In Guatemala, threats, violence and the disappearance of union leaders and social campaigners continue to increase. We call upon the international community and the ILO to take rapid measures to guarantee the safety and lives of the trade union leaders in Guatemala.

In Uruguay, another year has gone by without any collective bargaining in the universities. The workers belonging to our affiliates, the Federal Staff Union of the State University (AFFUR) and the Union of Workers for Clinicas Hospital (UTHC), have pressed their claims within social dialogue and at street level.

In the Dominican Republic, the Government is cutting back on spending, and intimidating the universities into a process of privatization, while reducing the social security budget for the workers. Our trade union there, the Association of Employees of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (ASODEMU), whose President Reynaldo Aybar is here with us, has been fighting for an increase in the budget and to preserve the gains made by the workers of the university.

This overview is very worrying indeed, and in spite of all this, trade unionists in the universities are continuing to fight, expanding our membership and maximizing our capacity for struggle. We look to the ILO for alternative proposals and for alliances that will enable us to defend international labour rights, but mainly to our own people, the workers for whom we are here to put their voice across, a voice that demands to be heard, a song of hope and a battle cry. The ILO must listen to the workers and offer them its support, because this is the only way for it to fulfil its historic mandate of ensuring social justice in order to guarantee peace in the world.

Finally, as an Argentinian, I would like to say that we oppose any form of colonialism in the world, and we lay claim to our rights over the Malvinas Islands.

Mr FOLLO (*Worker, Ethiopia*)

First of all, I would like to express my grateful thanks on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian workers organized under the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), and for having this opportunity to make a speech at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference which, for the last 100 years, has provided a grand rendezvous for key social partners from all corners of the world.

As is the case for all trade union organizations, the CETU is functioning in an ever-changing domestic situation, which is part and parcel of an international system where globalization is becoming a defining feature. My country, Ethiopia, is undergoing societal transformation. The Government is investing billions of dollars in the Ethiopian economy, which is one of the fastest growing economies, having registered double-digit growth over the last five consecutive years. To sustain this accelerated growth, the Ethiopian Government pays due attention to the enhancement of productivity in each and every sector of the economy. In the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of the economy, the Government is trying hard to raise productivity by scaling up the best practices achieved by some model farmers. The incumbent administration distributes millions of tons of fertilizer and seed to raise the productivity of agricultural products per hectare. The Government has also established institutions that can provide overall support for public and private industries in order to achieve a higher degree of productivity and build on the capacity of domestic industries to compete in the global market. Consequently, a significant improvement has been witnessed in textile and leather production, among others, that has considerably raised the competitiveness of domestic leather and textile industries.

Currently, Ethiopia is creating many jobs as a result of the nation's endeavour to implement home-grown and selectively adopted policies and strategies backed by political commitment. The comprehensive five-year Growth and Transformation Plan can be cited as a good example in this respect.

The Ethiopian Government has introduced social protection schemes that are of huge importance for the Ethiopian working community. This social security aims to extend the pension scheme to private companies. The other newly introduced social security scheme is known as the Social Health Insurance Scheme. The objective of the Social Health Insurance Proclamation, which will come into effect in July 2013, is to establish health insurance for all employees of public and private companies. Our Confederation has taken an active part in initiating and designing the new social health insurance. The Federal Social Health Insurance Agency, which is mandated to implement the Proclamation, has done a commendable job in bringing a great deal of workers under social health insurance. In addition, the CETU, in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders, has been implementing a series of projects with the goal of combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the workplace.

One of last year's important accomplishments was the unionization of about 250 basic trade unions across the country. The success we achieved in this regard resulted from the concerted efforts of our confederation, in collaboration with our partners and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and its African affiliate, ITUC-Africa, among others. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to our partners for their unreserved support over the many months of our efforts to unionize Ethiopian workers, which coincided with CETU's 50th anniversary. I am confident that the support we received from our partners in our unionization campaign will also continue in the years to come.

Finally, I would like to thank the ILO subregional and regional offices and headquarters for their unre-served support to strengthen Ethiopian workers.

Original Arabic: Ms SHARIF (Worker, Libya)

I am speaking on behalf of the National Confed-eration of Workers of Libya, which was established after the 17th of February Revolution 2011, which was a revolution of the Libyan people against dicta-torship and the rule of tyrants who violated national laws and international covenants. For four decades, our people suffered oppression, tyranny and vio-lence. Prisons were full of honourable people and fighters who refused injustice and tyranny. Many of them, who were unarmed, were killed. Lives were lost, scaffolds were set up and women became wid-owed. This continued until it was time for the peo-ple to stage a real revolution against this injustice, by confronting the armed militias of the tyrant sys-tem with brazen courage.

Today, we enjoy freedom; a freedom which was paid for with the sacrifice of thousands of revolu-tionaries who were martyrs on the battlefields, and now we exercise democracy.

Today, we can see the workers in our country, who rose against the so-called the Federation of Producers, which was loyal to the former regime.

Today, we can see the workers of Libya who are fulfilling their role through their federation, the Na-tional Confederation of Workers of Libya, be they women, men or young persons, in democracy and independence.

The Ministry of Labour and Capacity Building had a positive attitude towards us, as we partici-pated for the first time in the formulation of a draft new Labour Code for Libya as well as a law on trade union freedoms, which will be approved by the General National Conference, which was elected by the free Libyan people.

In spite of the problems of persons who lost their jobs and of persons who are seeking jobs, which we inherited from the former regime, the Ministry of Labour and Capacity Building is working on the identification and classification of such persons, and the organization of training and rehabilitation courses both inside and outside Libya, and subse-quently their employment. Nowadays, workers in Libya enjoy their freedom in full. There are no red lines to stop them from carrying out a sit-in or from going on strike to defend their interests.

It seemed that certain values were going to end, namely those of freedom, justice, equal opportunity and equal society, but it was the will of the workers which resisted.

Trade union organizations will continue to sup-port such rights through their contribution to the formulation of labour regulations with the Ministry of Labour and Capacity Building, which will take into account the need for freedom of union repre-sentation, and social justice, as well as the main rights and principles at work.

We are now at a historical crossroads, as wit-nessed by the realities in the Arab world, and are experiencing an extremely difficult situation at the international level. We are undergoing a global eco-nomic and financial crisis. As you may know, Libya is still in conflict with the remnants of the former regime, and with the feeble-minded, and those who wish us harm abroad.

In the name of moral principles and values, and in the name of friendship, fraternity and the coura-

geous positions which stimulated us to call for dig-nity and freedom, I call on all the brothers and sis-ters and friends who stood by our side, and who helped the Libyan people, be they workers, peas-ants, students or others, to continue their support. I call on any person who has suffered the bitterness of oppression and tyranny, as well as any person who breathed and enjoyed the breeze of democracy, to stand by our people and our workers so that we can rise again with your help, so as to reach our ob-jectives and welfare.

We cannot forget our cause, the cause of all Ar-abs: Palestine ... our beloved Palestine. We salute the Palestinian champions for their struggle for the sake of freedom and their usurped land. We declare our support for the beloved Palestinian people and workers.

Long live the unity of the working class!

Original Lao: Mr OUNLASY (Worker, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

On behalf of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, I would like to express our appreciation of the Re-port of the Director-General to the Conference. The Report contains an objective expression of the Or-ganization's efforts to promote the principles of so-cial justice within the framework of ILO standards, with a focus on the development of legislation on labour management.

Regarding social policy of current interest, when-ever the Lao Federation of Trade Unions has ex-pressed concern and raised issues of vital impor-tance for the protection and promotion of social rights and interests, the Lao trade unions have al-ways cooperated with the other actors involved, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, with a view to developing policies to protect and promote justice for the benefit of all people in soci-ety. The Lao Federation of Trade Unions recog-nized the contents of the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization as a guideline for the development of trade union work and de-tailed activities, and as a reference for the imple-mentation of policies on the ground.

Regarding the policy on providing jobs for all, the Lao trade unions have always cooperated with other sectors to provide jobs, as this is a priority of the Government's economic development plan in the short and long term. In the Lao People's Democ-ratic Republic, we have also been involved in draft-ing and finalizing legislation on the promotion and development of labour skills throughout the coun-try.

As regards social protection, the Lao trade unions were involved in drafting legislation on a social se-curity scheme to establish a standard of social pro-tection for all.

In the promotion of social negotiations, we have recognized that collective bargaining agreements are of vital importance in protecting the rights and interests of all parties. The Lao trade unions have participated in the tripartite system, involving the Government, workers and employers, to negotiate and discuss issues relating to labour, unionization and effective policy implementation, for example, on the creation of jobs, on the promotion of good labour relations and on the creation of a labour in-spection system. At the same time, we have been working on policies on minimum wage and working conditions, among others.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the policies and strategies of the ILO are guidelines for national legislation, and policies on social protection and labour management.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ILO and the international trade union organizations for their assistance, provision of experience and financial support to the Lao Federation of Trade Unions. We hope that their technical assistance and cooperation will continue in the future.

We wish you all a fruitful and successful Conference.

Original Arabic: Mr ESHRAH (Employer, Egypt)

We are meeting today at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference of a United Nations agency that differs from all the others because it gathers together the tripartite partners.

I would like to start by congratulating the Minister of Labour of Jordan on his election to the office of President of this session of the Conference, as well as the Vice-Presidents. I also congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as Director-General.

The items on the agendas of the technical committees are very interesting, especially those of the Committee on the New Demographic Context and the Committee on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs.

I am speaking on behalf of the Egyptian Employers and of employers' organizations representing some 5 million employers in every domain and activity and of every legal status.

In the time available to me, I will restrict myself to one agenda item, the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards. This Committee insists on including my country in the short- and long-lists of countries that do not comply with Convention No. 87, despite the fact that Egypt places no restrictions on freedom of association or on the right to organize. This is attested to by the fact that, in addition to the General Confederation of Trade Unions, five other trade union confederations have been established in the past 20 years and altogether we have some 3,000 trade unions and works committees. Setting up a federation has been facilitated to such an extent that we even have one that consists of just one general trade union and three works committees, with a total membership of fewer than 200 workers. In fact, general trade unions and works committees are deemed to have been constituted through mere notification, without any need for approval by the Ministry.

As regards Convention No. 87, there are three kinds of countries. First, there are those with trade unions and freedom of association that have not ratified Convention No. 87 because they already offer their workers sufficient advantages and freedoms – a somewhat condescending approach.

Second, there are those that have no trade unions and so have not ratified the Convention because their demographic composition and large number of foreign workers puts them in a separate category. These countries do not want trade unions that are dominated by non-nationals who might thus interfere in the country's internal affairs.

Third, there are countries that have ratified the Convention and have trade unions of workers who are free to exercise their trade union rights. However, some countries in this group come up against a politicized environment in which they are subject to double standards, and find themselves on the short-

list or the long-list. Despite the existence of six workers' federations, as I have just mentioned, despite the fact that workers can exercise their freedom of association and trade union rights without any kind of restrictions, despite the measures that the country has adopted, despite its positive response to the Committee's reports and despite its full compliance with the Convention, Egypt has time and again been unjustly listed because of the way the Committee functions. The point I want to make here is that this Committee and its practices mar the ILO's otherwise respectable reputation and undermine its credibility.

If this situation continues, I shall have no option but to ask my Government to suspend its adherence to the Convention, pending its denunciation in due course in accordance with its provisions.

The Egyptian delegation has over 40 members, more than half of which (about 30) are Workers. Is there a single country – big or small – present at this Conference whose delegation has that many Worker members?

Lastly, I would like to remind you all that there is still one country whose territory is under occupation and whose citizens and workers suffer from the worst forms of repression and injustice. Sad to say, there are at this Conference some representatives of governments that aid or abet that injustice, that occupation, while the people who try to liberate and repossess their own land from the colonizing power are treated as terrorists. The territory and people I refer to are the Palestinian territory and the Palestinian people.

I express here my love, esteem and respect for those who defend the law, justice and freedom.

*Original Portuguese: Mr ASCENÇÃO SILVA
(Worker, Cape Verde)*

I should like to begin by congratulating the President of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on his election and wish him every success in leading us in our work. I should also like to congratulate the new ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, not only on his election to this high office, but also on the excellent Report that he has presented to the Conference, *Towards the ILO's centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*.

My country, the Republic of Cape Verde, has made considerable progress in recent years in many different spheres, and this has been confirmed by a number of reputed international institutions and organizations. The Human Development Index, according to the *Human Development Report 2013* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), rose from 0.532 in 2011 to 0.586 in 2012, putting Cape Verde above the average in sub-Saharan Africa. The GDP per capita figure also increased, from US\$3,508 in 2011 to US\$3,609 in 2012. Cape Verde occupies first place in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and second place among the countries of the African continent as regards freedom of the press and democracy in Africa, respectively.

Despite the welcome progress described above, there are other issues in our country which cannot be ignored. Poverty remains widespread, affecting 26.6 per cent of the population, and unemployment increased from 12.2 per cent in 2011 to 16.8 per cent in 2012, young people being the worst affected,

with an unemployment rate for the 15–25 age group as high as 32.1 per cent.

Unemployment, and in particular youth unemployment, is without doubt the most serious social problem and the biggest challenge facing Cape Verde in the short and medium term. The economic, financial and social crisis, which is affecting the whole world and Europe in particular, is starting to have a serious impact in Cape Verde.

However, despite the unfavourable economic situation, in November last year the social partners and the Government signed a strategic cooperation agreement which will be in force until the end of the 2011–16 legislative period. This is a very important instrument for the workers of Cape Verde. It fixes a national minimum wage, which has been a long-standing demand of our confederation, the National Workers' Union of Cape Verde – Trade Union Confederation (UNTC–CS), and will come into force in January 2014 in conjunction with the state budget for that year.

It was also agreed that within a year from November 2012, the date when the agreement was signed, the social partners (trade unions and employers) will be represented on the Board of Administration of the National Social Security Institute (INPS). This has also been a long-standing demand of the UNTC–CS and an issue that has often been discussed at the Conference. In addition, a new plan was adopted concerning posts, careers and salaries for public administration workers in Cape Verde. This has resulted in a pay rise for civil servants in the general category of approximately 3 per cent on average, made retroactive to January 2012.

Social dialogue is now an undeniable reality in my country, as is the quest for decent work and the fight against child labour. Freedom of association and the right to strike are fundamental workers' rights which are established in our Constitution. However, as regards the actual exercise of the right to strike, there is a huge gulf between law and practice. The facts show that in practice it has been difficult, if not impossible, for Cape Verdean workers to conduct a successful strike.

The recommendations of the Committee on Freedom of Association urging the Government to change the parts of the labour law relating to minimum services, which give rise to most of the disputes, have not had any impact so far. The Government repeatedly has recourse to the requisitioning of civilian labour when notice of strike action is given in any sector considered to be essential.

We hope that the ILO mission which went to Cape Verde in October 2012, with a view to assessing the situation on the ground, can contribute towards resolving this issue as soon as possible. It should be noted that the mission, after hearing the views of all parties, concluded in its report that the exercise in practice of the right to strike in essential sectors in Cape Verde is clearly affected by the Government's almost systematic use of the formidable weapon of requisitioning civilian labour.

It is a well-known fact that social security is a human right and that international labour standards are the main source of support for countries in implementing their social security systems.

Of the eight Conventions and Recommendations relating to social security, Convention No. 102 is the most important one but it has not yet been ratified by Cape Verde.

We therefore support the efforts made by the Government towards ratification, and we welcome the technical support which has been provided by the ILO with a view to achieving this objective. We also recognize the ILO's technical support to the Government and social partners in our country in connection with collective bargaining. In the current climate of crisis, collective bargaining can, and should, be one of the prime instruments of social dialogue aimed at finding solutions to the serious problems, including unemployment, which the workers are facing.

Original Spanish: Mr SNEAD (Worker, Paraguay)

I represent the United Confederation of Workers of Paraguay (CUT), an organization representing more than 200,000 workers of Paraguay – professionals, manual workers, employees and teachers.

I will begin my statement to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference by expressing our concern at the increasing violations of the fundamental rights of workers in the past few years in Paraguay. Briefly, I would like to say that, in recent years, especially at the beginning of the presidential term in the year 2008, there were layoffs of public sector workers regardless of their seniority, ability or skills. Many labour laws have been violated, such as stability of employment and trade union membership, and they have ridden roughshod over the acquired rights of workers, which has weakened and decimated the trade union movement, especially in the public sector.

Fundamental rights, such as respect for collective agreements and the right to strike, have been violated. There has been an increase in the hours worked by public servants, ignoring acquired rights. The Government has even refused to engage in dialogue or negotiate with the workers. Settling union disputes in court has been used as a way of interfering in trade union affairs and has led to the disappearance of certain trade unions, especially in the major refrigerated transport companies and others in the transport sector. This is a clear violation of the right to freedom of association. The police are still being used to put down demonstrations by workers. In May, court action resulted in the pay of bus drivers being cut, and we are sure that this will be a source of conflict and widespread protest.

We submitted a complaint to the ILO about two years ago about the clear violation of collective bargaining committed by Itaipú Binacional, one of the biggest hydroelectric companies in the world. The action against its Paraguayan workers not only violated the collective agreement on working conditions, but also resulted in laying off workers in the subcontracting companies, which gave in to the strike against the Itaipú Binacional company.

We submitted documents with evidence of our complaint, but the ILO has not yet reacted. We hope for a prompt ruling and appropriate sanctions, because we think that a company which boasts that it is one of the biggest electric power companies in the world should not violate the fundamental rights of its workers under the protective mantle of the government of the day.

The increase in the numbers of informal workers without social protection, without pension rights, without fixed salaries and without any prospects is obviously the fault of the Government's employment policy. Today, informal workers are in the majority in our country.

Furthermore, as a so-called solution, the Government has issued laws on *maquilas* [export processing zones], which only result in workers losing their rights. They have adopted a so-called law of the first job, which instead of doing as it says it should, guaranteeing first jobs, is being used to enslave workers with salaries below the minimum wage, without social security and without any rights to promotion. We have tried to get the Government to be more consistent on wages and pay reviews, since in our country the minimum wage is used in many companies as the ceiling wage, and many of them do not even pay the minimum wage. We have always found obstacles in trying to discuss and make proposals on behalf of the workers. We hope that the new Government, which is going to take office in August this year, will be able to grasp that vocational training, medical insurance, pensions and decent pay are the bedrock of workers' rights, and will be able to put an end to the uncertainty that prevailed under previous governments, and actually create a future of decent work. Otherwise, we will have no hesitation in continuing to condemn all these violations of workers' fundamental rights. But we also understand that not everything is negative.

I would like to mention that after President Fernando Lugo left office, through our confederations, workers have been able to participate more in issues affecting workers, and relationships have improved, thereby reducing the amount of confrontation and putting us on the path to industrial peace with the mediation of the Ministry of Justice and Labour.

We realize that because Mr Federico Franco has not been President for very long, he has not been able to do much yet, but one of the drawbacks of his time in office is that, in the majority of public institutions, priority has been given to political groupings close to the Government when appointing people to ministries and other organs of the executive.

This is a difficult time for workers of the world, with the economic crisis and political colonialism continuing to put pressure on the working classes. We call for a fairer economy, with decent wages and benefits for all the workers of our country. We decided to give the Conference a picture of our main concerns in the area of trade union rights, because we believe the ILO should be a forum for discussing compliance with its standards and their effectiveness, and should be a leading body on the subject. It should make sure that the fundamental precepts of its Conventions are faithfully complied with, and it should put pressure on governments to respect them whenever attempts are made to violate workers' rights.

In the CUT, our strength is in the unity and solidarity we rely on to defend our fundamental rights, and we hope we can count on the ILO to achieve our goal.

Original Spanish: Ms PADILLA HERRERA (Representative, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing)

My name is Nohra Padilla. I am a recycler. Since I was 8 years old, I have been making a living from recovering things I find in rubbish – the third generation of my family to do so.

There are more than 24 million recyclers like me in the world, young people, women, old people, migrants. We are the product of the economic and social crisis, of technological and industrial developments that went wrong. We work in the recycling and management of rubbish – recuperating, collect-

ing, transporting and cleaning rubbish which every day is turned into millions of tons of raw materials for the production of mass-consumption goods.

We are thus at the very beginning of the production chain for recyclable raw materials, carrying out 90 per cent of the work, generally without any recognition whatsoever, which leaves us in a situation of extreme poverty. Without our contribution, all these raw materials would have to be buried, incinerated or left in open-sky dumps or in water that people need to live.

There are more than half a million recyclers on the five continents, organized in various forms of association where there are no bosses and no employees, just workmates. For more than 30 years we have been creating national and continental organizations, and recently we have been moving steadily towards the establishment of a global force. We are also trying to join forces with other workers in this value chain, which provides thousands and thousands of jobs across the world, and with them we plan to defend our legitimate rights.

Recyclers without access to rubbish are like fish without water or farmers with no land. We cannot survive unless we can be sure that the recyclable materials remain in our possession rather than fall into the hands of the capitalist rubbish-management system, which may, for example, incinerate the very source of our livelihood. The fight goes on because, as our colleague Sharan Burrow pointed out so well, the forces that are out to deprive us of our work are corporations that place business above human beings.

Without recyclers, the human race cannot save energy, water, trees, minerals and space for the final disposal of rubbish. While this is one of the sectors which, by its very nature, has the most significant and the most positive social, economic and environmental implications for sustainable development, the people who work in the sector are condemned to the most shameful poverty and working conditions.

As the Director-General states in his Report, the international community has moved beyond the false choice between jobs and protecting the planet. In that sense, we recyclers are a perfect example of the creation of self-employment, where simply by recovering paper and cardboard, a day's work can save a tree and millions of litres of water.

The discussions in the Committee on Sustainable Development will no doubt be a step forward in the achievement of the ILO's commitment to meeting our sector's demands that green jobs be properly recognized, that new green jobs be created and that decent work be guaranteed for all.

For these reasons, as the spokespersons of our global labour force in the Committee on Sustainable Development, we are calling for recognition of our status as workers, not employees, first, for practical recognition of the fact that recyclers have, for eight decades, contributed substantially to sustainable development. Second, we demand that the dreadful conditions under which recyclers currently work be replaced by decent jobs in their own cooperatives or organizations. Third, we call for improvements in social technologies that can combat greenhouse gas emissions, conserve raw materials and energy, and mitigate the effects of climate change. Fourth, we seek funding for the infrastructure that governments and the green sector need to improve working conditions and grant workers in the sector due recogni-

tion. Fifth, we call on governments to promote justice in the sector in practice, so that its workers are properly paid as public waste disposal workers, entitled to environmental benefits and a just price for the raw materials they recuperate. Lastly, we call for a just transition for recyclers in every country, so that they benefit from a social protection floor

and occupational safety and health, and are directly involved in the relevant decisions.

To conclude, we would like to thank our brothers and sisters who have been fighting with us to guarantee social and economic justice in the fight against the exploitation of workers.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.35 p.m.)

Eighth sitting

Friday, 14 June 2013, 10.05 a.m.

President: Ms Familia

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

Original Russian: Mr SHAYKHOV (Employer, Uzbekistan)

Ever since the advent of independence, Uzbekistan has considered that the country's general development is inextricably linked to economic, environmental and social development. It has always been clear to us that environmental and social issues are closely connected, since economic growth, job creation and general income levels all very much depend on the use made of the country's natural resources and environment.

Today, Uzbekistan is working towards introducing an economic system aimed at mitigating environmental risks and making effective, rational use of natural resources. An overall gradual transition to a green economy is under way.

In the area of renewable energy, with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, a feasibility study is under way regarding the construction of the first solar photovoltaic power station in the region, with a capacity of 100 megawatts. The aim is to reduce the proportion of fossil fuels in total energy production to 50 per cent by 2050, thanks to the development of non-traditional renewable energy sources. In addition, the introduction of renewables should make for the creation of 175,000 jobs by 2020, and 270,000 jobs by 2050.

In the community housing sector, a national rural development programme for the construction of housing, in particular "solar houses" in rural areas, is under way. Although construction costs for the latter are 8 per cent higher than for dwellings with a conventional heating system, solar houses are able to store solar heat because of their design and the passive solar heating system, and use eight to ten times less energy than traditional buildings. Above all, these measures will lead to the creation of new jobs, and the reconstruction of all community housing by 2050 is expected to generate a further 400,000 jobs.

In the transport sector, the transition to the use of clean fuels (especially liquefied gas and synthetic fuels) is continuing and by 2050 all automobiles throughout the country are expected to have changed over to clean fuels. Work in this sphere involves close cooperation between the public and private sectors and the social partners, in line with a decision adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Furthermore, in the context of a public-private partnership, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Federation of Trade Unions and the Government of Uzbekistan are formulating and implementing economic and social development programmes, especially in the area of alternative energy sources.

Thanks to the participation of the social partners through the "Forum of socially responsible Uzbek citizens", a non-governmental organization (NGO), a committee of experts on green economy development issues has been set up. The work of the committee, in which all interested organizations take part, especially trade unions and employers' groups, consists not only in expanding cooperation between the various partners in order to achieve common goals but also in making recommendations to the Government in order to create an environment favourable to the creation of green jobs through development of the green economy.

The experience of other ILO member States in this field is of interest to us and we are ready and willing to share our own experience.

Original French: Mr KPOKOLO (Minister for the Public Service, Labour, Employment and Social Security, Central African Republic)

Allow me, like other distinguished speakers before me, to congratulate you, Director-General, on your election to the head of our Organization, and particularly for the relevance and quality of your Report. I would also like to congratulate the President of the Conference and the Officers of the Conference on their election.

It is an honour for me to speak from this podium on behalf of His Excellency Nicolas Tiangaye, Prime Minister, Head of our transitional Government, and also of His Excellency Michel Djotodia Am Nondokro, President of the Republic, Head of State, who have spared no effort to restore security and social peace. The situation in my country is catastrophic because of constant upheavals over recent decades which have disrupted the economy and caused unemployment, the dislocation of families, and the internal and external displacement of many of our citizens.

Our country has become a stage for vandalism and attacks of all sorts by uncontrollable armed elements and bandits of every kind. Our administration is completely paralysed following the destruction of its buildings and the looting and sacking of offices, documents and office equipment. It needs rehabilitation and modernization to allow its offi-

cials to enjoy decent working conditions and improve their productivity.

The basic economic infrastructure for both national and foreign businesses has been destroyed, and this has had negative repercussions such as unemployment, staff cuts, bankruptcies and widespread fraud. The situation is disastrous and has had dramatic consequences for health, education and food security.

Given the extent of the disaster, the Government has asked its various partners for exceptional and urgent aid to cover its financial needs and to create the conditions for stability.

I would like here to pay tribute to the efforts of the international community, particularly the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), France and the United Nations, which all came spontaneously to the aid of our country in these difficult times in our history.

The Government, along with those who have been affected, is hoping to take stock of the infrastructure that has been destroyed, of the people who have been displaced so that they can return, and of the priority measures to be adopted to restore basic social services, improve living conditions and revive income-generating activities.

This is all part of a vast programme requiring the effective support of the international community and of potential strategic bilateral and multilateral organizations in mobilizing material and financial resources.

The world of today is facing rising inequality, unemployment, precarious employment and social unrest.

The social welfare situation in many countries, including my own, is steadily deteriorating, and as it does so many segments of the population are impoverished.

It is essential that we succeed in some of our most urgent initiatives, such as the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for the Central African Republic, the drafting, adoption and implementation of a policy document on employment and training so as to eliminate poverty and bring youth unemployment under control, the adoption and implementation of a social security policy document, and the establishment of a fund for promoting employment, creating enterprises and supporting income-generating activities.

Despite the prevailing situation, social dialogue and tripartism are still the form of governance that is most conducive to social justice and decent work for the authorities of the Central African Republic, where it has always been looked upon as one of the mainstays of our search for security and social peace.

Before I conclude, I would like to emphasize our concerns regarding employment and social protection, which we can only hope to allay within the framework of technical cooperation and participation with the ILO and its subregional offices.

I would therefore like to thank you all and to wish you every success in our work.

Long live the ILO! Long live international cooperation! Long live solidarity among peoples!

Mr ISKANDAR (*Minister of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia*)

Let me congratulate His Excellency, Professor Nidal Katamine, Minister of Labour and Transport

of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on his election as the President of the Conference this year. I appreciate Mr Guy Ryder's efforts in the ILO reform process since last year, and also the proposed Programme and Budget for 2014–15. I hope such measures will enable the Office to deliver to its constituents.

The new demographic context has significant implications for employment and social protection, both in countries with a growing ageing population and in those with a booming young population. Appropriate policies must be developed to tackle this challenge, particularly by increased job opportunities, which would benefit all population groups. Intensive consultation among the various stakeholders is a must when formulating policies. It is important to ensure that policies provide a balance, including both older workers and the working-age population. We also need to take into account those making a living in an informal economy, as they are particularly vulnerable to decent work deficits.

Our Government prioritizes social dialogue as an important mechanism to address labour issues at international, national, regional and sectoral levels. We have ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). We also have a National Tripartite Forum, a Tripartite National Council on Occupational Safety and Health, a Tripartite National Social Security Forum and tripartite wage councils to promote and strengthen social dialogue on labour matters. We are encouraging a greater role for bipartite cooperation in facing challenges in the workplace. We provide continued support to social dialogue mechanisms to achieve just, amicable, acceptable, sustainable and win-win solutions between parties.

Apart from dialogue, we hold the view that labour inspection is also crucial in enforcing labour norms and standards, as well as the implementation of labour-related regulations. However, we realize that social dialogue and labour inspection in the informal economy are still a challenge, and need continuous promotional measures.

We are also equally committed to the promotion of decent work and to achieving decent work for all. The inclusion of labour and environmental clauses in free trade and investment agreements shows our commitment to the sustainable development dimension of globalization.

Alongside decent work, we recognize the importance of an environmentally sustainable economy by implementing green jobs. Indonesia is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Indonesia has taken part in the ILO Green Jobs Initiative, including the Green Jobs in Asia Project. Various green jobs pilot projects, including in tourism, have also been launched in several cities in Indonesia.

As one of the co-Chairs of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, our President attaches the utmost importance to the creation of productive and decent work, and social protection for all, in order to eradicate poverty in all its forms, and to achieve sustainable growth with equity. The report of the High-Level Panel outlines 12 illustrative goals of the agenda, including job creation, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth. It also sets targets and indicators, which include increasing the number of good and decent jobs and livelihoods. We hope the report of the High-Level Panel will serve as a basis for

United Nations (UN) member States when negotiating a post-2015 development agenda in the near future.

Finally, we appreciate the ILO's engagement in Indonesia, and hope the Organization will play a more vital role in addressing major challenges in the world of work, particularly as it approaches its centenary.

Original French: Ms SABO (Minister for the Public Service and Labour, Niger)

First of all, on behalf of the delegation of Niger and on my own behalf, I would like to join previous speakers in extending our most sincere congratulations to the President on his election to preside over this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to offer thanks and congratulations to the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Guy Ryder, for his first Report to the Conference, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. In this Report, he outlines his vision for meeting the many challenges facing workers, businesses and governments throughout the world.

I would like to highlight the fact that, despite the demographic phenomenon that is heightening economic and social inequalities in Africa, many States on our continent, including ours, are busy preparing the way for a sustainable recovery. That is why we in Niger agree entirely with the Director-General's message, share his analysis and reiterate our commitment to the fulfilment of his mandate.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to Mr Gilles de Robien, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, for his thorough report and for the professionalism he displays in his office.

The main issues being discussed at this 102nd Session, namely employment, growth, social progress, domestic work by children, employment and social protection in an ageing world, the strengthening of social dialogue between governments, workers and employers, and the promotion of decent work and green jobs, are real challenges, both for the ILO and for the world as a whole.

The Director-General's insightful Report to this 102nd Session eloquently outlines the real challenges facing our Organization today.

It is up to our governments, employers and workers – each group in its appointed role – to respond to the Director-General's appeal by formulating clear and consistent guidelines which, within the context of the reforms that we have already embarked upon, can pave the way for a new era of social democracy in which, more than ever, tripartism and social dialogue serve as the model of governance that is most conducive to social justice, healthy labour relations and decent work.

I draw your particular attention to the seven initiatives for a strategic response to the crisis outlined in the Director-General's Report to the Conference.

The initiatives concern the governance of the ILO in the process of reform and change that we have begun, the supervisory system for ILO standards, environmental sustainability, increased engagement of enterprises, the eradication of poverty, women at work and the very future of work.

Following our in-depth analysis of these initiatives, we have concluded that they are commendably consistent with the ILO's commitments under

the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

Niger therefore reiterates, through me, its support of the Organization's efforts to meet these global challenges.

I would like to say a few words about a number of steps taken in my country that bear witness to the progress made within the framework of the Decent Work Agenda.

Niger has formulated an Economic and Social Plan for 2012–15 that is based on a medium-term view of our economic and social development and sectoral strategies, including the “Nigériens Nourish Nigériens” programme, which is the fifth objective of our DWCP. To finance the programme, we organized a round table in Paris in November 2012, with the support of the United Nations system, which came up with over 100 per cent of the funding needed for the priority action plan, whose cost was estimated at US\$4.7 billion.

At the sectoral level, and as part of the implementation of Niger's DWCP, my ministerial department organized social dialogue capacity-building activities for the members of the National Social Dialogue and Labour Inspection Commission, as well as the dissemination of the results of our country profile. As to social protection, we have, *inter alia*, begun to expand social protection with the collaboration of the ILO.

It would be remiss of me to conclude without urging the ILO to continue its active cooperation with the international financial institutions and other UN organizations to ensure policy convergence. I must also emphasize my country's desire to cooperate more actively with the Organization in the interest of the effective implementation of its DWCP.

Long live international cooperation!

Original Chinese: Mr HUANG (Employer, China)

Allow me to begin by congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election at this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. Under their guidance, and with the support of the tripartite constituents, I am sure the Conference will be entirely successful.

Since its founding 94 years ago, the International Labour Conference has observed the principle of tripartism and has cooperated closely with the governments, trade unions and employers' organizations of member States in pursuing the strategic objectives of employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights at work. This makes the ILO, increasingly, the centre of expertise in the world of work and the provider of quality policy analysis and services. The ILO has played a critical role in promoting social justice and the Decent Work Agenda.

The Director-General's Report to this Conference, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, is realistic and pragmatic, both in the summary it contains of the ILO constituents' collaboration over the past years and in its description of the criticisms and challenges currently facing the Organization.

The Report proposes a number of ILO initiatives leading up to its centenary and responds energetically to the tripartite constituents' call for reform. It emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the ILO and enterprises in member States. The China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) appreciates and supports this Report.

As the largest developing country in the world, China has made amazing advances in its economic development and social progress since it began reforming and opening up over 30 years ago. Enterprises under different forms of ownership have made great strides, and today they number 11.42 million companies employing 321 million workers.

As an important employers' organization in China, one of the CEC's primary tasks is to serve enterprises and entrepreneurs, promote business environment policies and build harmonious industrial relations.

The CEC has engaged in various activities to build harmonious industrial relations, promote labour laws and work contracts, improve machinery for the resolution of labour disputes, promote equality for migrant workers, protect the rights and interests of enterprises and entrepreneurs, encourage enterprises to develop faster, create better job opportunities, provide decent jobs, and ensure the joint development of workers and employers.

Since 2009, we have helped Chinese enterprises to overcome the repercussions of the global financial crisis. With the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, we have issued a joint set of guidelines on how to cope with the current economic situation and maintain stable industrial relations.

The strategy we propose focuses on protection of the enterprise, security of employment and maintenance of stability, and plays an important and positive role in promoting enterprises and job creation, and achieving the objective of decent work with strong support from the ILO.

Currently, world economic recovery is confronted by reversals and difficulties that place increasing pressure on employment. Enterprises in China are facing a number of challenges, such as restructuring, industrial upgrading, independent innovation and increasing labour costs.

In this context, the CEC reports regularly to the Government on the situation of the business sector and collaborates with it in taking appropriate measures to support enterprises, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

China is currently in the process of building a society that is prosperous in every respect. Enterprises and entrepreneurs play a significant role in promoting economic and social development and are a major force in providing decent jobs and establishing a harmonious society, which is essential if we are to eliminate poverty and ensure the sustainable development of society in the world.

We therefore call on the international community and the ILO to provide more support for entrepreneurs and help create a more favourable business environment.

The CEC is ready, as always, to communicate and cooperate with the ILO and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) in the quest for a brighter future.

Original French: Mr SY (Minister for the Public Service, Labour and Relations with Institutions, Senegal)

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Senegal, I would like to congratulate the President on his brilliant election as President of this session, and his Officers as well.

I would also like to welcome the indefatigable efforts made by the Director-General of the ILO,

Mr Guy Ryder, since his election, in order to meet the expectations and aspirations of his constituents. I would like to reiterate the confidence felt by Senegal in his work; our country will spare no effort to help him in his mission.

The 102nd Session of the Conference is taking place not long before the centenary of our great Organization. Since its creation in 1919, so many changes have taken place in international relations, within countries, in science and technology, in the world of work, in other words, in every aspect of human society – changes which necessarily require adaptation. It is from this point of view that I would like to express my satisfaction with the theme of the Report of the Director-General, that is, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*.

The realities of the contemporary world, the complexity of the questions they bring to the agenda, and the new demographic, economic and technological environment in which these realities have emerged require, from every point of view, an innovative approach with a harmonious combination of short-, medium- and long-term solutions. It is by taking this approach, firmly rooted in the tripartism which represents both the strength and the uniqueness of our Organization, that it will be most fit to play its role in promoting social justice. It is this revitalized approach that has enabled the ILO, at every turning point in international affairs, to play its role through constructive and sustainable proposals.

The Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008 are all eloquent examples. We also have the broad international consensus on decent work, which is now accepted by everyone as a strategy for combating poverty and exclusion.

The items on our agenda very eloquently reflect the focus of our Organization on the concerns of the world of work, but also on the concerns of people – the situation of Palestinian workers in the occupied territories, the new demographic context and its implications for employment and social protection, jobs, decent work, and the social dialogue at both national and international levels. As for employment and social protection, these are two of the main priorities included in Senegal's DWCP.

When it comes to social protection, the establishment in Senegal of the National Office for Social Protection and National Solidarity has strengthened the country's institutional framework for implementing universal health insurance, which is a key component of the programme of the President of the Republic, Mr Macky Sall, summed up in the concept of *yonu yokuté*, which means "the path to development". Senegal therefore encourages the ILO to hold its line, bearing in mind that tripartism remains the bedrock of our Organization.

In this context, I should like to welcome all the internal changes in working methods in terms of governance and, in the same vein, the spirit of openness of our Organization which, however, is firmly rooted in the task of representing the world of work, exclusively in the form of governments, and representative and independent organizations of employers and workers.

The challenge of consistency faces our Organization, which operates within a multilateral system

that increasingly has to deal with regional, inter-regional and subregional initiatives. Accordingly, we call on the ILO to spare no effort in collaborating fully with all international bodies to achieve the aims of the Declaration and improve the health, education and well-being of all peoples, and to examine also, in the light of this objective, all economic and financial programmes of action and measures that are taken at the international level. The results we have achieved in this area and the various meetings that have taken place encourage us to view the future with optimism. I would like to conclude by wishing every success for the work of the 102nd Session.

Original Spanish: Ms GONZÁLEZ (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Cuba)

The Conference agenda addresses issues that are important for workers and for our peoples. The global economic crisis, whose end is still not in sight, requires that citizens be consulted and take part in the decisions that are taken by the Government, because it is they – and especially the lower-paid workers, young people and immigrants – who are suffering the consequences of the crisis.

We share the view presented in the report entitled *Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs* that environmental and social development are two indissociable elements of sustainable development. Our country pays special attention to safeguarding the environment and to its close links to sustainable economic and social development, in order to ensure the well-being, safety and survival of present and future generations.

Social dialogue in Cuba is a reflection of our socialist State. Our basic legislation on employment and social security is analysed by the workers before it is promulgated. The present Social Security Act is a prime example of this. By the same token, the proposed Labour Code will be debated with workers in the coming months to obtain their views as to how it can be improved, prior to its approval by the National Assembly of People's Power.

As regards employment and social security in the new demographic context, Cuba is not exempt from the phenomenon of an ageing population. By 2030, over 30 per cent of the population will be 60 years old or older, and by about 2050 the Cuban population will be one of the oldest in the world, with around 36 per cent in that age bracket. This is the result of the country's demographic growth over the years, which since the beginning of the twentieth century has been marked by low fertility, as well as of the social and economic policies implemented by the Revolution.

That is why the Cuban State pays particular attention to the study and implementation of strategies for tackling this phenomenon, and to ensuring that the elderly continue to participate in, and benefit from, the country's development in an environment that acknowledges their skills, autonomy and independence, while promoting intergenerational solidarity and the sharing of responsibility between the family, the community and the State.

The economic, political and media blockade imposed by the United States for over 50 years has not prevented the creation of equal opportunities, a fair distribution of wealth and social justice.

We are confronted by complex situations which, because they pose a threat for mankind, require us to engage in joint action in a spirit of solidarity in

order to cope with crises whose economic, social, environmental and other repercussions demand that we maintain our struggle to build a better world.

Original Arabic: Mr LOUH (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Algeria)

Our Conference session is being held at a time when the world is still waiting for the global economic crisis to unfold. Indeed, most countries' economies are in recession while others are contracting, given the significant challenges facing the international community in terms of energy, water resources, environment, food security, unemployment, terrorism and organized crime, all of which require responses in order to guarantee peace and security in the world.

The most dangerous obstacle to global economic recovery is the loss of confidence in international economic operations, especially between the bodies that finance the economy and all the other parties involved. Hence the recourse to speculation, often in the place of investment that would promote economic and social development. Many Heads of State present today at this Conference have called at this and at other meetings for reform of the international financial system and stressed the need to ensure that new rules are not drawn up in the absence of most countries.

The issue of the new demographic context, on the agenda of this Conference, is a reality which could exacerbate the effects of the economic crisis in all developed countries. Indeed, forecasts show that the percentage of senior citizens is set to increase, and that the dependency ratio will increase from 1:9 in 2000 to 1:4 in 2050. However, the situation is different in some countries; in Africa, for example, it is not an issue, given that young people account for the majority of the population. The priority in those countries is to provide employment. Therefore, a solution that is appropriate to some countries could be unsuccessful in others.

Young people in Algeria account for 70 per cent of the population, while people aged over 60 are estimated to have accounted for 5 per cent in 2004, a figure which is set to rise to 15 per cent in 2030.

Within the context of the reforms planned by the President of the Republic, the National Retirement Fund has been established and receives funding in the form of 3 per cent of annual oil revenue. The Social Security Fund has also been established and is financed from supplementary sources in addition to traditional contributions, in order to ensure that the social security system is sustainable and keeps pace with social and demographic changes.

In terms of employment, Algeria is focusing on developing its infrastructure in order to build an economy that generates jobs and wealth, in line with a policy of investment incentives. At the same time, mechanisms to help young people set up small businesses and foster entrepreneurial spirit have been introduced, notably the National Agency for Youth Employment Support.

With regard to sustainable development, the President of the Republic, Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, has stated that implementing an innovative, genuine global partnership, based on the principles of equity, solidarity and shared responsibilities, is one of Algeria's ongoing concerns.

Algeria has incorporated sustainable development into its development policy in order to face three major challenges: first, protecting natural resources

and maintaining environmental diversity and ecological balance; second, making rural areas more attractive; and third, increasing the productivity of cultivated land so that it helps consolidate the national economy and improve food security in the country. Algeria has also focused on social dialogue within the framework of tripartism.

The reform of ILO structures undertaken by the Director-General is a first step towards adapting the Organization to the requirements and challenges of the world of work in the years to come.

We reaffirm the need to consolidate and promote tripartism within the Organization, as it provides the basis for its work and should serve as an example to other international organizations. It is a system that guarantees transparency, improves dialogue and ensures the credibility of the decisions taken by our Organization.

Original French: Mr GUIRO (Worker, Senegal)

This platform of the 102nd Session of the Conference gives me the opportunity to take the floor on behalf of the workers of Senegal in order to touch on some of the main concerns of the world's social, economic and financial life.

I would first like to address my congratulations to the President on his election to lead our work. I would also like to congratulate the Vice-Presidents and Officers, to whom we renew our support and encouragement in their mission. We would also like to congratulate the Director-General, Guy Ryder, who has set the groundwork in the first year of his mandate for transforming the realities of the world of work and renewing the capacity of the ILO to achieve social justice everywhere. This requires substantial reforms in order to bring about better global financial governance, based on an inclusive and participatory system. This is because, in spite of all the efforts that have been made, the global financial crisis continues to have negative effects in Europe, in America and in the economies of developing countries.

We therefore agree with the Director-General, and feel that it is vital for our States to tackle the major changes and challenges in the world of work, reflecting on the role they have to play together with the ILO at the beginning of this twenty-first century.

The fight against poverty, unemployment, precarity and underemployment must be a priority in seeking to attain social justice and a universal and lasting peace. We are also very much convinced that there cannot be universal peace without social justice, and that any social justice has to be based on the promotion of decent work and social protection for all.

In our message we cannot leave out the question of the environment and sustainable development. In fact, climate change is exceptional and calls for more than merely adaptation strategies to mitigate its effects. It means we have to completely rethink development models on a global scale, and especially for developing countries. Climate change often results in catastrophic situations such as flooding, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and desertification. These phenomena are exacerbated by soaring population growth, uncontrolled urbanization and environmental degradation. The degradation of our environment should be the concern of all of us – workers, employers and governments. The ILO, given its tripartite composition, also has a very im-

portant role to play. Here we would like to renew our thanks to the Director-General for the ambitious scope of the report concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. It is along these lines, too, that the National Confederation of Workers of Senegal (NCWS), in partnership with the NGO Green Cross of Italy, is developing an agricultural project in two rural communities in Senegal. This project, which takes account of the environment, uses new technology to rationalize the use of river water through the drip system, biomass and solar energy to drive the pumps. This investment will enable 900 women and 200 men to find paid work through market gardening with three growing cycles a year.

In 2019 the ILO will celebrate its centenary. Looking forward to this great event, we welcome the relevance of establishing a strategic framework, as proposed by the Director-General, and we endorse the guidelines set down. However, the member countries must go beyond the actions identified for feeding into and illustrating strategies enabling the ILO to meet the challenge of implementing its mandate better once the centenary is over. Such action has to be carried out while respecting the Declaration of 2008, which is based on social dialogue and strengthened tripartism.

As we can see in the core Convention No. 144, tripartism presupposes respect for the principles of social dialogue based on the representative character of the parties. As for the situation in Senegal, elections were finally held in 2011 for the most representative trade union federations, and in spite of some problems with the Government about the meaning of representativeness, we welcome the conclusion agreed with the Prime Minister on the choice of four of the most representative organizations.

We would like to point out some social advances in our country, with a tax reduction on salaries of 28.9 billion, a reduction in the price of some basic necessities and the extension of health insurance to provide medical cover for the elderly.

We have great hopes for the reforms now under way for economic recovery, for the DWCP, for social protection based on a minimum floor, and for the national economic and social development strategy, which will certainly lead the country's economy to a better tomorrow.

In concluding, I wish to reaffirm our solidarity with the workers of countries in conflict on all continents.

Original Spanish: Mr MARTÍNEZ (Worker, Argentina)

The Director-General's Report is a political response to a global situation that reaffirms the importance of agreements based on sincere and proactive social dialogue in which the workers are recognized as political counterparts.

Today, the crisis is deepening. Inequality in the world is growing because of the persistence of precarious labour conditions. In the new international scenario the values of work and production have changed. When financial capital rules, it is always the workers' loss, and inequalities are always aggravated.

As Pope Francis says, "has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy."

Yet, against the current model of humanitarianism that disregards fundamental social, labour and environmental values, there is an alternative.

The situation today being what it is, the Director-General's proposal to transform the ILO by consolidating its role as guarantor of fundamental rights and social justice is especially important and marks a change.

At the next G20 Summit, the ILO will be asking governments to keep their promise to tackle the crisis through more investment in infrastructure, to make it easier for SMEs to get access to credit and, above all, to extend social security coverage and create jobs for young people.

Governments must give priority to political values, sustainable development and social inclusion, rather than to economic remedies that utilize work-ers as an adjustment variable.

The international financial organizations need to be reformed.

Today, people are reacting to permanent adjustment policies by going into the streets to defend their rights and social gains.

Let us bear in mind the theme of the Summit of the Americas that was held in Argentina in 2005, which called for job creation to tackle poverty and strengthen democratic governability.

Many of the objectives set have not been attained. Although democratic systems have been consolidated and there are some significant economic growth rates, the poverty and inequality indicators paint a different picture. In most countries there is no real social dialogue and no collective bargaining, and so income distribution remains just a figure of speech. Moreover, the situation is aggravated by the absence of freedom of association, unemployment, the increasing precariousness of conditions of employment, shortcomings in health and occupational safety, and anti-union violence involving persecution and murder.

Our challenge as a strong and united union movement is to make sure the voice of the workers is heard, by insisting that governments include our demands in their political agendas.

Our unions are prepared to play a key role in mobilizing workers in defence of our rights.

For ten years now in Argentina, job creation and the country's workers have been at the heart of the Government's economic and productive development policies.

As we rebuild the social and productive fabric that we had lost, social and labour conditions are changing.

Measures to boost employment, provide decent jobs and redistribute income have been key themes on our Government's agenda. The enforcement of collective bargaining, the raising of minimum wages, full access to retirement benefits, universal child and pregnancy benefits, and the development of education and vocational training as a means of social inclusion are just some of our policies in Argentina.

We still face major challenges before we can create more and better jobs, do away with the informal economy, reduce the taxes on labour, and eliminate the pockets of poverty and marginality that remain.

It is true that we need an economic and social development council in which we can discuss and formulate policies to resolve our social debt problems.

One example of the positive outcome of dialogue has been witnessed at this Conference, where the Committee on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs has called for the mainstreaming of sustainable development throughout the ILO.

We workers rely on our Government's political will and determination, organization and strength to write a new chapter in history that will give universal scope to the fair distribution of wealth, decent work and social justice, as a lasting legacy for future generations.

Original Japanese: Mr KANEKO (Vice-Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan)

It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the Japanese Government at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, on his inauguration. Mr Ryder has proposed the Programme and Budget for 2014-15 and reformed the institution, keeping in mind that the ILO, which is soon to turn 100 years old, should be recognized as the expert in the world of work, providing its constituents with policy advice and assistance based on its high-quality analysis and slotting its core subject into worldwide discussions concerning labour, society and the economy.

I pay tribute to the Director-General's swift and strong leadership and expect timely and appropriate outcomes to result.

One of the most important functions of the ILO is the supervisory system. I very much respect the work of Workers and Employers, since at this Conference the Committee on the Application of Standards is fulfilling its mandate, which indicates the great efforts being made by both parties. I hope this social dialogue continues so that the supervisory system can be even better.

The Government of Japan experienced a change of leadership last December, and we now have a package of policies to rebuild our economy that is called "the three arrows". They include a bold monetary policy, a flexible fiscal policy and tactics to stimulate private investment. The measures on employment and human resources are contained within the third aspect.

To revive our economy, it is important to assist employment and to establish a good environment for the work that drives it. I would like to mention some measures which Japan is currently examining.

The Director-General, Mr Ryder, has said that the ILO needs to be a key player in addressing worldwide issues concerning labour, social and economic policies. I am certain that our measures could serve as valuable reference points when addressing this.

First, to shift human resources smoothly from mature industries to developing ones, the Government is strengthening the labour-matching function in partnership with the private sector by expanding subsidies on labour mobilization and making maximum use of private employment agencies. This measure expands opportunities for people seeking employment to find appropriate jobs.

Second, the Government is establishing new employment models so that workers have various options as to working styles, as in real society people have to choose between a model of regular em-

ployment that can provide sufficient money but is very rigid, and a model of non-regular employment.

Third, and I know this is one of the critically important areas mentioned by Mr Ryder, there is the realization of decent youth employment. The Government is making an effort to strengthen the partnership between the Public Employment Department and the universities and colleges, in order to support the employment of young people as regular workers. The Government also supports the organization of SMEs which train newly employed young people to enable them to have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills.

Last, but not least, the Government is strengthening its efforts to promote women's participation in society.

The Government is providing childcare facilities which will cover 200,000 children in fiscal years 2013 and 2014, and another 400,000 by fiscal year 2017, when the need for childcare will reach its peak. This could enable all the children who need to be cared for to be covered, and would help women to enter the labour market again. Moreover, the Government supports skills development and measures to help women to stay in, or return to, the labour market smoothly.

Economic policies and employment policies should go together if a country is to recover from a crisis and enjoy increased prosperity. We are convinced that this principle that the ILO commits us to is the right one and we are encouraged to make every effort to address the issue.

I am glad that, when the Director-General came to Japan last May, it was reaffirmed that the partnership between the ILO and Japan should be further strengthened. With the international community in the midst of a worldwide financial and employment crisis, the relevance of the ILO, which seeks to bring about social justice, has been steadily growing.

I would like to conclude my speech by mentioning that the Japanese Government makes the utmost effort to assist the activities of the ILO, which has an important mission. We support the Director-General's initiatives in various areas and the establishment of an advisory panel on the future of work in the next century.

Original Vietnamese: Mr NGUYEN (Worker, Viet Nam)

The 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference is taking place amid difficult conditions in the world economy. No positive solutions have been worked out to tackle the European sovereign debt crisis. The economies of some developed countries, and emerging economies, cannot yet see a bright future ahead, and have failed to maintain the same growth rate as in previous periods.

We share the view of the Director-General in his Report *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. The Report also mentions the challenges and adverse impacts of the crisis on labour, jobs and the livelihood of hundreds of millions of workers worldwide.

At the same time, we strongly agree with and support the ILO's initiatives in the reform process and its promotion of tripartism to achieve the sustainable development goals it has set ahead of the 100th anniversary of its foundation.

The 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference focuses on the themes of job creation and social protection, and the advantages and disad-

vantages they face. Sustainable development and green jobs are common ground for constituents in each and every member country to review and share their valuable information and the experience gained through their commitment to the DWCP, while devising measures to respond to the challenges in the areas of labour and employment in the current context. In particular, the increasing risks associated with the ongoing trend of unemployment, lower income, social inequalities, a high rate of precarious work and a worsening youth employment crisis are becoming ever more pressing issues that call for strong action, involving participation and cooperation at both national and global levels.

The Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), representing a working class with nearly 8 million members in 113,000 workplace unions in all economic sectors of Viet Nam, always endeavours, to the utmost, to build up Viet Nam, a country with democracy, equality and civilization, which are also the aims of the ILO. As a social partner, the VGCL always works actively with the Government and employers' organizations to build and promote tripartism, improving harmonious and stable industrial relations in the workplace through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

In 2012, the VGCL worked closely with the Government and social partners in revising the Labour Code and the Trade Union Law, which were adopted by the National Assembly. The endorsement of these two pieces of legislation contributes to improving the employment law framework for more effective protection of workers' rights and for promoting the representation, role and functions of the Vietnamese trade unions.

In the circumstances of globalization and economic transition in Viet Nam, the VGCL has been fully cooperating with social partners and the ILO in implementing the DWCP in Viet Nam, 2012–16.

Taking this opportunity on behalf of Vietnamese workers and trade unions, I would like to express our gratitude for the ILO's technical assistance, as well as for the effective support of NGOs, international trade unions and friendly organizations. We look forward to receiving your continuous cooperation in the near future.

We wish every success for the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Mr DUBINSKI (Worker, Poland)

First of all, I want to congratulate the President on his election. The current 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference should remind everybody, including Governments and Employers, of the minimum standards that should be observed to make a clear difference between slaves on the market and workers employed (hopefully) in a free democratic world.

It is necessary to remember two things: first, that under 50 per cent of people are covered by ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98; second, that the advice given to us now as a medicine against crisis fever by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the European Central Bank, rating agencies, etc., obliges us to cross the very thin border that separates decent work from slavery.

A third thing we have to remember, especially at this session, is the important role of social dialogue as a fundamental instrument for shaping balanced socio-economic policies, especially in times of crisis. The Polish workers firmly believe that the

ILO's definition of social dialogue should be kept and not changed.

According to the Director-General's Report, the ILO has two main tasks: setting standards, and using its supervisory system to show how the standards are applied. Polish workers therefore strongly oppose any attempt to undermine the ILO's supervisory system, because weakening the system could destroy the Organization. We urge the Governments and Employers not to weaken the ILO but to strengthen standard setting, and especially the supervisory system.

Regrettably, the Polish workers are once again obliged to inform this assembly that social dialogue does not exist in our country. Despite the fact that Poland has ratified both Conventions and that we have a national Tripartite Commission on Economic and Social Affairs, as well as a number of tripartite bodies and procedures, there is a real shortage of social dialogue.

Let me give you some examples. The Polish Government has changed the pension system against the wishes of the trade unions and without any negotiations with the social partners.

Similarly, the Government sent Parliament a Working Time Bill that ignored an agreement reached by the national workers' and employers' organizations. Parliament has now adopted this law despite protests by the unions and by the people of Poland. Moreover, the Government is continuing its bad practices by arbitrarily preparing amendments to the Labour Code.

We read in the Director-General's Report that tripartism built on trust is the key. But what can I say about tripartite dialogue when members of my Government, including the Prime Minister, are less trustworthy than Pinocchio? What can I say about trust, when members of the Government commit serious offences against national and European Union law? For example, they do not allow elected workers' representatives to carry out their workers' council duties in state holdings such as the Polish Copper Mining Company (KGHM).

I am tired of being a mere actor in the Government's tripartite theatre – every day the same scenario, the same decor, the same result: nothing, *nichts, nic!* After two years of work spent by a tripartite group of experts drafting a parliamentary bill in accordance with the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), and with the requirements of European Union legislation, the shipowners and seafarers finally reached complete agreement, only to have the draft withdrawn by decision of the Ministry of Finance.

Another serious breach of trust occurred when the Deputy Minister of my Government declared, during a tripartite sea transport meeting, that the ILO Convention is not binding on Poland, even though it was ratified five months ago.

What can I say when in my reborn democratic country more than 30 per cent of young people have no employment contracts? They are told to set up their own enterprises, because the enterprises they work for have no human rights, no social security and no coverage by ILO instruments. They are just enterprises, not human!

Because of all this, the Polish workers call on the ILO, through all its structures and all its member States, to make Conventions Nos 87 and 98 function as effectively as possible. Those Conventions are the *sine qua non* of authentic social dialogue and

the adoption of adequate measures to resolve the global crisis.

It is obvious that meeting formal requirements is not enough. There is no social dialogue without goodwill on all sides. Unfortunately, however, I am obliged to say that, despite Poland's ratification of both Conventions and despite the efforts of several tripartite institutions, Polish workers are still waiting for social dialogue to arrive.

Mr MALOI (*Minister of Labour and Employment, Lesotho*)

First and foremost, allow me to convey warm greetings that my delegation and I bring from the Kingdom of Lesotho. Permit me to also associate myself with all the congratulatory messages extended to the President, the Officers, and to the Director-General on his assumption of office, from the beginning of the plenary to date. It is a distinct honour for me to be a part of this august gathering for the first time. This is particularly so because, this year, the International Labour Conference is anxious to pave its way as it approaches its 100th anniversary. It is indeed the right moment for the tripartite approach in engaging with, and addressing, the realities in the world of work.

The Report of the Director-General not only is concise and clear, but also states his thoughts around the challenges which are facing the global tripartite constituency. What is particularly gratifying about the Report is the fact that it urges us to go through a process of self-questioning in order to establish our relevance within the emerging challenges and dynamics of the world.

In the interest of time, allow me to react to only a few of the issues raised in the Report. In so far as the issue of migration is concerned, this is a topic that is very close to our hearts in Lesotho because of the migrant labour system that history designed for us. Today, the people of Lesotho still migrate in large numbers in search of employment. That being so, we need to address pertinent issues which affect them, including the portability of benefits between their countries of destination and origin. We all know that migrant workers contribute immensely to the economic development of the countries in which they operate, yet some become a burden to their own States when they retire.

The Report also addresses the issue of growing inequality. We are all aware that migrant workers are more vulnerable to this growing inequality than workers who work in their home countries. However, this does not mean that we believe other workers are not victims of inequality. Indeed, this menace has to be addressed without delay, as it not only is a growing threat to social peace, but is also continuously brewing social unrest. The ILO is therefore in a better position than ever to bring together all the stakeholders to discuss issues which continue to cause inequality in member States. We therefore wholeheartedly support your views on the institutional challenges facing the ILO, as well as on tripartism and legitimacy.

It would be counterproductive for the ILO, as well as its tripartite constituencies, not to share and, better still, involve those who are responsible for creating jobs. Indeed, nobody can dispute the fact that in order for us to achieve our goal of promoting social justice for all, we need to be open to work with, and engage, other role players beyond the traditional social partners, and share our thoughts with them. In the same manner, we are in agreement that there is a

need for interaction among multilateral organizations at both regional and international levels. We would like to propose that discussions around integrated cooperation among these organizations should begin as soon as yesterday. In fact, your proposal resonates well with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy of “Delivering as One”, which seeks to ensure that UN organizations should deliver as one in member States in which they are represented, as opposed to operating in silos.

We are, accordingly, grateful that the ILO, as well as the International Organization for Migration, have decided to organize a meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, for the member States of the Southern African Development Community, to prepare for the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development scheduled to take place later this year.

Let me now turn to the issue of international labour standards. As you have rightly pointed out, we should not wait until we are embarrassed by the consumer groups that are forever mindful of the working conditions in which jobs are created. Lesotho, accordingly, embraces the idea that it is high time for the ILO to engage with enterprises, as they are key players in our efforts.

Last but not least, allow me to take this opportunity to note with appreciation that my country is the first African country to benefit from the Better Work project, which has been financed by the US Department of Labor and the International Finance Corporation. We therefore seek the continuing support of the ILO in ensuring that this project, which is in its third year of operation, remains a success.

In conclusion, I am highly confident that under the President’s able stewardship this Conference is being, and will continue to be, steered towards the successful accomplishment of the task before it. In the same vein, Lesotho reiterates its support for the Director-General, and the Organization as a whole, as he continues to navigate the ILO in its continuing journey to realize social justice for all.

Original Arabic: Mr ABASSI (Worker, Tunisia)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of our session and to wish him every success in fulfilling his responsibilities.

I would also like to pay tribute to my friend, Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General, who has tackled some major problems and challenges in his first Report. He has presented us with a Report that highlights the Organization’s challenges, difficulties, hopes and promises as it approaches its centenary.

The increasing inequalities that the Report of the Director-General refers to are not just those that occur within a given society between individuals, social classes and regions. They are to be found, above all, in international relations, where the gap is widening every day between the rich industrialized countries, with their enormous scientific and technological potential, and countries that suffer from dependency, underdevelopment and external indebtedness, where most of the population – and especially young people – live below the poverty threshold and where unemployment and marginalization are rife.

That is why we would have liked the Report also to have discussed social dialogue between countries

in order to reform the world economic system on the basis of transparency, universal moral values, respect for international standards of behaviour and human rights.

Because we are convinced of the appropriateness of this approach, the General Confederation of Labour of Tunisia has tried since the end of the dictatorship to consolidate social dialogue in the country. We have emphasized the importance of incorporating social dialogue into our institutions and see it as part and parcel of the objectives of the revolution and a fundamental means of establishing democracy, liberty and social justice. For example, along with our partners in Government and with the Tunisian Federation of Industry, Commerce and Handicrafts, we have – with the support of the Belgian Government and in the presence of Mr Guy Ryder – concluded a social pact within the National Assembly under the auspices of the ILO. To implement the pact, we have set up tripartite committees to define the measures that are needed.

Given the economic, social, political and security situation in Tunisia and the spread of violence even to our own headquarters, the General Confederation of Labour of Tunisia, as in the past, has taken over national responsibilities that go beyond its traditional role.

We have accordingly brought together the political parties and the forces of civil society in the National Congress for Dialogue, in which we hope to reach agreement on the measures that are needed to overcome the crisis and to implement a clearly defined programme by a specified deadline for managing the rest of the transition period. We are hoping that, within the next few days, the committees set up by the National Congress for Dialogue will reach agreement on the contentious issues that are still pending.

Talking about freedom and peace brings us to the Director-General’s Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. It is important to emphasize that the final observations in the Report do not discuss the prime cause of the tragedy, namely continued occupation and settlement, and all the violations perpetrated against the Palestinian and Syrian people, and against the Palestinian workers.

As the Director-General says in the preface to his Report, continued settlement and restrictions on the Palestinian economy are an obstacle to any attempt to bring peace. We reaffirm that it is the international community’s responsibility to put an end to the occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories, and allow the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

We appeal urgently for a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis as a precondition for peace and stability in the region. We reject any foreign intervention in the Syrian conflict, while reasserting our support for, and solidarity with, the demands of the Syrian people for freedom and social justice.

Mr TANIGAWA (Employer, Japan)

It is my great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Japanese Employers on this occasion, which sees the ILO moving forward in a new direction under the leadership of Mr Guy Ryder.

First, I would like to touch upon how the current Japanese administration, led by Prime Minister Abe, seeks to revitalize the Japanese economy. So-called

“Abenomics” consists of three main measures: aggressive monetary easing by the Bank of Japan, a massive fiscal stimulus package and a concrete growth strategy with structural reforms to promote investment in the private sector.

We believe the growth strategy is the most important element among them. It must include deregulatory measures in the areas of employment and labour issues, energy and environment policy, and the health and medical sectors. A key message which we must recognize is to let the private sector do what they do best: create growth, social development and jobs.

Economic growth, led by vibrant corporate activities, is the key to solving the employment challenges. In order to retain and create employment, a well-balanced policy should be introduced and implemented. Ensuring flexibility for companies, which are the source of employment, and creating diversified employment opportunities, should be taken into consideration, together with the protection of workers.

We strongly believe we are able to contribute to discussions in the three technical committees this year because we have, to some degree, overcome, and are still struggling to overcome, many challenges in the areas of demographic change, green jobs and social dialogue.

Let me share our experience on social dialogue with you. In the past, we had confrontation between labour and management. However, we realized from that experience that intense discussions in good faith between labour and management resulted in growth of both companies and the nation as a whole. That is the virtuous circle we have to pursue.

Recently, many Japanese companies have been facing a worsening domestic business environment as well as fierce competition with foreign companies. Under such circumstances, we need to survive and grow, and thereby maintain employment. It is essential for labour and management to overcome many difficulties by sharing a sense of crisis and properly recognizing severe conditions in their own companies through sharing information and exchanging views on a day-to-day basis.

Therefore, we propose that ILO should collect best practices on healthy and constructive social dialogue that produce fruitful results, rather than just relying on institutional mechanisms such as ratification of the relevant ILO Conventions, so that they are shared among the tripartite constituents of the member States.

Last, but not least, we note that the Director-General is proposing to directly engage with enterprises. We would value it if the Office could recognize the importance of enterprises which create jobs, and put more emphasis on the development and sustainability of enterprises as a prerequisite to addressing the ongoing job creation challenge. We would like to also remind you that we have focal points for enterprises, namely the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) within the secretariat, we have the IOE and we have employers' organizations in the member States. Any new initiative should therefore be taken through them in order to respect, and not to undermine, the ILO's governance mechanisms.

Mr PIPERKOV (*Government, Bulgaria*)

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, I would like to congratulate the President

and all the other Officers on their election, and to wish them every success in presiding over the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. It is an honour to participate in the exchange of views on the essential topics selected for discussion during this year's Conference session – employment and social protection in the new demographic context, sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, and social dialogue.

I would use this opportunity to join the discussion on the Director-General's Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. We support its conclusion that during the ILO's 94-year history, the Organization has frequently shown great creativity and significant capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. The Organization has managed to build stable partnerships and become a leader among the multitude of international organizations. The issues and challenges of the labour world covered by the Report, such as the impact of demographic changes, the changing outlines of poverty and prosperity, and the transition to a more sustainable environment, are important for all ILO member States.

The last two decades have been marked by increasingly scarce resources, rising levels of pollution and climate change, combined with record rates of unemployment and a long-term commitment to fight poverty and social exclusion. Environmental protection and the provision of access to decent work for all have been identified among the challenges of the twenty-first century. While the global economic crisis has significantly exacerbated ecological and social problems, the importance of decent work conditions for sustainable development has increased. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro this year provided an unprecedented opportunity to develop synergies between ecological sustainable development and decent working conditions aimed at dealing with the crisis and eradicating poverty.

These issues are important for Bulgaria too. After the early parliamentary elections held in May this year, on 29 May a new Government was formed. The programme of the new Cabinet envisages implementation of a sustainable governance model focused on three main priorities: enhancing democracy, economic recovery, and solidarity and social justice.

The new Bulgarian Government's first task is to provide a minimum package of measures supporting the most vulnerable groups, to be implemented in 2013. In this regard, allow me to present some of those measures. The amount of the lump sum targeted assistance for first-grade students at state or municipal schools is increased to cover part of the costs at the beginning of the school year and is allocated to those families meeting the conditions for social assistance. It is one of the measures encouraging the social inclusion of children at risk and preventing early school leaving. This fall, 45,000 first-grade students will be supported by this measure. The second measure concerns expanding access to energy assistance. This change will allow 60,000 more people to benefit from this assistance. Currently, about 210,000 people and families benefit from this right. The third measure is the Government's decision to increase, as of 1 July this year, the amount of child-raising allowance for children between 1 and 2 years of age. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will cooperate closely

with the Ministry of Economy and Energy in dealing with existing problems and taking decisions in the field of social policy.

Moreover, we share the opinion expressed in the Director-General's Report on the impact of demographic changes and the need for complementarity between policies on employment and social protection for all age groups during the whole life cycle. They must be built on solidarity between generations and cooperation between countries. We think that policies for dealing with structural tendencies, such as ageing, should not pursue a short-term and cyclical perspective imposed by the crisis.

The implementation of the national policy on demographic development is related to the responsible task of providing guidance for the adaptation of the major sectoral policies, their updating and reforming in accordance with demographic challenges, with a view to achieving a relative demographic balance. The Republic of Bulgaria supports the European Union's conclusion that meeting demographic challenges is directly relevant to the implementation of the targets set by *Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. We consider that the accomplishment of four out of the five targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy depends on the way in which sectoral policies are adapted to demographic changes.

To conclude, I would like to share our belief that, as we approach the ILO centenary, we will come even closer to our common goal – a world dominated by fair globalization, social progress and decent work.

Original Spanish: Mr LINERO MENDOZA (Employer, Panama)

The challenges facing the world of work in the twenty-first century, referred to by the Director-General in his Report, require commitment and will on the part of the social partners in order to seek out solutions.

As an Employers' delegate from Panama, I would like to outline the actions carried out by two very important bodies in my country, the National Council of Private Enterprise and the Labour Foundation. The National Council of Private Enterprise signed an agreement with the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2011 to promote corporate social responsibility for the prevention and eradication of child labour under the so-called ETi-1 project. This began with awareness raising in the business sector on the issue of child labour, and the great disadvantage for children of not being able to attend school because they need to work in order to meet their basic needs. It has been important to harmonize the understanding of such concepts across production sectors and companies, regardless of their size. As part of these efforts, we have drawn up a guide on corporate social responsibility for the prevention of child labour. The guide provides the necessary tools for any type of organization, whether public, private or non-profit, to include strategies focused on this objective. It provides instructions for the diagnosis, reporting of results and an action plan in each company, and it has been implemented in sectors prone to child labour such as coffee, pineapple and sugar cane production, trade and tourism, resulting in five cases of good practice that have served as an example for other companies. The extent of sensitization is reflected in the results of the fourth national survey on child labour, published in May 2013, which indicates that the prevalence of child labour has

fallen from 62,140 cases in 2011 to 50,410 cases in the last report. The ETi-1 project has been publicized through social networks, and radio and television programmes via the Internet, known as ETi-TV. The project recently entered its second phase, which will focus on setting up a multisectoral organization to audit, certify and issue a social label to companies and organizations informing consumers that their products or services are child labour-free.

The Labour Foundation is a bipartite NGO, founded in July 1993 by eight employers' associations, including the National Council of Private Enterprise, and by eight large trade unions. In January 2012, the Ministry of Labour and Labour Development became involved, establishing it as a tripartite organization working to improve labour conditions. Among other things, the Labour Foundation has promoted and strengthened the culture of social dialogue in Panama. With support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), it created a labour skills certification model, which was implemented and then handed over to the official institution responsible for vocational training throughout the country. It has participated in both of the national dialogue forums set up by the ILO, one aimed at finding solutions based on consensus, and the other at establishing a rapid dispute settlement mechanism in line with 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). As of July 2012, the Foundation has directed its efforts and activities towards two very important issues for the world of work: gender equality and youth employment. In the area of gender equality, two forums have been organized to look at equality between men and women at work. This resulted in recommendations that will be presented to the executive branch with a view to the adoption of state policies to overcome the long-term and ongoing hurdles facing women, as touched upon by the Director-General. With regard to youth employment and the question raised in the Report of the Director-General on how we are going to create employment, the Labour Foundation called upon all official institutions linked to youth employment and the country's universities to work together to develop a project and a forum on decent youth employment, lining up a number of events. The first of these was held on 19 February, and focused on providing information about the crisis in youth employment. The second event was held in April, and sought to determine the urgency of providing dual vocational training. The third event focused on persons with disabilities in order to express the country's social debt towards this category of workers. The universities have committed themselves to undertaking research on this issue.

In conclusion, I would like to say that both the Employers' group and the Labour Foundation, which is a tripartite organization, will continue to work together to improve labour market and working conditions, and to achieve our common goal of social peace through constructive dialogue.

Mr SAKURADA (Worker, Japan)

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to deliver this speech on behalf of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-RENGO). We are approaching the ILO centenary; we recognize and appreciate

the work the ILO has done since its foundation. In his Report this year, the Director-General posed questions about the future of the ILO in order to be provided with clear guidance from the constituents. When we look at the present situation, we can easily recognize that the goals and expected objectives are far from having been achieved.

Now, let me turn to the recent growth strategies planned by the Government. The new strategies are to revitalize the economy, get rid of deflation, strengthen consumer power and increase competitiveness, thus creating more jobs and better living conditions. It is perhaps too early to evaluate these strategies, but ITUC-RENGO already has some concerns about the implementation of this growth strategy, because these plans are based on monetary easing and deregulation in many areas. We are worried that deregulation might weaken workers' rights and destabilize the labour market.

The Director-General's Report points out that about half of the global workforce is engaged in waged employment, but many do not work full time for a single employer. The Report even says that the supposedly "atypical" has become typical; the "standard" has become the exception. In Japan already, more than 35 per cent of employees are atypical, and underemployment is growing. If deregulation is penetrating the labour market without adequate protection, what is the future of decent work? The current economic measures, with monetary easing, are resulting in investment in business and are reflected in the volatile situation in the stock market and exchange rates. So only a few people are enjoying the benefits of such a situation. There is no real wage increase and no real benefit for workers.

The ITUC-RENGO is demanding social justice and protection of workers' rights and putting pressure on policy-makers to achieve sustainable working and better living conditions. If the world of work is going in the direction indicated in the Director-General's Report, what we need is an adequate sustainable social protection net for all.

The crisis is not over and people are suffering from the Government's failure to prioritize employment in economic policy-making. New government strategies under the name of "Abenomics" have started to navigate into the ocean, but the destination is not yet clear. To reach the destination safely, urgent action must be taken to make progress towards sustainable quality jobs by putting social protection at the heart of the ongoing reform measures.

In conclusion, if the Report asks how the ILO can play an effective role in the context of persisting injustice, the economic financial crisis, mass unemployment and underemployment, and the widespread absence of social justice, the answer will be found in the hands of the Organization and the tripartite constituents. I believe that social dialogue, collaboration and cooperation with goodwill are surely in our hands.

The ITUC-RENGO is firmly committed to such action through solidarity in order to uphold the principles of the ILO, playing its role as a social partner and ensuring that it contributes to the realization of the Director-General's centenary initiatives.

Mr MECINA (*Government, Poland*)

I am honoured to take part in this year's International Labour Conference, given the matters covered by the Conference, notably the new demographic context and social dialogue, which are issues familiar to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Poland.

Currently, all European Union Member States are affected by the economic slowdown. The difficult situation on the international markets prompts governments to implement programmes aimed at stabilizing the situation in particular countries. In Poland, based on the experience gained in implementing the anti-crisis package, a mechanism has been put in place to provide support for entrepreneurs at a time when incomes are falling. Its purpose is to keep jobs and prevent redundancies among employees who are at risk during the temporary worsening of conditions, boosting economic activity by the entrepreneur. Solutions like these are mostly based on the possibility of receiving additional income to pay wages during suspension of work or a reduction in working time.

A period of economic slowdown is also a time for us to look carefully at the provisions of the Labour Code. The purpose of the proposed changes is to adjust the regulations to labour market conditions, as well as to provide a guarantee of decent work for the workers. The suggested solutions include extending the period of employment to 12 months by agreement with workers' representatives, and introducing flexitime, together with the right to rest.

The economic crisis seriously hampers the implementation of those long-term objectives. It is also a time of high unemployment. All the unemployed expect effective support from the public employment services. High unemployment among young people entering the labour market and low activity among elderly people – these are the problems we are facing nowadays. The Government is therefore introducing a reform of the public employment services, aimed at raising employment indicators by increasing the effectiveness of services.

One of the most important tasks is to improve the situation of young people on the labour market, and to introduce guaranteed support for them. The guarantee is a period of three months during which a young person without work should receive a job offer or an offer to raise or complete his or her qualifications. These solutions will be supplemented by programmes to support entrepreneurship among young people and university graduates. A better start in adult life means better conditions for starting families.

The demographic situation is important, not only for the labour market, but also for the financial stability of the pension system. The Polish Government undertakes initiatives to support families, including programmes for day care and longer parental leave. Employment, family and entrepreneurship are the key factors for improving the situation on the labour market today, and this is our answer to the strategic challenges of the future.

In the Report *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, the Director-General presents seven ideas to prepare the ILO for its centenary. It is an inspiring and very ambitious new vision of the Organization. Particular focus should be put on the initiative to consolidate

tripartite consensus by a reference to the supervisory system, and to highlight the importance of international labour standards through the review mechanism. Moreover, we note with interest the plans for further ILO involvement in innovations in the world of work. It seems that the implementation of that vision will prepare the ILO for the challenges of the contemporary world, and will lead to greater involvement by the international community in addressing them.

Mr SARANGI (*Government, India*)

It gives me immense pleasure to address this august gathering on the Director-General's Report *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. The Report is well-documented, precise and contains valuable information on the future course which the ILO should follow when nearing 100 years of its existence.

The ILO, over the years, has provided valuable leadership in the implementation of labour standards, the strengthening of workers' rights and the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda, and in finding acceptable solutions to labour market issues. The adoption of the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice of 2008 are important milestones in the history of the ILO, in which tripartism is recognized as one of the core commitments for furthering the Decent Work Agenda.

The Government of India is committed to the ethos and culture of tripartism, and we hold regular consultations with the social partners in order to obtain a consensus for enacting new laws or bringing about changes in the existing laws.

India is in the midst of a demographic transition, and our Government is undertaking various measures to maximize the benefits of this. Active labour market policies in our country are recognized as an important strategy for providing immediate access to employment for young people and for the less-advantaged groups in the labour market. As a major national priority, the Government of India has launched a coordinated action plan for skills development, in order to achieve the target of 500 million skilled persons by 2022.

We recognize that it is important for nations to integrate the outcomes of the mandate of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). We endorse the concept of the social protection floor, but it should be closely linked to each country's financial resources, the size of the informal sector, the employment strategy and other social policies.

While the green jobs strategy, the social protection floor and the Decent Work Agenda are laudable objectives, the ILO should protect the interests of the developing countries and discourage the use of strategies such as trade barriers.

India has always pursued a strategy of seeking inclusive growth that benefits the have-nots and reduces disparities. We have enacted a law that ensures the right to education as a fundamental right. We now propose to introduce legislation giving our citizens the right to food security. Our policies have aimed to empower the sections of our society which are socially, educationally and economically weaker.

Thanks to our efforts, schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee

Scheme and *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana* have ensured sustainable employment and health care for the poor and for unorganized workers.

We agree that standard-setting policy is a cornerstone of ILO activities, and we share the concerns expressed in the Report of the Director-General. We believe that the choice of topics for future standard setting should be widened according to the requirements of all ILO member States. The standards should take into consideration the vast informal economy existing in many developing countries, as well as the socio-economic disparities among the member States.

Enhancing coherence between international organizations and governments is important, but efforts at coherence among the international organizations should not lead to encroachment on the area of competence of each, or the dilution of the ILO's knowledge base and leadership in subjects related to labour. While there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to employment and social policy issues, the full benefits of the globalized economy will only be realized if governments avoid unilateral protectionist measures and act in a coherent and coordinated manner.

To conclude, India has great faith in the principles and practices of the ILO. The successful implementation of the ILO's programmes depends on harmonious relations between governments, employers and workers.

Let me assure you, the Government of India will continue to follow socially oriented policies while upholding the principles of tripartism and social dialogue.

Let me also call upon all my colleagues from the member countries of the ILO to work together to not only protect the workers' interests, but also to do our best for reducing unemployment and achieving poverty alleviation. Let us not forget that poverty somewhere is a challenge to prosperity anywhere.

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

I would first like to congratulate the President, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on his election to Chair the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. We are convinced that under his leadership the work of our Conference will be crowned with success.

I am very happy to be participating in this session, which, among other things, is to discuss the Reports submitted to the Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, for the excellent report, *Employment and social protection in the new demographic context*. I agree that we need to formulate appropriate policies to deal with the issues related to demographic changes, and their economic and social implications. I would also like to thank him for the report, *Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs*, which has concluded that the environment and social development are the two main pillars of sustainable development. The report also calls for the integration of environmental, social and decent work elements to ensure a smooth transition to sustainable economies.

Furthermore, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. This Report provides an analysis of all these

developments, and of the major challenges that the world of work has to face. It also describes the role that has to be played by the ILO as it approaches its centenary. The Appendix to the Report deals with the difficult conditions of work experienced by the Palestinian workers who are subject to the Zionist occupation, clearly expressing this situation in stating: "It is also increasingly obvious that the restrictions arising out of the continuing occupation and expanding settlement activity are effectively blocking the Palestinian economy, and importantly its private sector, from further significant progress."

Mauritania continues to consolidate the rule of law in guaranteeing civil and political liberties. It is also in the process of establishing democracy, social justice and human rights in accordance with the wishes of the President of the Republic, Mr Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, by means of the plans and programmes established by the Mauritanian Government.

My country is bound by the Conventions and Recommendations adopted by our Organization, and this is illustrated by the following recent measures: the signature, in collaboration with the ILO and after consultation of the social partners, of the DWCP; the reorganization of the labour inspection services to ensure wider geographical coverage and make them accessible to the public; an increase in the salaries of public servants, the abolition of taxes on low wages and the reduction of taxation rates for higher wages, and the application of both these benefits to private sector workers, which shows the interest of the President of the Republic in the working class in general and in low-income workers in particular; further training for managers and social partners working in the social sphere; the amendment of certain provisions of the Labour Code in order to improve skills and boost the competitiveness of enterprises and increase incomes and protection for workers; strengthening the capacity and resources of central and regional administrative structures – accordingly, new equipment has been supplied to the administration and the labour inspectorate; and extension of the services of the National Social Security Fund and formulation and implementation by the National Occupational Safety and Health Office of a five-year strategy to promote occupational health in our country.

All these actions will contribute towards establishing universal social protection coverage and trade union plurality in our country. Free and fair occupational elections will be held soon in order to fix the level of representation of trade union federations.

The work of our Conference will enable us to examine many issues relating to the conditions of work and living standards of workers, and to enhance the national labour legislation to ensure better protection for workers and preserve social peace in the world.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the ILO for its ongoing efforts to promote and develop different aspects of social policies and to achieve social peace, and I wish this session of the Conference every success.

Mr PEIRIS (*Employer, Sri Lanka*)

I consider it a privilege and an honour to represent one of the oldest employer federations in Asia, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon, at this

102nd Session of the International Labour Conference this year.

Today, the world of work is facing tough challenges. Global growth has slowed down and unemployment has started to increase, leaving a total of 197 million people without a job in 2012. The unemployment rate is set to increase again and the number of unemployed worldwide is projected to rise by 5.1 million in 2013, and by another 3 million in 2014. Young people remain particularly stricken by the crisis. Currently, 73.8 million young people are unemployed globally.

For the last 14 years, the ILO has been promoting the Decent Work Agenda within four strategic objectives, one of which has been employment creation. The Global Jobs Pact, which was adopted in 2009, called upon countries to introduce job-centred policies. Notwithstanding all of this, statistics are rising to astonishing proportions. How must the ILO respond to these challenges? Shouldn't the ILO be less prescriptive and more proactive? Shouldn't the ILO be less critical and more practical? Above all, shouldn't the ILO acknowledge the unique diversity of its constituents and postulate standards that are realistic in the world of work?

We Employers are certainly encouraged by the words of the Director-General of the International Labour Office at the Conference this year. He told the Employers that it is incumbent on the ILO and its leadership to do everything possible to make sure that the ILO is relevant and useful, and reaches out to the business sector. This can only be a reality when the ILO is ready to hear and respond to every single voice in that sector.

Sri Lanka has developed a labour policy which recognizes creation of employment as one of its four policy directives. Sri Lanka is poised towards economic development. The Government forecasts per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$4,800 by 2016. But, there is much to be done in creating an enabling environment for employment growth in Sri Lanka.

We are happy that the social partners in Sri Lanka very recently signed the DWCP which sets out country priorities for the next four years. However, we need to acknowledge and accept that decent work needs certain basic decent conditions. Decent work necessarily requires a decent enabling environment for employment generation. Decent work requires flexible work arrangements without restrictions inhibiting access to employment to any particular section of society. Decent work requires a proper labour relations framework that will focus on strengthening workplace relations between employers and employees. Decent work requires recognition that there is unlikely to be work or jobs everywhere that are equally remunerative and attractive, or equally satisfying.

The time has come for employers to look beyond their bottom lines and for workers to look beyond their rights. The time has come for governments to do what they ought to do in terms of their country's socio-economic requirements without being inhibited by populist political interests. Tomorrow's challenges in the world of work can only be faced if all social partners work together.

Let me conclude with the famous African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." Let us all work together.

The Panamanian Workers represented in the National Council of Organized Workers (CONATO) and the National Confederation of United Independent Unions (CONUSI) congratulate the President on his election and the Director-General on his vision, reflected in his Report and his opening remarks. Together with the World Federation of Trade Unions, we trust that efficiency and effectiveness in meeting these challenges depend on the level of inclusion of all the sectors in the task outlined by the Director-General.

The Panamanian workers have said before that our labour legislation has not been brought into line with the ILO Conventions and that the Government's behaviour has not changed. This year, 2013, we can say that very little has changed.

We are extremely grateful to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) which demonstrated its solidarity in 2012 and helped to expose the true scale of violations of freedom of association and human rights, preventing President Ricardo Martinelli from misrepresenting this reality to the Conference. In turn, we would like to express our unconditional support today for the union members' right to life and the right to oppose impunity of our brothers and sisters in Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras.

We received an ILO technical assistance mission, and two tripartite dialogue bodies were set up bringing together the parties, but they proved unable to resolve the issues before them. These attempts at tripartism have been put on hold for reasons attributable to the Government, including anti-union persecution, dismissal of public sector union leaders and the refusal to grant new unions legal personality. The Government has not complied with the agreements reached by these bodies, which included ILO experts. The authorities have changed their tune, but in practice, the Government has not stopped its anti-union activities, aggravating its lack of credibility in terms of respect for freedom of association, and repressing popular protests such as the demonstration in Colón in October 2012, when its repression once again resulted in the death of some protestors.

Despite strong economic growth in our country, these are glaring realities, as are political cronyism, abuse of transnational enterprises and social inequality.

The reasons for which the ILO technical assistance mission was first organized have not been resolved. The murderers of the workers in Bocas del Toro in 2010 have still not been punished, nor have those responsible for the deaths of our indigenous colleagues in 2012. There are ongoing criminal proceedings against union leaders, which are based on unfounded charges by the national Government. In October 2012, particularly harsh police repression against workers affiliated to the Single National Union of Construction Industry and Allied Workers (SUNTRACS) led to 300 people being arrested; they were denied the right to legal defence in criminal proceedings that are still before the courts.

In the public sector, over 60 organizations, representing more than 70,000 workers, are not recognized as trade unions. The standards on collective bargaining in the Administrative Careers Act are a dead letter. Collective bargaining does not exist in the Panamanian public sector. The dismissals and

persecution of union leaders have been unrelenting, as is non-compliance with orders for the reinstatement of dismissed officials.

Our purchasing power continues to fall; 45 per cent of the labour force is informal. Youth unemployment is over 15 per cent. We are the second most unequal country in Latin America in terms of wealth distribution, owing to the restrictions on the right to collective bargaining and establishing unions, and the lack of progressive public policies.

Our trade unions are united in facing these inequities and promoting social dialogue as a way of upholding our rights, but the Government should move from talk to action to show that it believes in, and is willing to, respect our labour rights.

Mr SHRESTHA (Government, Nepal)

It is my great pleasure to represent the Government of Nepal and address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I have brought best wishes from the birthplace of Lord Buddha for the success of this Conference, as well as for world peace and prosperity.

Let me congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session. I also congratulate the Vice-Presidents on their election. My delegation extends its full support and cooperation to the President with regard to discharging his important responsibilities. I thank the Office for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference and the Director-General and his team for their commitment and dedication to the Organization.

My delegation acknowledges that the Reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body outline the important vision and motivation of the Organization, as well as the direction for its future work. We particularly take note of the thrust of these Reports that full and productive employment that paves the way towards decent work should be an explicit goal of the global development agenda beyond 2015.

As the ILO embarks on its second century, its efforts and attention will have to be directed more towards the most vulnerable in the world of work. We agree with the Director-General's view that reaching those people is difficult and addressing their needs is even more so but this is a prerequisite for laying the foundation of social justice. After all, the fulfilment of the emotional and physical needs of individuals contributes to economic progress and social development.

Since 1966, when Nepal became a Member of the ILO, we have taken appropriate measures to implement ILO standards and decisions. The Government of Nepal has always been playing an active role in promoting harmonious labour relations among all stakeholders. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 guarantees the "right regarding labour" as a fundamental right. The Government has consistently tried to ensure that the ideals of tripartism are respected and upheld both in the public and private sectors. Smooth and peaceful industrial relations, as well as secure, productive and dignified employment, continue to remain the priorities of the Government.

As a least developed country, Nepal faces a multitude of development challenges beset, primarily, by poverty and hunger. Unemployment is a major challenge for us, as more than 400,000 people enter the labour market every year. Realizing that investment in productive sectors is essential to promote broad-

based and inclusive growth, the Government is committed to creating an investment-friendly environment to encourage greater involvement by the private sector in the country's development process.

As a result of inadequate employment opportunities at home due to the nascent state of industrialization, an economy based on subsistence and agriculture and the post-conflict transitional phase of the country, labour migration has become a primary source of employment for Nepalese youth. Nepal is one of the largest suppliers of migrant labour in the world. Every day, some 1,500–1,800 Nepalese people become migrant workers.

In the context of labour migration, three major challenges stand out from our national perspective: improving regulations; promoting the skills of the workforce to meet external demands; and ensuring and safeguarding the rights and dignity of these workers in the receiving countries. There are challenges associated with the protection of Nepalese migrant workers from forced labour and human trafficking as well. At the national level, we remain effortful in overcoming these challenges in cooperation with the ILO and other relevant agencies by developing suitable policy, legal and institutional frameworks and mechanisms, and implementation of skill development programmes in the country.

The growing phenomenon of labour migration demands closer and more constructive cooperation at all levels: bilateral, regional and international. The benefits that migrant workers bring in have to be duly recognized in both sending and receiving countries. As human beings, these migrant workers, including female domestic workers, naturally deserve protection, respect and dignity. It is our view that greater respect for, and wider observance of, ILO standards by all, together with an appropriate mechanism for monitoring, is necessary to safeguard the rights of all migrant workers regardless of gender and secure their dignified employment. The role of the ILO is critical towards this end.

Nepal is currently going through a transitional period. We are gearing up to hold elections for the Constituent Assembly in the near future to write a new Constitution for the country. The promulgation of the new Constitution will bring the ongoing peace process to a logical end. It is our hope that labour-related fundamental rights, as enshrined in the existing Constitution, will also find a place in the new Constitution.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, I wish to reiterate our full commitment to the principles and goals of the ILO.

Original Arabic: Mr AL BAKRY (Minister of Manpower, Oman)

Allow me to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election, a clear sign of confidence in their ability to bring this session of the Conference to a successful conclusion.

I would like to express my appreciation of the Chairperson and members of the Governing Body, and of the Director-General and his collaborators, for all they have done to enable the Organization to attain fundamental goals that have further enriched its pioneering work.

The Conference agenda touches on a number of key issues: employment, social protection, sustainable development, decent work and social dialogue. These are vital issues that need to be addressed effectively if we are to cope with the economic, social and human challenges of development, particularly

at a time when labour markets are confronted by problems of globalization, and by a financial crisis and its attendant repercussions on the labour market in general and the employment of young people in particular.

Our main economic and social objectives in the Sultanate of Oman are the development of human resources, the creation of new jobs, the raising of the minimum wage – currently 325 Oman rials – and the improvement of the education system at every level and in every domain in order to adapt to the requirements of the labour market.

Recognizing the pioneering role played by SMEs in development and employment, the Sultanate of Oman organized a technical seminar earlier this year, as instructed by Sultan Qaboos bin Said, to make the important role of SMEs better known. The outcome of the seminar was the establishment of a fund to provide SMEs with the financial resources they need to get off the ground. A state body was also set up to facilitate their development, to enhance their role in creating employment for young Omanis and to encourage them to establish their own enterprises so as to satisfy people's desire for independent employment and so that SMEs can contribute to the country's economic diversity, ability to innovate and use of modern technology.

Regarding social protection, and given the Sultanate's global sustainable development and its desire to provide workers with decent jobs in every branch of the economy, international labour standards are essential for a comprehensive social protection system.

We have therefore amended our Labour Code extensively so as to protect workers' rights more effectively, help enterprises to work more efficiently, increase their production capacity and make them more competitive. Workers are also encouraged to establish trade unions, of which we currently have 175 affiliated to the General Workers' Federation of the Sultanate of Oman.

In addition, we are constantly developing our labour inspectorate and improving the inspectors' level of skills by means of proper training, in collaboration with the ILO.

We are taking steps to improve occupational safety and health in all our enterprises. Research has been conducted into improving benefits for workers covered by social insurance and extending that coverage to independent workers, again in collaboration with the ILO, so as to guarantee stability of employment and decent living conditions for the workers and their families.

In order to establish social dialogue on a firmer basis, the Sultanate has set up sectoral committees, under the presidency of the private sector. The committees' members are appointed by the social partners and are responsible for reviewing programmes that will be of interest to the world of work for the next stage in the development of our human resources.

Ms LYNCH (Worker, Ireland)

A hundred years ago Dublin was a place of poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and overcrowded housing. The State did little or nothing to alleviate this. It was workers and their trade unions who stood up to demand better working conditions and to challenge the maldistribution of wealth that was at the heart of their problems. This year, Irish trade unions are commemorating the courage and vision

of working people just as we are facing difficult times again. A full 100 years on from the 1913 lockout, austerity policies are hitting the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest again, there are renewed and sustained attacks on labour standards, and the right to collective bargaining through a trade union is still not recognized.

On the one hand, Ireland has a very good track record in promoting trade union rights abroad, exemplified by the positive role played by Irish Aid's programme of support to help unions grow in Myanmar. Important leadership has been demonstrated by Ireland as part of the European Union presidency in promoting the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). On the other hand, any objective assessment has to conclude that it is a case of "do as I say and not as I do". Ireland itself has not ratified the Convention No. 189 and rather than supporting unions and promoting collective bargaining, there has, instead, been sustained opposition by those who should know better in politics and business to all forms of tripartite social dialogue.

These attacks are one part opportunism, two parts ideology, and three parts the austerity agenda and its false premise that wage-fixing mechanisms and collective bargaining damage economies. Employers, using the deficit panic, claim that if they are required to respect an employee's wish to be represented by their union this will drive away business or lead to reduced employment.

Of course, such threats are not new. For over 100 years opponents of trade union rights have made this claim, but fortunately economic analysis has advanced and, using accurate methodologies, economists can prove wrong those who cry wolf about the alleged negative impact on economies.

A particularly worrying development of recent times in Ireland has been a series of legal challenges taken by employers. These challenges are aimed at striking down every single piece of legal underpinning for the right to collective bargaining. In May of this year, the Irish Supreme Court characterized the law to extend collective agreements as giving rise to the prospect of burdensome restraints on competition for prospective employers and intrusive paternalism for prospective employees.

Disappointingly, employers do not have to look very far afield for more encouragement. Far-reaching and unacceptable changes to Ireland's wage-fixing machinery and collective bargaining rights have been stipulated by the Troika as part of the programme for financial assistance.

The biggest threat to jobs is not trade unions or collective bargaining, it is continued austerity, and it endangers all human rights everywhere if employers can claim a veto on the fundamental human right to collective bargaining through a trade union in Ireland.

That is why it is a matter of grave concern to trade unions in Ireland that, despite the State's solemn commitment given to the ILO at the foot of our complaint that they would amend Ireland's law and give effect to the right of collective bargaining through a trade union, no visible action has yet been taken. Nor has the independent inquiry requested by the ILO been established and if the Minister's reported comments are correct this week, he has no intention of doing so.

The time for nice words is over; action is needed now. That is why the Irish Congress of Trade Un-

ions is requesting ILO assistance to ensure that immediate action is taken by the Government so that legislation is enacted that will require employers to respect the right of workers to collectively bargain through their trade union. By doing so, this year, 2013, a hundred years on from 1913, we can see the delivery of the vision of work and of the right to be in a trade union recognized that was the dream of our brothers and sisters in 1913.

Mr PATWARDHAN (*Worker, India*)

I extend my warm greetings to this august House on behalf of the 486 million workers in India.

This year, India commemorates the 150th anniversary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda. India, as a distinct civilization and cultural habitat, found its most creative expression in him, as his vision of inclusive growth and unification in the world became an instant hit when he spoke to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago on 11 September 1893. Within two decades, the baton of his unfinished mission for poverty alleviation and equanimity was well taken up by the ILO. Indian labour salutes Swami Ji and the ILO for their historic contribution.

The recent intervention of the ILO through the Global Jobs Pact was an apt move to block the distortion imposed by the global recession of 2008. The demand was for a change of equation but the world did nothing much to protect humanity. The ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, was very right to urge European States to take a humanitarian view.

In the past two decades, the forces of unfair globalization, presided over by the World Trade Organization, have imposed reforms to cater for the interests of the rich, but the social cost of growth and development has been paid by workers, poor villagers and peasants. Some bilateral free trade agreements are even more scorching and exploitative, and workers have been victims of exploitation. The approach of inclusive growth demands that policy-makers consult trade unions and ensure balanced growth. Here, the ILO has a big role to play.

The global job situation is worsening. Unemployment has reached new heights of 12.6 per cent and of approximately 18 per cent for youth in recession-hit regions. This is not acceptable. Balanced, sustainable and inclusive growth is the only mantra of a future course. The current session of the ILO has this message for all.

Against this backdrop, India has recorded a growth rate of around 6 per cent, but this growth is full of exploitation and disparities. This era is full of woes for labour. The continuing high spirals of inflation, rising threats to organized labour, contempt of labour laws, precarious jobs, jobless growth, besides wider issues of corruption, etc., moved the Indian trade union movement to take up a two-day national industrial strike in February 2013, and it assumed the avatar of "non-political genuine trade union unity". This unity has successfully emerged as a stronger force to meet challenges. This is a new dawn for Indian workers.

The Indian trade union movement has been focusing on over 300 million rural workers. A sincere effort has been undertaken to extend trade union protection to them. In this, we expect the ILO to lead and guide us because all Indians have a dream that India will "arise out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough; out of the huts of fishermen,

the cobbler and the sweeper; [and that she will] emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets". But India also wants the region of South Asia to be at the forefront of progress, prosperity, development and peace. South Asian peace is a guarantee of permanent global peace.

The path-breaking paradigm opens with the ILO centenary initiatives offering the right path towards sustainable prosperity. However, we have never forgotten that tripartism is the pivotal element that we should never lose sight of. Again, under the supervision of the ILO, the world of work is protected and no one should attempt to destroy it under any pretext. We are sure that, under ILO initiatives, the world will find a way to overcome the challenges thrown at us by the onward march of technology. Human space in the job markets is progressively being occupied by automation. This must change. Successfully dealing with this key issue under the centenary plan would be the historic achievement of this century.

The Indian trade unions wish the ILO Director-General all the best and, once again, I greet the world of work with a traditional Indian prayer, *Sarvepi sukhina santu* – Let the world experience peace and prosperity.

Original Russian: Mr SHOKHIN (Employer, Russian Federation)

The initiatives undertaken by the ILO in the fields of the sustainable development of enterprises and ensuring decent work, and the Organization's commitment to principles of social partnership, play an ever-increasing role in the development of social and labour relations.

The tasks outlined in the Director-General's Report to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference reflect, in many ways, the priority activities of many of the G20 countries. On 1 December 2012, Russia took over the presidency of the G20, and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs took over the presidency of the Business 20 (B20). Attention is drawn to the very serious role of the IOE in formulating the recommendations of the B20. The taskforce of the B20 dealing with job creation, employment and investment in human capital, which is co-chaired by the Secretary-General of the IOE, has prepared recommendations for the Heads of State and Government of the G20 for setting up high-quality systems of mandatory vocational training, for ensuring a favourable environment for entrepreneurship and job creation, and also for finding responses to demographic challenges.

In order to solve the problem of job creation and the modernization of economies, what is needed is the appropriate state policy in economic, financial and credit matters, as well as in the field of social and labour relations, to encourage investment and create decent jobs in the real economy.

One of the obstacles to providing contemporary jobs in the Russian Federation is the shortage of skilled manpower, a problem common to many countries. In the Russian Federation, we are setting up a national qualification system while developing and introducing professional standards and developing independent evaluation of vocational education and its quality. We are paying particular attention to the linkage between the vocational demands placed on workers by employers and the labour market,

and the content of programmes of vocational education and training.

All States, including the Russian Federation, need coordinated action by employers, trade unions and governments to create a flexible labour market that is finely tuned to crises, demographic changes, and technical innovations and achievements. A flexible labour market is part and parcel of a favourable business climate, and is especially important for SMEs. The ageing of the population has a major impact on economic and social systems in many countries, and has certainly affected Russia and its social institutions. By the year 2030, because of the growing numbers of pensioners, the demographic burden on the economically active population will increase one-and-a-half times. So we have accepted the need to reform the pension system. We need a proper reform of the system of early retirement that enables every third worker to retire early, and a compulsory contributory pension scheme. We want to set up a well-balanced and fair pension system that ensures a decent standard of living for all pensioners without hindering the growth of companies.

In Russia, we need to increase the effectiveness of mechanisms and institutions for tripartite interaction between the State, business and workers, at both the federal and the regional levels. We take a positive view of the initiatives for celebrating the centenary of the ILO, as set out in the Report of the Director-General.

Mr PANT (Employer, India)

On behalf of the Indian Employers, it is my proud privilege to congratulate the President on his election as the President of the Conference, which does him and his country a unique honour. We are confident that his vision and great experience will steer the Conference to meaningful and important conclusions, making the 102nd Session of the Conference a landmark event.

The Conference is taking place at a time when global economic cues are not very healthy and recovery is only fragile. Global trade, which had increased by 21 per cent in 2010, went down to less than 1 per cent in 2012. Unemployment has already crossed the 200 million mark and, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), globally, about 175 million people experience multidimensional poverty in health, economic opportunities and living standards.

Employment generation is, therefore, a challenge to face in addressing the situation. The agenda, focusing on employment, social protection and sustainable development, is cohesive, integrated and contextual, which should be a recurrent feature in times to come. Unemployment is common across countries, and developing and underdeveloped countries in Asia and Africa account for more than half of total unemployment. The reasons are: lack of institutional capacity to train people for jobs; inadequate education and vocational training facilities; social and economic barriers to the labour market; and an absence of systematic and structural linkages between industry and academic institutions. These are not only contributing to unemployment, but also to low productivity and to the poor quality of products. Hence, these should be flagged for the ILO's focused attention.

The informal or unorganized sector, which accounts for 94 per cent of the workforce in India, lacks skilled manpower. The ILO should, therefore,

focus on training and skills development as a critical part of the employment generation strategy. This should also include training and entrepreneurship development to promote self-employment, turning jobseekers into job providers.

Finally, removing all barriers and protectionist measures for the free flow of capital, technology and skills across countries, and promoting flexible and open labour policies at the national level, should form an integral part of an employment generation strategy, towards which the ILO should work relentlessly.

We are fully aware that environmental degradation and climate change will increasingly require enterprises and the labour market to adjust to ensure sustainable development. In fact, India was the first country to set up a task force on green jobs. However, poverty reduction, social inclusion and developmental imperatives are equally important requirements for decent and dignified human life. It should, therefore, be left to individual countries to adopt country-specific policies. However, the green jobs concept should continue to be popularized by the ILO.

Social protection is also one of the ILO's four strategic objectives, but only 20 per cent of the global population is covered by formal social security. Employers in India fully support the view that access to adequate social protection is a basic human right and they contribute up to 30 per cent of employees' salaries towards social security, thereby covering some 60 million workers. However, the social protection floor recommended by the ILO cannot take a "one-size-fits-all" approach. It has to be a flexible mechanism rooted in the socio-economic context of each country.

The world today is not divided along a geographical line, but a developmental line, although both share certain problems. Finding a common solution may be difficult but not impossible. Resource mobilization and technological transfer from developed countries and skilled migration from developing and underdeveloped countries with demographic dividends can create a common bridge between the two halves of the world, thus providing a sustainable answer. The ILO is therefore requested to initiate a discussion on developing a multilateral framework for skill migration. I am sure that all ILO plans and policies will be drafted taking this background into consideration. A discussion on employment in the context of demographics is a well-intentioned hint provided by the agenda.

To conclude, we are moved by the recent tragic events in our neighbouring country, Bangladesh, resulting in a huge loss of lives. We offer our sympathy and condolences to the bereaved families. We appreciate the ILO's gesture to dispense a high-level mission to Bangladesh to convey the ILO's deepest concern.

Original Arabic: Mr JERAD (Worker, Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President on his election as President of this Conference and to wish him, on behalf of the Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb, every success in performing his tasks.

I would like to thank Mr Guy Ryder for his forward-looking Report, especially since it is the first Report submitted to the Conference in his capacity as Director-General of the ILO.

The Report of the Director-General provides a deep analysis of the characteristics of the world of work and calls for renewal in response to existing tensions which prevail in all regions, affecting peoples and nations. Despite certain indicators which confirm the beginning of a gradual reduction in the impact of the global financial crisis and its repercussions, its most important manifestations still exist, threatening the pillars of security and stability in numerous countries. Thus, unemployment rates are constantly on the rise as a result of diminishing job opportunities, which have led to the prevalence of informal work and atypical forms of employment. Social protection policies are losing ground in an attempt to find ways of reducing product costs, under the guise of economic policies which only fuelled inflation and reduced purchasing power. These policies are linked to repeated attempts to violate rights and trade union freedoms. These policies run counter to trade union organizations which refuse to subject the working class to the repercussions of the economic crisis, and to the wrong choices emanating from a minority which monopolizes wealth and privileges.

These are the characteristics of the world of work today. There are pockets of tension in many countries, and repeated economic crises which erode social benefits. They are experienced by the countries of the Arab Spring as well as in the Maghreb. Everybody acknowledges the difficulties which continue to beset the transition phase on the way to democracy. In addition to individual and collective freedoms which are at their lowest ebb, societies are affected by political, social and security problems, even including political assassinations and terrorism of all kinds.

It is this reality that prompted the international financial institutions, especially the IMF, to suggest reforms to developing countries in the form of conditional loans. However, we believe that such proposals will worsen matters, since the conditions set for obtaining aid and loans, such as the review of policies subsidizing basic goods, in the current context of widespread poverty, will raise prices, especially the prices of basic goods. This will affect social stability to which developing countries aspire in order to safeguard internal and external investment, failing which any possibility of economic recovery will be jeopardized, consequently affecting efforts to reduce unemployment.

The continuation of Israeli settlements, which represents the last stronghold of colonialism, and the imposition of restrictions on the Palestinian economy will destroy any peace efforts, as was reiterated by the Director-General in the preface to his Report. Accordingly, we would have preferred that the concluding observations contained in the appendix to the Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories be consistent with the preface.

We therefore emphasize the responsibility of the international community in putting an end to the occupation of the Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian territories, as well as the empowerment of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State, with Al-Quds as its capital. We reiterate our commitment to the peaceful resolution of the Syrian crisis, and our firm rejection of any foreign intervention in the current conflict in Syria, and our unconditional solidarity with the demands of the Syrian people for freedom, dignity and social justice.

The ILO, which was established at a time of war, succeeded despite the difficulties in achieving social peace through tripartite commitment to dialogue, which was conditional on the observance of international labour standards. Today, we call on the ILO to continue its struggle for social justice in the second century of its history through the principles enshrined in its instruments and Constitution. The Constitution of 1919; the Declaration of Philadel-

phia of 1944; the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998; and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008 remain a frame of solid reference setting out the means to achieve justice, equality and fundamental rights at work.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.05 p.m.)

Ninth sitting

Friday, 14 June 2013, 3.50 p.m.

President: Mr Paulauskas

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

Original French: Mr BELAHRACH (Employer, Morocco)

I could not hope for a better introduction than that of the President, who has in fact covered all the challenges we need to address, namely employment, training and education.

However, in order to do this, we need a new framework for consultation with the social partners, a new framework for discussion, because we cannot address today's challenges with yesterday's solutions.

Addressing these challenges means reaching agreement between trade unions and employers on a vision that is accepting of the following premises. Firstly, only companies create wealth. Secondly, economic progress makes no sense unless there is social progress and social progress will only be sustainable if companies grow. Thirdly, social dialogue is an everyday necessity, not a passing fad. Lastly, the State should be both a regulator and a facilitator.

With this in mind, employers and trade unionists must reach agreement. Firstly, to build a new framework for consultation, and this is what Morocco has done with the five most representative trade unions by putting in place a new type of partnership agreement. We have signed it in order to work together on the major issues, which are, of course, employment, employability, the right to work, flexibility, the right to strike, etc.

It is important that employers and trade unionists realize that today's challenges go beyond us, and over and above any party political divisions for one simple reason: if there are no more companies, there will be no more workers and no more trade unions.

Bearing this in mind, it is vital that both groups build such a framework together. I want to reiterate that employment is a major issue, which is why I welcome the initiative of the ILO and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) to create an African task force to work on employment and employability issues.

A last word and a last message: employers and trade unions no longer have any other choice but to work together. For their part, Moroccan employers have come a long way by clearly stating that freedom of association is a major issue that must be respected, as is freedom of work.

So, employers and trade unions now have a responsibility to history and to their country's eco-

nomic history to leave something for future generations.

Original French: Mr ELMIGER (Secretary of State for the Economy, Training and Research, Switzerland)

In an economic and social environment that is constantly changing everyone suffers. The people involved at both the national and the international levels all have to adapt to new priorities and rely on social dialogue to identify coherent social and economic policies together. That is why I am gratified by the Report of the Director-General, who alerts the constituents of the ILO to the challenges that face the Organization as it approaches its centenary in 2019 and beyond.

Switzerland is committed to a strong ILO whose expertise in the fields of social justice, implementation of fundamental rights, creation of decent jobs and promotion of sustainable enterprises, vocational training and social protection is credible and commands respect. Switzerland is in favour of a consolidated body of standards that is implemented at the national level and firmly rooted in a multilateral system.

We have great ambitions for the ILO, by which I mean that it should ensure that the constitutional mandate and declarations that have marked the course of its history are properly put into practice, bearing in mind prevailing economic realities and the developments that are likely to take place in the world of work today and tomorrow.

The fundamental values of the ILO's mandate are inalienable and they are as topical as ever. They are values that guide the ILO, even when the economic and social environment is undergoing profound change and when the world of work is suffering the consequences.

That is why the Conference has endowed the ILO with the means of adjusting to these changes. I am of course referring to the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which the Conference adopted unanimously and in whose drafting Switzerland participated actively. The Declaration identifies many ways in which the future of the ILO can be ensured.

But unless we have the political will to strive altogether to attain the goals we have set ourselves, unless the social partners can start trusting one another again, we shall only be able to implement the few aspects of the 2008 Declaration on which everyone agrees. If the ILO continues simply to go for the smallest common denominator, it will not be

able to take the lead in terms of the necessary expertise and effective action.

The challenges posed by technical and technological progress, lifelong education and training, economic recovery, sustainable creation of decent jobs, population growth, the elimination of poverty and inequality, and coherent policy-making, demand that we make a combined effort to achieve social justice. Among other things, this means that the policies pursued by the ministries of labour, of the economy and of finance must be more coherent. This coherence in turn must be reflected in the various international institutions, and here the ILO can act as a catalyst.

Looking at the 2008 Declaration, Switzerland believes that there are two important undertakings that have to be started immediately and brought to fruition regardless of the 2019 deadline. I am referring to long-term projects that affect the ILO both as an institution and in its standard-setting capacity.

First, to take the ILO's labour standards, we have to reinforce the tripartite consensus on a supervisory system that carries due authority, and we have to make the standards more relevant by means of an appropriate monitoring system. We also have to shoulder the political responsibility of adopting and reviewing standards wherever to do so presents a genuine added value for the world of work.

Second, we need to improve the governance of the ILO by successfully reforming the management and decision-making structures of the Organization. Any proposals that we make for 2019 must heighten the ILO's ability to interact with the actors of the real economy.

Switzerland believes that emphasis should be placed on activities which promote sustainable enterprises that generate decent jobs, and on providing advice and guidance on labour market and training policies that are adapted to national circumstances. These activities must be designed to ensure the creation of jobs for the younger generation while maintaining existing jobs.

Unless we engage systematically in social dialogue at both the national and international levels, we shall never get anywhere. We therefore need to find ways of reinforcing social dialogue so that it is universally recognized as the most effective means of devising socio-economic rules and policies on which everyone agrees – both in times of crisis and beyond. Social dialogue and tripartism are the key ingredients of governance in the interests of social justice, that is to say, of labour relationships that are fair and peaceful.

Lastly, objectives such as sustainable development that leaves a small carbon imprint, the eradication of poverty, the gradual introduction of equality of opportunity and pay, equality between men and women, and greater solidarity between the haves and have-nots in the world of work should be cross-cutting themes that are part of all the ILO's activities.

The President has apologized for the way in which this sitting of the Conference has been organized, but I would still like to point out that I was invited to make my statement at 2.30 p.m. and it is now almost 90 minutes later, without there being any justification or objective reason for the delay. I was once President of the Conference myself and I always made a point of starting and ending our work on time. It is a matter of respect vis-à-vis the Members of the Organization, but it would seem

that that is no longer of concern for the efficiency and credibility of our discussions. I shall see to it that the future reforms to the Conference that we shall be discussing correct this kind of shortcoming. I would be grateful if you would have these observations included in the record.

Original Russian: Mr KOZIK (Worker, Belarus)

As the representative of the Workers' delegation of Belarus, which brings together 28 of the biggest trade unions in our country, and as the representative of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, I would like to convey my greetings and wish you the very best in the future.

At the very beginning of my statement, I would like to underline the quality of the Report which has been prepared for us by the Director-General of the ILO. It is an excellent document, it contains some very good ideas and it seems to me that for the first time we have a Report not only based on an analysis of the major global problems which exist in the world today, and which have a direct influence on the position of individuals and their future, but also dealing with problems, not from a general, theoretical point of view, but in practical terms.

Obviously, it tells us to pay attention to the need to find solutions to the problems which it refers to. It goes without saying that the workers of Belarus have always supported Director-General Guy Ryder's approach, as outlined in the Report, because we also think that eradicating poverty can only be achieved through establishing decent jobs.

We want people's value as workers to be taken duly into account, and that cannot be done with the current levels of youth unemployment. As trade unions in Belarus, we have tried to tackle this problem and we have unemployment at the moment of only about 1 per cent. Wages are increasing, and after concluding their education in school or in vocational training or university, young people, according to our law, are offered their first job, sometimes as soon as only four months after they finish school. That means we do not have a youth unemployment problem. We are very happy with that and we are trying to do everything we possibly can to ensure that this situation is maintained in the future.

Having said that, we do see a worsening of problems such as poverty, inequality and wage discrepancies all over the world. We know that the world economy still has sufficient potential, if that potential is used properly to guarantee sustainable and stable economic growth, accompanied by social progress for everyone worldwide. Unfortunately, we do not see that happening. And the reason for that is that national gross domestic product (GDP) in various countries is unfairly distributed, resulting in poverty alongside a class of the super-rich. The workers of Belarus welcome the fact that, today, the International Labour Organization has recognized that creating decent, stable jobs is its number one priority, and will help us to find a way out of this crisis.

However, the worldwide crisis continues, and is having a major effect on many people and on the poorer countries in the world. People are asking, why did this happen? It would be a good idea if we could get an answer eventually and, even better, if that answer is accompanied by the creation of the decent jobs we so greatly need.

The ILO has recognized the need for reform in the world outside these walls but also within its own

walls, inside the Organization. That end has already been discussed here, and we assume and hope that it will continue, on the basis of the ILO Constitution. We have spoken before from this rostrum of the need for reform and the need to carry it out while sticking to the basic labour principles. When we look at the various issues within the mandate of this Organization, we need to avoid double standards, and reforms being carried out or decisions being taken for political reasons of whatever kind.

The social partners of Belarus, together with the Government, and on the basis of a reasonable policy, have been able to maintain stability in our labour market and in our world of work. However, having said that, our economy is subject to the influence of the worldwide crisis as well. We are worried as to whether we will actually be able to maintain our achievements thus far. We are doing everything to ensure that our workers in unions can do that. So that our unions can defend the rights of their workers and members we have established active social dialogue at every level; and collective bargaining and agreements exist at various levels of our economy. That is what we understand by social partnership.

We hope, in the future, to promote social dialogue, and this concept of decent work which is so often discussed at the Conference. We have suggested that, in 2014, at the next session of the Conference, we look at the possibility of considering the question of social partnership in its various forms worldwide and, indeed, also the issue of fighting youth unemployment, because it is such a critical issue.

Ms KHOR (Government, Singapore)

Governments everywhere seek a future of decent and productive work for their citizens. A future where people are engaged in quality jobs in inclusive workplaces. The question is how each of us can best go about achieving this. I will share Singapore's perspective on this issue.

The Singapore economy grew moderately by 1.3 per cent last year, amid global uncertainties. Fortunately, despite the sluggish growth, the overall unemployment rate remained low, at 2 per cent.

The outlook for the world economy has improved since late last year, although uncertainties still persist. Singapore's GDP is expected to grow by 1 to 3 per cent in 2013. Our rate of growth will moderate going forward. This moderation reflects a new phase in Singapore's development, as our economy matures and grows at a slower but more sustained pace, led by improvements in productivity that we are seeking to achieve through capital restructuring.

This is not the first time that we have restructured our economy. Our earlier efforts, in the 1980s and early 2000s, were not without headwinds, but we succeeded and emerged stronger, and more flexible, than before. This latest round of restructuring will not be easy either. In fact, the adjustments we are prodding firms to make are painful in the short term and the productivity-enhancing measures we have introduced will take time to bear fruit. The Government is committed to doing our part by providing support to help businesses upgrade, create better jobs and share productivity gains fairly with their employees, and by investing heavily in areas such as continuing education and training to help Singaporeans improve their skills and raise productivity. We are confident that the collective efforts of the

Government, workers and employers in the process will reap rich rewards.

As our economy matures, the texture of our workforce is also changing. Like other developed countries, Singapore is feeling the twin impacts of low birth rates and the entry into retirement of the baby boomer generation. An ageing workforce presents a complex set of challenges that no single response can completely address. One key measure will be to support the continued employment of older workers as long as they are able and willing. Last year, we introduced a law which requires employers to offer re-employment to their workers from age 62 to 65. We have been encouraged by the smooth implementation of the law and, for this, we have to thank our tripartite partners for their efforts in promoting and preparing for re-employment over the five years leading to the introduction of the law.

We have also developed various assistance schemes to help companies maximize the available labour pool, through job-redesign and training to hire and retain the economically inactive and older workers.

Our population is also becoming more educated with professionals, managers and executives (PMEs) forming a growing proportion of our workforce. We continually review our employment policies to ensure that they meet the needs of this group. This year we will be amending our main labour legislation, the Employment Act, to ensure that more PMEs are adequately protected. We are also reviewing our industrial relations laws to provide PMEs with more avenues of representation.

A key trend observed in Singapore and elsewhere is the slow wage progression of the low income group. We are taking active and targeted steps to uplift this group. We have enhanced a social security scheme called Workfare to provide even more incentives to lower wage workers to work regularly and upgrade their skills. Another example is the progressive wage model, which was developed by the Singapore National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). The Government and employers support this unique approach, which aims to help low-wage workers obtain sustainable wages as they upgrade their skills and raise productivity.

I would like to end by saying a few words about the value of tripartite cooperation. Our economy has remained resilient despite the immense and complex global challenges we face. Importantly, tripartite cooperation and dialogue underpins all the policies I have just shared with you. Tripartism ensures that our policies and measures benefit both employers and workers and that win-win outcomes are achieved. This is how we have worked in past decades, and this will become an even more important feature of how we operate in the future.

Original French: Ms KASSIM (Government, Comoros)

On behalf of the Government of the Comoros, I would like to express my gratitude and congratulations to the ILO on its difficult but promising struggle. It warrants our utmost respect. Today, thanks to the progress achieved by our Organization in promoting decent work, it is no longer seen as an economic risk but as an essential condition of sustainable development.

History seems to show that the ILO is right. The recent ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact testify to the

accuracy of its analysis and the relevance of the solutions proposed by the tripartite partners.

Allow me to thank the Director-General and all his team for his valuable Report and for all the studies submitted to the Conference, which point to the continuation of the work already begun, and the adaptation of our strategic activities to the major changes and new issues in the world of work.

The Government of the Comoros fully supports the Report's analyses, vision and guidelines for a stronger Organization committed to renewal as it approaches its centenary.

The new demographic context, sustainable development, social dialogue and social justice are the major driving forces transforming the world of work. Moreover, they are fundamental for guiding our work and achieving the aims of our Organization, while respecting its immutable values.

You cannot have failed to notice that our millennium has a unique feature, namely the fact that global wealth is increasing while unemployment spreads and poverty persists all over the world.

On our continent, the extent of poverty and its rate of growth is a threat to political, social and economic stability in our countries. Like the international community, African States realize that there have been poor results in terms of the relationship between the growth in employment and the growth in GDP.

In the Comoros, there are signs of economic growth and recovery thanks to the fiscal discipline of the Government, which has allowed us to reach the end of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) programme with the International Monetary Fund, even though we still face acute problems of unemployment and underemployment.

With the support of the ILO, the Government has adopted an institutional mechanism which should help us meet these challenges, notably undertaking to set up an Employment Centre and putting employment at the centre of every programme to promote development and combat poverty. The Decent Work Country Programme, which was adopted in 2010, includes the targeted promotion of employment in terms of both quantity and quality in order to fulfil the Global Jobs Pact and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We are also developing and validating the national employment policy, which is a reference framework that puts jobs first among the objectives of national, cross-cutting and sectoral policies. The Advisory Council on Labour and Employment to strengthen social dialogue is an example of this, relying, as it does, on the process of democratization and liberalization of the economy.

I am pleased to inform this august assembly that we have just ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). As for the application of international labour standards, we revised the Labour Code in 2012 to bring it into conformity with them.

Regarding social protection, we have a new law reforming the Social Security Fund, in order to promote a basis for social protection in line with the ILO's Recommendations.

In 2012, we also adopted guidelines on women's entrepreneurship, to reduce gender inequality and provide for greater participation by women in the country's economic development.

We are aware of the ILO's role as a catalyst in promoting decent work, and its substantial contribu-

tion to our fulfilling our commitments at the international and national levels. The Government has formulated a plan to pay off its arrears of contributions, and we have recovered our right to vote in the Organization.

The Government and the people of the Comoros would like to thank the Governing Body and the Director-General for their support, which takes many forms.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to working to achieve the ILO's objectives, while appealing to all the other international organizations to work alongside the ILO in taking up the challenge of achieving growth with justice, because wherever there is poverty it is a danger for the rest of humanity.

If we want to overcome the crisis and look to the future with optimism, we have to build a broad consensus. Everybody will gain, and nobody will lose.

Long live the ILO and international cooperation and solidarity!

Original Spanish: Mr FRADES PERNAS (Worker, Spain)

I would like to begin by congratulating the Director-General on his first Report, which does not disappoint, by setting out the important and renewed role that the ILO must play in the long term.

This Organization is facing major challenges. One of them is, of course, responding to the far-reaching and dizzying changes in the world of work. It will be no less challenging to address the attempts made to distort its role to promote social justice, especially in view of certain proposals aiming to weaken the supervisory mechanisms on standards.

The two terms that the Report of the Director-General probably uses most often are "tripartism" and "social dialogue"; two concepts that are inherent to the nature of the ILO. In this respect, we greatly regret that our country, which was once a model of social dialogue, is now the model of the absolute opposite.

My country is undergoing an exceptionally difficult situation. In a short space of time, we have suffered the greatest decimation of our social rights since the establishment of democracy. In addition to a dire situation of precariousness and unemployment, with an unemployment rate of 27.2 per cent, we are seeing the dismantling of dearly bought social rights, which are taking poverty and vulnerability to intolerable levels. Drastic labour reforms, making dismissals cheaper and easier, reducing wages and generalizing precariousness, are particularly worrying.

Austerity measures and budget cuts, particularly in health, education and social services, and other public policies, far from providing a solution, are aggravating the crisis. The crisis is also being used as an excuse to do away with rights, under policies which would replace social justice and dialogue with an insecure social system.

Although the present is painful and bitter, the future looks no better. The foundations are being laid for an increase in social inequalities. First, budget cuts are being made in strategic areas for future growth, such as research, education and other social welfare policies. This is going to undermine both our productive model and the future creation of decent employment. A second contributing factor is the particularly serious level of unemployment among young people, which stands at 57.2 per cent and is making a large proportion of young people

turn to emigration as the only way of getting a job. In turn, this means a loss of human capital, which Spain cannot afford, as it will cancel our potential for future growth.

Aside from the enormous sacrifices imposed on Spanish society, bullheaded austerity policies could lead to the economic and social ruin of my country. The greatest proof of the injustice with which this crisis is being addressed is the priority given to bank bailouts, at the expense of our welfare state, while the banks are still not granting credit to companies and families.

Social democracy and the welfare state were Europe's gifts to the rest of the world. However, for millions of people it would seem that Europe has turned its back on these principles, firstly by imposing austerity measures on social policies of national competence, with disregard for national institutions and the fundamental standards of the ILO; and secondly, by setting Europe's social system on a road to self-destruction. It is hardly surprising then, that the European Union is beginning to lose part of its *raison d'être* as an increasing number of Europeans are turning against institutions that have recently offered nothing but suffering.

Given the responsibility which the trade union movement has towards the world of work and Spanish society, at a time that we can safely describe as a national emergency, the General Union of Workers (UGT) and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions (CC.OO), as the most representative unions in Spain, have made a package of proposals to establish wide social and political consensus to bring an end to the unemployment crisis, to recover our social protection system and to bring about a major change in our development model. In short, we need to position policies for the active promotion of protected, decent and quality jobs at the heart of economic policies.

Mr HOU (*Government, Cambodia*)

On behalf of His Excellency Mr Vong Sauth, Minister for Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia, I am honoured at this plenary sitting of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference to describe to you Cambodia's achievements in the field of labour.

The Ministry of Labour, through the implementation of its strategy orientated by the Rectangular Strategy of the Royal Government of Cambodia, has attained key achievements that can be summarized as follows.

The first point is good governance. The Labour Law and the Social Security Law are two core national laws that have been enacted in parallel with the guidance of 13 ratified ILO Conventions, including the eight core Conventions, which can ensure good governance in employment relations. Six technical departments of the Ministry have been playing an active role in enforcing these laws, together with the parallel mandate of the Labour Advisory Committee and the Arbitration Council.

A new Trade Union Law has been drafted and submitted to the Council of Ministers by the Ministry of Labour, while the drafting of a Labour Court Law is under consideration at the Ministry of Justice. The workers' and employers' organizations have been actively involved in a range of discussions on the draft of the new Trade Union Law, with the technical assistance of the International

Labour Office, which aims to ensure proper protection of the rights and benefits of the workers.

The second point is industrial relations and working conditions. Industrial relations, which have improved significantly, ensure good cooperation in the world of work and play a key role in increasing productivity and wages. In addition to the existing Labour Advisory Committee, the Royal Government of Cambodia has established a special tripartite mechanism called the Eighth Working Group, to deal with the issues of industrial relations and working conditions that are raised by the Workers' or Employers' groups. Some key issues have been discussed and directly reported by the Eighth Working Group to the Prime Minister for consideration and decision.

Through the successful implementation of the Better Factories Cambodia Project, good working conditions in the garment sector have been recognized worldwide. Workers' unions exercise their rights freely in the garment sector, which accounts for 85 per cent of total exports and employs more than 500,000 workers.

The third point is social protection. At present, the Injuries Compensation Scheme is functioning actively. Around 600,000 workers have been registered with this scheme. In cooperation with the workers' unions and employers' organizations and with the technical assistance of the ILO, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training has conducted countrywide awareness raising for factory workers on occupational safety and health.

Finally, I would like to give thanks for the technical assistance provided by the ILO and for the cooperation between the countries in Asia and other countries.

Mr MAHMUD (*Worker, Bangladesh*)

My name is Sukkur Mahmud, President of the Jatiyo Sramik League, Bangladesh.

First, I would like to express our heartiest greetings and sincere thanks on behalf of the trade union movement of Bangladesh. I believe that the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference will bring some tangible outcomes for workers' industrial relations, for economic, social and environmentally sustainable growth, and for the equitable distribution of wealth and resources among developed and developing countries.

The tripartite partners and the International Labour Organization have expressed their great sadness at the immense loss of life and serious injuries caused by the collapse of the Rana Plaza in Sabar on 24 April 2013, as well as the recent factory fires at Tazreen Fashions Limited and Smart Export Garments. All parties extended their condolences to the bereaved families of the victims, and we also convey our sympathy to those injured due to these terrible events.

I am delighted to inform you, in this very important forum, that immediately after independence, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, on the initiative of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, ratified 29 ILO Conventions, six of which were core Conventions, including the two core Conventions, 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), so as to uphold workers' rights in Bangladesh. Since then the trade union

movement has gained special momentum in Bangladesh. The trend is still continuing.

At the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, we urged the Government of Bangladesh to expedite the amendment of the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006 in line with ILO Conventions. I wish to inform you that the trade union movement in Bangladesh was fully involved throughout the whole process of amending the Act. We would like to extend our thanks to the Government of Bangladesh because, according to the public commitment of the present Government as reflected in the election manifesto, the proposal for the amendment of the 2006 Act was finalized and approved by the Cabinet last month.

We appreciate the inclusion by the Government of specific provisions to improve workers' labour welfare and safety at work, removing the barriers to the formation of trade unions, securing transparency in the payment of wages and enabling the workers to draw upon the assistance of experts during collective bargaining. We are happy to know that the amended law will be introduced as a bill in the Parliament which is expected to sit on 30 June 2013. We also urge the Government to take proper steps to enforce the law at the factory level.

At the last session of the Conference, we mentioned decent working conditions in the informal economy. In the meantime, the trade union movement in Bangladesh has made some significant achievements in this area. We are glad to note that the Government has proposed bringing within the Labour Act some new sectors such as outsourcing companies, shipbuilding and ship recycling.

We also note that with the assistance of the ILO, a project to formalize the informal economy is in progress in Bangladesh. We hope that as an outcome of that project some new sectors will come under the labour legislation in Bangladesh. But we have to work together to ensure that workers' rights are protected in all informal sectors. We promise to pursue our efforts to secure the rights of the informal sector workers. We would like to express our commitment to securing full rights for workers in export processing zones.

In some sectors, the negative attitude of the employers, the lack of adequate administrative action by the Government and the poor inspection capacity of the labour inspection department are the most important barriers to ensuring the effective enforcement of existing laws in Bangladesh. If proper inspection mechanisms were guaranteed, we could probably have saved the lives of the workers which were lost recently in the incidents in the ready-made garment sector in Bangladesh.

We urge the Government to strengthen its inspection capacity as a matter of urgency. We find from analysis by experts that the lion's share of the profits generated by poor workers in the ready-made garment sector is going into the pockets of the international buyers. We can no longer tolerate the loss of life for the sake of making profits. We urge the international buyers to look to the welfare of the workers and to implement corporate social responsibility actions for workers as well as for their children. We believe that restricting imports of ready-made garments from Bangladesh will limit employment opportunity and negatively affect the livelihood of workers and their family members.

Therefore, we urge the Government, employers and international buyers to work together to im-

prove industrial safety and the working environment in Bangladesh. The trade union movement in Bangladesh would like to extend its full cooperation in this process.

We, the trade union movement in Bangladesh, strongly believe that there is no alternative to a transparent, free, fair and responsible trade union movement in ensuring sustainable industrial development, increasing productivity, maintaining industrial integrity and upholding democracy while pursuing the economic growth of the country.

We believe that effective and meaningful social dialogue is the only way to these goals.

Various kinds of restrictions on trade union activities have been common in the country. In the interest of the country's industrial development, the Government, employers and trade unions should practise the philosophy of the ILO Conventions and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other international treaties. Compliance with employment rights, now demanded by workers everywhere, can be properly addressed by introducing democratic practices and effective social dialogue in industrial relations.

We believe that the Government will ensure effective social dialogue, in the overriding interest of the country's industrial development.

Most of the workers in the industrial sectors of Bangladesh, especially in the ready-made garment sector, are not well informed about trade unionism. We hope that the implementation of the Better Work programme in Bangladesh will change the picture in this regard.

I would like to request that the ILO provide technical support for capacity building and skills development in order to extend social dialogue in Bangladesh.

Mr YIMER (*Employer, Ethiopia*)

At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to you, along with those of the Ethiopian Employers' Federation (EEF). It also gives me great pleasure and it is an honour to deliver a speech at this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive Report.

I am proud to share with you that the EEF colourfully celebrated its 60th anniversary in January this year in the presence of the Prime Minister, His Excellency Hailemariam Desalegn, higher government officials, trade union delegates and over 1,000 employees. Since its establishment, the EEF has played a significant role in paving the way for private economic development in Ethiopia. Above all, the Government has identified the private sector as an engine of growth that translates Conventions Nos 87 and 98 into reality. The Federation has attempted to build a strong foundation for foreign direct investment and industrialization across the nation. Its membership in the IOE and Business Africa, among others, has strengthened its capacity to advocate in favour of the private sector.

As well as participating in international forums, the Federation actively participates in the Labour Relation Board, the Advisory Board, as well as quality control and social protection forums, among others. Issues such as decent work, occupational health and safety, social dialogue, social protection, child labour and trafficking in persons are of major importance to the Federation. In order to achieve

productivity, efficiency and business profitability, the Federation addresses labour relations on a bipartite and tripartite basis. The significance of such efforts has been demonstrated in the agreement signed between the EEF and the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). The Federation is creating a vast international network with different sister organizations, such as the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), the Dutch Employers' Cooperation Programme (DECP), the China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) and African employers' organizations, enabling it to build its capacity and broaden its network.

The new demographic context, which is characterized by "population ageing", has significant implications for employment and social protection policies. It will have a great impact on productivity and earnings, social protection coverage, the sustainability of social security systems, migration and many other issues that require adequate, timely and structural policy responses. This highlights the need for sustainable and quality employment for all, with adequate social protection coverage.

Our Federation has put in place the necessary policies and strategies to foster job opportunities and social protection. It highly encourages its member enterprises and the private sector alike to facilitate access to social security in accordance with the new law. The EEF is committed, and pledges its readiness, to continue its efforts to face the challenges as an active and efficient participant in the formulation and implementation of such national, social and economic policies.

The EEF is an active proponent of social dialogue and tripartism. The EEF considers these to be engines for the promotion of social justice, fair and peaceful workplace relations and, in general, the promotion of decent work. We believe that effective social dialogue magnifies shared interests and perspectives, and brings about workable rules and policies for the benefit of society at large.

The other important issue that demands our attention is the need for environmental sustainability. The EEF believes that effective utilization of resources ensures job security and increased productivity. The EEF is pro-green jobs and intends to fight environmental deterioration, which will eventually endanger the labour market and undermine enterprises and employment.

Finally, I wish to thank the ILO for its continuing support and hope this will be maintained in the future.

Original French: Mr ABDI (Minister of Labour in Charge of Administrative Reform, Djibouti)

It is a tremendous honour and privilege for me to represent my country at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, which is occurring two months after I was appointed Minister of Labour in Charge of Administrative Reform.

In this period of global crisis, which has now been going on for some five years, ministers of labour everywhere do not have an easy task. They are expected to take practical measures to curb unemployment, reform the administration to make it more efficient, and conduct in-depth analyses and produce solutions for promoting social justice.

First of all, allow me to congratulate the Director-General on the high standard of his first Report to the Conference. His analysis of the changes and challenges which are occurring in the world in the

twenty-first century is completely accurate and he has also identified the right approach to enable the ILO to take measures to cope with the ever-changing realities.

We reiterate our support for tripartism, which has always been, and continues to be, a key element in seeking to achieve the objectives of the ILO, and we are grateful for the specific actions described in the Report.

High unemployment, especially among young people, underemployment and its related issues, not to mention marginalization and precarious work, are all issues of serious concern to the international community. These problems should prompt us to seriously rethink our policies and our methods of production, and redirect them to achieve job-rich growth.

Let me briefly outline what my Government has done to promote employment and combat poverty. Before 1999, my country was subjected to a drastic structural adjustment programme imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions and designed primarily to place public finance on a sound footing. Since 1999, employment and solidarity have become major concerns and the wish to introduce a social dimension into public policy was reflected by the establishment on 12 May 1999 of a Ministry of Employment and National Solidarity.

Then the Republic of Djibouti embarked on structural reforms in order to establish an institutional framework which would help to attract foreign investment and improve the business climate. Thus, a number of legal codes – relating to labour, investment and business, and children – and the law on the privatization of public enterprises were all adopted.

These reforms have borne fruit and my country has now seen a great deal of investment in the port, tourism and building sectors. As a proportion of GDP, investment increased from 8.3 per cent in 2005 to 23 per cent in 2007.

In order to achieve better results in the area of employment, the Government established the National Employment, Training and Job Placement Agency (ANEFIP), which is exclusively dedicated to matching jobseekers and enterprises in relation to employment opportunities. To support these structures, a national programme for job placement and adaptation was devised. Unfortunately, this programme was never implemented owing to financial problems.

Since being appointed as Minister, I have been in a position to assess the main criticisms levelled, especially by companies, at young people coming out of industrial and commercial training. Reference is often made to lack of skills, non-existent or inadequate qualifications, lack of experience and inadequate command of English. That is why, in some sectors, the jobs available are taken by foreign workers.

On the basis of the above, and since vocational training now comes under the Ministry of Education, it has been agreed that our two Ministries will cooperate and together bring about a radical change in vocational training, which will be revamped to a high level to meet the needs of the labour market and respond to the wishes of the enterprises consulted.

As far as social protection and health are concerned, in February 2013, the Republic of Djibouti took a major step forward in adopting Act

No. 99-13, extending health-care coverage to self-employed workers, who will now have the same coverage as all other workers.

Reducing inequality in access to health care by extending coverage to self-employed workers is not only one of the priorities of my Government but also forms part of our general health policy aimed at securing access to health care for everyone.

Moreover, it was out of the desire to help the lowest wage earners that the Government raised the minimum wage from US\$100 to US\$200 in 2012, in an unprecedented measure.

In conclusion, let me say that job creation, improving the employability of young workers and vocational training are three areas which have constantly been identified as priorities by the different governments in Djibouti since 1999.

Employment policy is no longer seen as a sectoral policy but rather as a policy to be pursued in coordination with general macroeconomic policies. Tackling unemployment and creating jobs have now been incorporated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs into a forward-looking plan entitled "Djibouti Vision 2035".

Mr MARTONO (*Employer, Indonesia*)

First of all, on behalf of the National Board of the Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO), I would like to congratulate Mr Nidal Katamine on his election to preside over the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

APINDO shares the spirit of "Building a future with decent work", which is the particular theme of the 102nd Session of the Conference.

It has been APINDO's priority to promote and campaign for the implementation of decent work through green jobs, the creation of employment, a more realistic social security plan, efforts to enhance the competency of the youth labour force and to empower society through entrepreneurship, as well as to actively promote social dialogue as part of the quest to increase employee welfare and productivity and, ultimately, to promote investment and business sustainability.

APINDO strives to develop productive and competent human capital of good character, through training and development programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including entrepreneurship and empowerment programmes across Indonesia. This effort is intended to improve the people's welfare and reduce the unemployment rate. In the last ten years, APINDO has consistently promoted the creation of employment in this informal sector and will gradually shift the priority to the formal sector, as more than 70 per cent of the national economy is supported by this sector.

Aside from that, APINDO is taking real steps to analyse and draw up the principles of social security, based on the universality of protection for workers, the non-discrimination principle, the enhancement of work quality through increased employee competency, and a comprehensive social security system. Thus, APINDO gives flexible guidance to employers so that they can provide their employees with social security accordingly.

APINDO is fully aware of environmental issues such as climate change and global warming and has been actively participating in efforts to reduce the impact of wrong business practices. Together with the Government, APINDO has pursued policies on environmental conservation to help protect the eco-

system, reduce the use of energy, raw materials and water, and also reduce waste and pollution by actively campaigning for programmes such as Go Green, Green Supply Chain, and other activities carrying the spirit of emphasizing work decency and safety. In this way, green jobs would not only create abundant job opportunities but also provide decent work for people and increase society's role in environmental conservation.

APINDO strives to systematically address unemployment, and expand and create green jobs to overcome environmental destruction. In the next five years, APINDO's serious efforts in these areas would be the priority of the association's members nationwide through the following programmes.

First, programmes concerning job opportunity, entrepreneurship and green jobs: to promote competency-based education and training in preparation for entering the labour market; to support youth entrepreneurship and foster the growth of SMEs; to encourage the business sectors to create green jobs.

Second, programmes concerning social security and job security: to ensure the implementation of social security for improved workplace productivity; to boost productivity by increasing employee welfare, particularly through the provision of compensation and benefit schemes according to employee performance and capability.

APINDO is fully aware of the need for decent infrastructure and facilities in order to support the Government's particular effort. APINDO is joining hands with its members to help accelerate regional economic growth through investment in the relevant sectors.

We hereby inform you that APINDO is taking real steps to promote the creation of employment, and to increase the competency of future workers and existing workers through internships, management trainee and corporate social responsibility programmes, in which corporate leaders provide lessons at training centres and will impact employees' productivity and welfare in due course.

We do hope that this year's session of the Conference will bring enlightenment, opportunities and certainly the support to create eco-friendly employment and the realization of social security and job security for people worldwide.

Together with the Government, trade unions, the ILO and other related parties, APINDO relentlessly promotes the creation of green employment on the basis of harmonious industrial relations, which will eventually lead to productivity, prosperity and a conducive investment climate. APINDO will consistently play an active role in the development of Indonesia towards a brighter future.

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

The General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU), which represents over 40 million unionized workers, considers that the Director-General's Report is highly topical. As we approach the centenary of the ILO, we need to make an appraisal of how far the Organization has come, reflect on the current global situation and ensure that the mandate of the ILO is defined accordingly for the future.

It is an undeniable fact that, through its tripartite mandate, the ILO has made a considerable contribution to building civilized labour relations worldwide and establishing the social dimension of globalization. Thanks to the ILO, we have entered the era of

globalization equipped with a whole array of instruments, including the ILO Conventions and Recommendations, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, and the Global Jobs Pact.

The GCTU agrees with the basic premise of the Report that, in today's world which is very different from the one that existed when the ILO came into being, it is essential that the Organization remains equipped to deliver its mandate. So we need to modernize its goals, its tasks, its working methods and its structures. At the same time, these innovations, albeit essential, must not undermine the foundations on which the Organization has built its success.

The basic cornerstone of the Organization is, of course, tripartism. We must avoid any attempt, disguised as renewal, to undermine the foundations of social dialogue or abolish the role of its participants, in particular the trade unions, to call into question their right to represent their members or to destroy traditional worker-employer relations. We must not, in any circumstances, accept any alternative that seeks to replace social dialogue or collective agreements.

It is also important that we maintain the rhythm of standard setting, the cornerstone of this Organization, if only because there are many global issues that have still not been resolved by international labour standards. The significance of the latter should not be underestimated. For the trade unions, ILO Conventions and Recommendations serve as guidelines and a source of support in their struggle to defend workers' rights. Furthermore, it is useful to compare our national labour legislation with these instruments. This is why the GCTU carefully monitors the process of ratification and observance of the ILO fundamental Conventions in the countries of our region and examines these issues each year in its executive committee meetings.

We agree with the statements in the Report underlining the major role that the ILO has to play in the quest for social justice. We need to speed up what we are doing to create conditions that are conducive to decent work. At the seventh Congress of the GCTU in September 2012, we adopted a new slogan for the unions in our region for the next five years, namely: "Reliable guarantees for decent work and social justice".

The recent economic crisis has shown all of us how necessary it is to have an effective system for protecting workers from social upheaval. Accordingly, the unions in our region are fighting for access at national level to basic social protection as called for in the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

We agree with the seven proposed centenary initiatives set out in the Director-General's Report. However, we would like to add an eighth, relating to multinational enterprises, which are the biggest group of employers in the world. We need to find answers to the following questions: How can we build labour relations in a global economy? How can we ensure that global capital assumes its fair share of responsibility for the observance of labour standards? How can we ensure that multinational enterprises come within the scope of the ILO supervisory system?

The ILO will have to face these challenges in the next century of its existence, and these issues

should be placed on the agenda of the advisory group on the world of work which is due to be set up.

Original Arabic: Mr SHAHER SA'ED (Worker, Palestine)

Allow me to greet you all on behalf of the workers of Palestine. I would like to congratulate the President of the Conference on his election.

My sincere thanks goes to the Director-General, Guy Ryder, for the responsible and professional work of the evaluation mission that recently visited Palestine and Syrian Golan. The mission's report describes the situation in Palestine under Israeli occupation and accurately documents how the Israeli occupation forces dominate every facet of life of the Palestinian people, and especially that of workers.

The Conference agenda deals with universal and vital human concerns and problems, and the delegates' participation in the discussions have provided a very useful exchange of views, knowledge and experiences and discussion of our vital interests – social dialogue, social protection, decent work, social security, child labour, etc. – which have given the agenda an added significance. We would like to express our appreciation to the Director-General for all that he has done to open the path to a constructive social dialogue.

The dangers encountered by Palestinians in general, and Palestinian workers in particular, are grave, threatening as they do every moment of every day in their lives. They are the product of Israeli practices and violations that are perpetrated against the workers every day at security checkpoints, where they suffer every imaginable humiliation and indignity, including body searches that defy principles of morality and humanity while they are herded together in rooms that are barely big enough for four people. They are also searched with X-ray equipment that exposes them to dangerous radiation which, used on a daily basis, can cause mortal illnesses.

The mission was able to learn from the reports we presented to it about the practices employed by the Israelis against our people and our workers. One such practice was responsible for the recent accident at Betula, near Hebron, when the security forces pursued the workers with police dogs across the checkpoints at the foot of the wall of racial segregation.

From this independent rostrum, we denounce the exploitation of our workers by intermediaries who traffic in work permits and rob them of their wages, for which they have to work long hours without any legal or social protection, without holidays and without any form of occupational safety and health. This discrimination is practiced without any consideration for principles of morality or social conscience.

The settlements and the wall of segregation are the main obstacles to communication between the West Bank and Gaza and between the villages and cities.

I must mention specifically the situation in Gaza, which has been completely cut off ever since 2006, and the permanent geographical (and therefore economic and social) separation by which it is being stifled. The latest raids on Gaza caused the death of hundreds and the injury of thousands, including women, children and old people, as well as the destruction of hundreds of houses, factories, farms and

worksites that provided jobs for at least a few of the unemployed.

It is time to put an end to the Israeli occupation of our land, of our homeland and of all occupied Arab territories, especially the Syrian Arab territory of the Golan. We wish peace and security for Syria. We believe that it is time this Organization imposed sanctions against Israel for its violation of the most elementary rules of conduct and human rights.

Speaking as Palestinian workers and on behalf of the workers of the whole world, we aspire to full membership of the International Labour Organization, especially since the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State.

Unemployment and poverty are the daily lot of the people of Palestine. If only the occupation can be ended, we will be able to participate on an equal footing with you in bringing about justice, peace, equality and social justice, social protection, decent work and freedom from poverty. This is our collective responsibility as human beings.

Finally, I wish to express our support for a fair global peace based on Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, the creation of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital and the unconditional release of all prisoners without any restrictions.

Mr DE PEIZA (*Worker, Barbados*)

I bring greetings to this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference from the workers of Barbados.

I wish to acknowledge that your Report and that of the Director-General have signalled that the ILO should move to institute a programme of reform to drive capacity building, through a renewed focus on social dialogue and labour standards. The discussions of the issue of social dialogue and collective bargaining have thrown up some interesting positions on the observance of practices in various member States. The respect for, and observance of, these principles is paramount if social justice is to be achieved. I can report that the practice of collective bargaining is institutionalized within the industrial relations landscape of Barbados. It is to be stressed that Barbados subscribes to the principle of voluntarism, which to all intents and purposes, forms the bedrock for the practice of collective bargaining in both the public service and the private sector.

It is to be admitted that Barbados is yet to adopt the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154). However, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are embodied in Chapter 361, section 40, of the Trade Unions Act, in the Laws of Barbados. Added to this, a grievance handling procedure is included in the Public Service Act 2007-41, and the newly proclaimed Employment Rights Act, which relates to the private sector and statutory boards. Here, the role of the trade union is recognized and the process of collective bargaining is emphasized.

In his Report to the opening of this session of the Conference, the Director-General cited the need for reform if the ILO is to be more relevant and effective. For this to be achieved, the ILO must be able to successfully wield its influence in getting member States to embrace and to observe standards, and to implement policies set by the Organization. In

assessing its effectiveness, the ILO has to re-examine its established processes of accountability for the purpose of satisfying the Organization that member States are putting the appropriate mechanisms in place to support and observe the fundamental principles of workers and the fundamental rights of workers. In this specific instance, this applies to the promotion of social dialogue and collective bargaining. It is for member States to develop a culture that allows for the existence of social dialogue and collective bargaining. Our considered opinion is that social dialogue and collective bargaining will more than likely exist where a culture and climate of participatory democracy prevail.

The birth of the Social Partnership in Barbados, which dates back to 1991, has served to embrace and promote voluntarism, social dialogue and collective bargaining. This is reflected in the successive Protocols signed by the Government, labour and the private sector. To underscore the point, the Preamble of Protocol VI refers to the fact that the social partners subscribe to the principles enunciated in the International Labour Organization's Conventions Nos 87 and 98, the ILO 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and Convention No. 144.

Barbados continues to boast an industrial relations system which allows for collective agreements that are based on a gentleman's agreement made acceptable by custom and practice, and not driven by the force of law. Admittedly, Barbados is yet to adopt Conventions Nos 154 and 151 that I spoke about earlier. I wish, however, at this time, to note that, in Barbados, we have registered trade unions and staff associations which are members of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados. However, there is a need for the law to be amended so as to reflect that police, prison and fire officers are free to associate. With regard to the right of police, prison and fire officers to freely associate, the ILO should use its good offices to influence member States to amend relevant laws, so as to allow these workers the right to enjoy the fundamental human right of freedom of association. It is for this august body to accept that to exclude any sector within the public service or the private sector from being able to associate is discriminatory in nature, and effectively does not lend to decent work. We therefore identify with the sentiments of the Chair of the Workers' group, that social dialogue is to be strengthened and not undermined. The ILO must therefore continue to encourage workers' organizations to commit to a united effort, working under the umbrella of national centres, in promoting labour standards.

Finally, it is for the ILO to recognize that it has an important role to play in ensuring its relevance and effectiveness. The way forward in this quest is for the ILO to commence a research programme, which is intended to identify best models of social partnership at work, which in turn could be recommended to other member States.

Barbados as a member of the Small Island Developing States has such a model to showcase.

Solidarity forever.

Original Burmese: Ms HTAY (Worker, Myanmar)

My name is Than Than Htay and I am from the Basic Agriculture and Farmers' Association, which was formed under the Labour Organization Law of Myanmar. I was democratically and unanimously

elected as a delegate to the 102nd Session of the Conference by farmers and workers at the Workers' Labour Organization Leaders Forum on 29 and 30 April 2013.

I take this opportunity, first of all, to express our heartfelt thanks to the ILO, Governments, Employers and Workers for their uninterrupted support of the process of democratization in Myanmar. Allow me to appeal for your continued assistance in the development of democracy in Myanmar.

Today, we can see that Myanmar is engaged in a process of reform for the country's democratization and development. At the same time, there are other important reforms that we need to attend to continuously. For example, we still need to create jobs, to raise people's income, to improve the level of skills and to provide safe workplaces where workers can enjoy good health and gender equality.

Following the principles of accountability, transparency and careful foresight in every domain, the workers and farmers of Myanmar are now collaborating with the Government and other stakeholders involved in the process.

Regarding future investment in Myanmar, we would like it to focus on employment generation, on the acquisition of technologies and on the dignity of the people of Myanmar. We call on domestic and international employers to treat the workers, communities and other stakeholders with a proper sense of responsibility and accountability.

We are seeking to improve the lives of workers in accordance with internationally recognized standards, and in doing so we are trying to favour the tripartite approach.

We acknowledge the fact that the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, led by President U Thein Sein, has formed a commission to investigate the issue of farm lands that were confiscated and is preparing to return them to their owners or pay a fair price for them. Plans are also being drawn up in Myanmar for the standardization of the minimum wage of civil servants and workers in industry and other sectors. Myanmar has made tangible progress in handling such issues as forced labour and child labour, and the international community has acknowledged its efforts by lifting restrictions. We call on the ILO to discontinue all its remaining restrictions on Myanmar, as doing so will help to improve the living conditions of our workers.

For long-term progress in these areas, the issues must be assessed and dealt with by all the political, social and economic stakeholders. We request the international community, governments, the ILO, employers and international trade unions to provide Myanmar with the assistance it needs if it is to deal with those issues effectively.

Because of the shortcomings of some businesses and lower-level officials, there are sometimes weaknesses in cooperation and implementation, and we shall therefore try in future to ensure that the Government of Myanmar and the regional governments handle these issues properly.

We, the people of Myanmar, will cooperate with ILO staff and officials in Yangon in their systematic efforts to bring about a more democratic society in Myanmar.

Finally, we would like to thank the ILO's officials, the public sector, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and trade unions for their assistance in

convening a forum to elect trade union delegates democratically to attend this Conference.

Original French: Mr LOKOSSOU (Worker, Benin)

On behalf of the College of Secretary-Generals and in my own capacity, I would like to express my warm gratitude for the opportunity you have given me to address this International Labour Conference in its 102nd Session. Allow me also to congratulate the President on his brilliant election to the opening session of this Conference.

You will recall that at the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, my colleague Pascal Todjinou, Secretary-General of the General Confederation of the Workers of Benin (CGTB), spoke from this very platform on behalf of the Workers' delegation of Benin, stressing three key points: the repeated violation of the Constitution and laws of the Republic by the Government of President Boni Yayi since his assumption of office in 2006; failure to live up to the commitments undertaken by the Government towards the workers of Benin; and the denial of fundamental freedoms.

The relevant comments made by my colleague a year ago did not dampen the Government's dictatorial behaviour in preying on public and democratic freedoms, but accentuated its worst excesses. Indeed, my country's Government continues to engage in acts of provocation, intimidation, harassment and bans against peaceful demonstrations in response to this abuse of power. Furthermore, while senior government officials, ministers and other regime lackeys are able to organize all sorts of marches and demonstrations all over the country, including prayers in churches, temples, mosques and other Vodunist convents for the President of the Republic, in Cotonou and other cities, workers, job-seekers, persons with disabilities and unemployed graduates, among others, are formally banned from making the slightest protest against the numerous cases of social injustice observed in the country.

The most striking example of this is last year's disastrous organization of a competition to recruit permanent civil servants by the Minister of Labour and Public Service, the results of which, marred by widespread fraud, are being challenged by trade union organizations and other citizens. Social dialogue, which would enable the resolution of some disputes between the social partners, has become non-existent to the point where the Government only pays lip service to social dialogue in the corridors of the International Labour Office. The Government is taking advantage of this clear lack of dialogue to do away with public freedoms, including the freedom of opinion, press and, above all, association. Having removed several political parties of the opposition, the "refounded" Government is also trying to muzzle inconvenient trade unionists to establish a single party line in Benin, which is known for its long tradition of social struggle.

This was behind the Government's arrest and imprisonment of several colleagues. Pascal Todjinou, the Secretary-General of the CGTB, spent a short time in the civil prison of Cotonou for the insignificant act of failing to insure his car. Other colleagues, including Gilbert Kassa Mampo and Philibert Ali Yerima, both members of the Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Benin (CSTB), have been held in the prison of Misséréte since February 2013. I myself was also the victim of arbitrary arrest by the police on 17 May 2013, and was marched off

to the premises of the Economic and Financial Brigade. I was finally brought before the Public Prosecutor, on the orders of the Government, on trumped-up charges of failing to denounce the actions of a Director-General who had been arbitrarily appointed by the President of the Republic and was in receipt of political favours in return for his services. The safety and life of other secretary-generals of trade union federations, and even of grassroots unions, are also in serious danger.

In the absence of dialogue, the demands of workers, especially teachers, which are the subject of a complaint dated 10 April 2012 before the Committee on Freedom of Association, have not yet been satisfied. The trade union confederations are aware that the negative effects of a globalized economy are paralysing the business sector and undermining the promotion of decent work in our country. But instead of looking for ways of creating new jobs through economic operators in the context of public-private partnership, the Government is engaging in a methodical fiscal harassment of honest businessmen who do not toe the party line and who do not engage in underhand activities or other arrangements with the regime. Benin is ailing in moral, political, social and economic terms, as dearly bought democratic rights and liberties are whittled away on all fronts and on a daily basis.

In this light, it is not an exaggeration to state forcefully that we have a de facto two-track system of democracy. It is for all these reasons that I invite the ILO authorities, dedicated to the noble ideals of justice and social peace, to dispatch a commission of enquiry to Benin as soon as possible, to investigate the allegations brought against the Government for violations of public freedoms and human rights. After all, prevention is better than cure.

Mr EDRALIN (*Worker, Philippines*)

Greetings of peace and justice to all. This year's Conference theme of "Building a future with decent work", reflects our hopes as workers. It is a hope that refuses to die even after decades of intense struggle and many lives lost. It gave rise in 2012 to NAGKAISA (United), the largest coalition of labour in the Philippines, whose membership now embraces the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL-Sentro), the Coalition Against Contractualization (KONTRA), the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) under Brother Mendoza, and 49 other labour organizations.

We, in NAGKAISA, welcome the Report of the Director-General and agree that the ILO must carry forward its struggle for social justice into the second century of its history. We recognize the contribution of the ILO to achieving a future with decent work. However, the future must be founded not just on hope and efforts to build a better society, but on the experience now of social justice, equality, inclusive and sustainable development and *vivir bien* (living well).

It is in this light that we bring a most urgent appeal to the ILO, that the Philippine Government be placed on the ILO's shortlist of countries whose law and practice still do not fully adhere to ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98, having failed to bring to justice the perpetrators of numerous cases of extrajudicial killings.

For many years now, we have exposed the rampant violations of workers' fundamental rights to

organize, bargain collectively and strike. Today, trade union killings continue to happen with impunity, even though such cases have drastically declined in the past two years. Of the 59 cases of extrajudicial killings in the last five years, 23 have been treated as "cold cases" because no one has stepped up to testify, with only three being formally brought to court. Despite repeated commitments by the Government to give justice to all the victims, not one single case has been resolved.

Another insidious practice increasingly used is the filing of malicious and/or fabricated criminal charges by companies in order to stop workers from exercising their rights. Precarious work is rampant and is used as a tool to avoid or bust unions in the private and public sectors. It comes in many guises: contractualization, "job order" workers, project employment, and "volunteers" in health, education and social services delivery. The Government, as an employer, is the biggest culprit.

Meanwhile, the right of public sector workers to self-organization and collective bargaining continues to be restricted even as these workers are threatened by privatization, outsourcing and the systematic shrinkage of the public sector. We recognize that governance reforms for transparency, accountability and participation are essential, but such reforms should never be at the expense of the rights of state workers. As a consequence, trade union density in the country continues to decline, from 8.7 per cent in 2010 to 8.6 per cent in 2012. At the same time, female workers still struggle with economic marginalization, political subordination and violence in the workplace and in communities.

We recognize the efforts of the present Aquino Administration to ease the economic burdens of Filipino workers, and the initiatives of the Department of Labor and Employment, working with the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, to align the country's law and practice with ILO Conventions, including its successful efforts to resolve the conflict in Temic Automotive Philippines. However, these efforts are being eclipsed by the inadequate, incoherent and, in some cases, contradictory actions of the executive branch, including the Department of Justice, the armed forces of the Philippines and the Philippine national police, as well as the judicial branch, especially the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals.

In the report the Philippine unions submitted to the ILO high-level mission to the Philippines in September 2009, and again in a letter to the ILO Director-General in April 2013, we explained the futility of pursuing labour justice, because it is simply too expensive and too complicated, as a simple legal action takes years to conclude. To make matters worse, the Supreme Court issues judicial orders against workers. Although the Aquino Government has so far failed to implement the recommendations of the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association on one such order, called the Velasco Decision on the Dusit Hotel case, where the Supreme Court decided that an actual work stoppage is no longer an essential element of a strike, the same ruling is being used to declare other forms of workers' concerted actions as illegal strikes.

For some of us, this is nothing short of a war being waged against workers. For others, it is just bad capitalism. We, in NAGKAISA, may have our nuances, but we all agree that a future founded on decent work can never rest on the exploitation of

workers. We are conscious that this situation exists not only in the Philippines but also, or even more so, in Nepal, Malaysia, Cambodia, Bangladesh and often in the Gulf States. So we call on the ILO to stop all these governments that pay lip service to our Conventions, while sowing a culture of fear and impunity among their people, including our own.

Original Spanish: Mr LARA ENAMORADO (Worker, Honduras)

My fraternal greetings to all the comrades attending the 102nd Session of the Conference! Thank you for this opportunity to attend this Conference.

I would like to congratulate the President of the Conference and his team for the excellent way in which they have conducted its business.

The ILO has played a decisive role in providing a certain degree of peace, particularly in our underdeveloped countries. Unfortunately, though, it has not managed to raise the awareness of other sectors that are concerned above all with economic gain rather than with the social cause or the living conditions and rights of workers.

The Director-General's Report shows us the considerable progress that the ILO has made and that the only way out of the crisis is through consultation and negotiation, and not by placing the burden of the crisis on the workers' shoulders.

Dialogue may be the solution to the economic crisis, but it has to be frank, sincere and equitable, and it should not translate economic costs into social costs that ruin workers' family lives.

The ILO cannot allow itself to be party to deregulation, privatization and neoliberal policies that take away the little the workers still have.

This is the belief that we wish to affirm before this august assembly of Workers, Governments and Employers, as a genuine expression of tripartism that must be respected.

We want to take this opportunity, once again, to denounce the situation confronting trade unionism in Honduras, where we constantly have to denounce the violation of, and disregard for, workers' rights which, far from declining, are becoming more and more serious.

First of all, work paid by the hour, which we have denounced time and again in this Organization, continues to undermine labour stability and diminish the rights acquired by the workers. The Government of Honduras has even gone so far as to propose that its programme be extended for another three years and to threaten that it could become permanent.

Second, the Government has launched a frontal attack on teachers' unions, denying the rights that protect the independence of their trade union organizations and even trying to undermine the rights of the union officials, which the ILO is committed to protect. We therefore call on this international body to issue a statement immediately calling for the protection of our unions' continued existence.

Third, we condemn the violence in the agricultural sector in Honduras, which has caused a lot of bloodshed among farm workers because of the apathy and even collusion of the Government and its institutions.

Fourth, we denounce the alarming level of violence in Honduras, which stems very largely from the climate of impunity, public and private corruption and organized crime that are responsible for the lack of insecurity of the population.

For all these reasons, we vehemently appeal for the full and unwavering support of this leading Or-

ganization, and for its backing of a comprehensive programme to rescue not just our workers' rights but the whole institutional framework of Honduras, so that we can build a future based on decent work.

Original French: Mr CHIKH (Representative, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)

The focus of the ILO is building a future with decent work. That shows us that workers' rights and respect for their dignity are essential for building a future which meets our legitimate hopes for lasting economic and social development. We cannot build the future without taking account of demographic change, which has an effect on the economy, on the labour market and on the development of our societies.

Youth employment, women's employment, entrepreneurship, inclusion, social justice and the development of human skills in the world of work are at the very heart of the agenda of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for development and poverty reduction.

At the moment, our member countries are experiencing significant unemployment rates among young people and women. Only 41.6 per cent of women and 32.8 per cent of young people are in work, even though young people make up a very large proportion of the population of member countries of the OIC.

It is the same picture as across the world, with macroeconomic instability and a lack of economic growth, together with changing demographic trends, being a source of major concern for our future generations.

The consequences in terms of unemployment for young people and women, of skills shortages and relatively low levels of productivity, precarious seasonal work and a lack of social protection for migrant workers, are questions which need urgent attention.

In connection with this, the second Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers, which took place in Baku on 26 April 2013, approved a framework document on cooperation on labour, employment and social security, and decided to set up a steering committee to bring this cooperation into being. The framework is intended to enhance cooperation between member countries in areas such as safety and health at work, lowering unemployment, enhancing skills, foreign labour and information strategies on the labour market, as well as social protection.

With regard to occupational safety and health, it is important to maintain and promote the health, as well as the skills, of the workforce. It is also important to improve the working environment to ensure protection against occupational hazards, and to develop the organization and culture of the world of work so as to pave the way towards a positive social climate, thereby increasing productivity.

Turning to employment and tackling unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, the OIC has developed a joint action plan which would effectively promote and strengthen job creation in SMEs. This programme is intended to assist enterprises to improve their competitiveness, and to support the growth and expansion of the market. This will develop entrepreneurial skills while improving access to new technology and to appropriate sources of financing for young entrepreneurs.

With regard to foreign labour, we hope to facilitate the movement of workers within our member

States by signing bilateral agreements. We also hope to promote the return of skilled workers to their countries of origin, and to bring about exchanges of experts while ensuring adequate social and legal protection.

It is from this perspective that the OIC's cooperation framework aims systematically to build connections, in development plans, between employment and social protection policies.

We are committed to social protection and decent work for all workers, and particularly for those in the occupied Arab territories. The Director-General's Report on the situation of workers in these territories alerts us to the obstacles, the barriers and constraints in their access to the labour market and in securing protection for their rights and a guarantee of social justice in case of need. This situation is all the worse because the economy in these territories continues to experience stagnant growth, rising unemployment and increased poverty. The Report has clearly signalled the difficulties which young Palestinians have in accessing the labour market. The unemployment rate for those aged 15 and above has dropped from 35.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2011, to 33.8 in the fourth quarter of 2012. The ILO has an important role to play here, and this is the organization best fitted to contribute to strengthening institutions and mechanisms in order to introduce employment legislation into these territories. Such legislation has to be respected by the occupying powers, because it is a matter of urgency to establish frameworks for dispute settlement and, according to the Report, these necessitate a framework for social dialogue as a means of re-establishing a State governed by the rule of law.

Mr NUR (*Worker, Somalia*)

I endorse the congratulatory messages and commendations to the Director-General, who has put together a Report which takes account of the debate about the challenges faced by the ILO, together with the specific measures likely to guarantee the standard-setting action of the ILO in terms of how we better promote jobs and protect people.

On behalf of the Somali workers, allow me to assure you of our undivided support for you, as you embark on the important duty of leading this tripartite Conference. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to stand before this plenary at this critical time of peace building and security re-engineering in Somalia.

Things are beginning to look up in Somalia and Somali workers are hopeful. This new hope is against the background of sundry comments that Somalia has been written off as a failed State. Indeed, all these are highly daunting and intimidating at the moment. The Somali people currently have some of the lowest development and humanitarian indicators in the world, and inequalities across the different social groups, a major driver of the conflict, have been widening. The former, in the year 2011, indicate an increasingly dismal future if approaches to both the conflict and development do not significantly change.

Huge frustrations with the economic realities is another nagging challenge needing urgent attention if the security situation is to be further addressed. The majority of the Somali people in the country live on less than US\$1 a day. The armed conflict

and general insecurity have no doubt exacerbated these challenges.

Somalia is at a crossroads, where decades of one of the world's most complex and protracted conflicts have shaped this country of stark contrasts. The southern part of the country has experienced years of fighting and lawlessness, while the northern regions have achieved a fragile semblance of peace and stability along with some progress.

I hear that the ILO has assisted Somalia in the northern part to do the first forced labour survey in three districts since 1984. Such an initiative will assist the Federation of Somali Trade Unions, colleagues in business, and the Government to plan properly.

According to a survey conducted to prepare the Somalia Human Development Report 2012, overall unemployment among people aged 15 to 64 is estimated at 54 per cent in Somalia, up from 47 per cent in the year 2002. The unemployment rate for youth aged 14 to 29 is 67 per cent, one of the highest rates in the world. Again, there is much to learn and do. We can empower women through economic engagement and, again, there are equality initiatives started but they require full support to drive them to achieve a meaningful result of larger numbers of women.

One of the key challenges facing the Somali youth is the lack of basic education, relevant training, and the knowledge and skills required to enhance their absorption into the labour market. It is not surprising that the lack of employment opportunities ranks at the top of youth frustrations. Already, young people are major actors in the conflict, constituting the bulk of the participants in militias and criminal gangs, including Al-Shabab.

Lost opportunities, unclear identity and a growing sense of marginalization among young people are seen in an environment of state collapse. Violent conflict and economic decline provide a fertile ground for youth radicalization but there is hope for achievement with a commitment to defined goals which are realistic and address the underlying issues of this disenfranchisement and lack of decent work.

At the same time, there is too much unproductive and precarious work with jobs offering poor terms and conditions of employment. The federal Government of Somalia, with the help of the ILO and the social partners, needs to control such practices as we work to create inclusive growth for employment.

There is an urgent need to address the increasing efforts to undermine trade unionists and the independently organized activities of workers on the part of those entrusted with public offices. We call on the ILO to continue to take note of, and help intervene against, the relentless attacks on workers' civil liberties in Somalia. Journalists have been arrested. Somalis should be advised, as well as helped, so that they desist from interfering in trade union activities, functions and administrations.

The Federation of Somali Trade Unions had requested the intentional action of the federal Government of Somalia and lawmakers to review the labour law of the country, so as to improve labour regulation and working conditions.

Original Spanish: Mr SIGLIANO (Representative, Organization of Mutual Associations of the Americas)

For the third consecutive year, the Organization of Mutual Associations of the Americas (ODEMA),

has the privilege of speaking to the International Labour Conference. First, we would like to commend Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General, for his excellent Report on transforming the International Labour Organization and, once again, we would like to highlight the significant contribution made by the mutual system in the global structure for social justice.

ODEMA has worked relentlessly to seek a minimum social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalization, on the clear understanding that a system based on solidarity can support States in implementing public policies that guarantee access to essential social services for all, particularly the most vulnerable groups in society.

There is no controversy about the idea that we should consider an economic structure, which is social and based on solidarity, as something which aims to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of people, based on a mutual effort by citizens. There is also no controversy about the fact that the mutual system is a bastion of an economy based on solidarity. It is one of the most genuine forms of association, successfully applying the methods of association, with the aim of contributing to the achievement of the ILO's objectives, ultimately aiming to achieve social protection in all its aspects.

On the other hand, the mutual system was traditionally and for reasons inherent in its very nature, engaged in social dialogue as a means of dissemination and awareness raising among communities of its tireless action to mitigate the effects of poverty and marginalization. This is a key role played by ODEMA on the American continent, which is one of the regions most affected by social inequality.

The mutual system is certainly not far removed from the issues that are attracting most attention at this Conference but, quite on the contrary, each of these issues confirms that there is no situation affecting human beings that leaves us indifferent. We are fully committed to all ILO programmes aimed at achieving decent work for people throughout their lives.

Our organization fully endorses the idea that action should fit into an integrative global framework, with a strong emphasis on strengthening, equitable and sustainable social protection. This process is carried out within the mutual system, which is determined to make the system universal by setting up a global organization with regional representations from the continents of Europe, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania, in a forward momentum led by ODEMA in the Americas, representing the American continent, and also by the African Union of Mutual Associations, representing the African continent.

Finally, on behalf of ODEMA, we certainly hope that we can all work towards a future with decent work, hereby confirming the mutual system's adhesion and firm intention to participate and commit itself to the achievement of that goal.

Original Spanish: Mr QUINTANA (Representative, Latin American Union of Workers of Monitoring Bodies)

First of all, I would like to commend the Director-General for his Report. I commend him on the objectives set out in the Report, aimed at ensuring that the ILO will be capable of changing, in order to move towards social justice, and so that we can rise to our institutional challenges and put the ILO in its

rightful place as a centre of technical excellence in the world of work.

On behalf of the Latin American Union of Workers of Monitoring Bodies (ULATOC), we state that democratic, effective and responsible governance is the basic prerequisite for the development and consolidation of national sustainable growth processes and for the establishment of fair and equitable distribution.

Our people need active and efficient States with the necessary tools to do away, once and for all, with corruption, which causes delay, inequality and poverty. Our societies demand a focus on the actions and results of their leaders, who need permanent guidance in order to administer their ever scarce resources efficiently.

We need better transparency and publicity on governments' actions. We need less corruption and greater scope for social oversight by the people. We are fighting for the defence of labour and trade union rights, and for the promotion and recognition of public accountability, as the basis of a social State governed by the rule of law. The task of workers in supervisory bodies is to serve the public interest. Public supervision offers suitable mechanisms for raising timely and proper warnings about misconduct, and for recommending corrective action within public administration, advocating transparency in the conduct of public policy.

Public supervision is a bridge between citizens and public policy, enabling people to become involved and express their views and demands through participative social supervision. The more efficient public supervision becomes, the better the institutional quality of public services. For this reason, better public supervision leads to better governance and better democracy. A lack of supervision and control leads to corruption and the misappropriation of funds. It also jeopardizes lives, health, education and individual integrity. In short, lack of supervision kills.

The problems of workers in supervisory bodies are no different from those of other workers of concern to the International Labour Organization seeking decent jobs. Nonetheless, our focus has specific characteristics, requiring different approaches and solutions.

Public supervision is the sole prerogative of the State, and any delegation to outside economic or partisan interests is a serious transgression which threatens required transparency and independence. There is a need to defend the independence of supervisory bodies and of their workers who must be kept free from internal or external pressure. The supervisory message must reach its addressee without the regrettable and all too frequent act of "killing the messenger". Harassment against public supervision is always primarily felt by workers but, at the end of the day, it is the entire community that suffers.

Now, if we are really concerned about corruption and its impact on public services, then we must first protect those whose job it is to detect it. Here, at this Conference, we advocate and call on the ILO to set up an office to study and advise on this issue. Its conclusions should be the basis for the development of a standard to protect workers in the sector and safeguard the institutional nature of public supervision and struggle.

I would like to greet you on behalf of Syrian workers and their trade union organization, the General Federation of Trade Unions. I wish to congratulate the President of the Conference and greet the Director-General of the International Labour Office and all participants in the Conference.

I wish to congratulate the Director-General for the excellent Report that he has submitted to the Conference. I believe that we all have a duty to take the necessary measures to put it into practice, given the importance of its message, especially since we all, and especially workers, continue to feel the effects of the 2008 economic crisis. The crisis has caused many enterprises to close down and go bankrupt and has led to the dismissal of millions of workers, as well as to a rise in unemployment and spreading poverty. We have witnessed attempts to marginalize trade unions and their role in dealing with consequences of globalization, along with a decrease in unionization and in the capacity of trade unions to defend their workers. Labour laws have become weaker and international labour Recommendations and Conventions are no longer being implemented properly.

For the past two years, Syria has been the victim of a global multipolar war, with the participation of all the former colonial powers; countries that took possession of our people, destroyed our country and plundered our wealth. This war is led by the United States, United Kingdom, France, Turkey and the other NATO countries. On the pretext of spreading democracy and protecting human rights, thousands of terrorists from around the world have been prepared, equipped, trained, armed and have received the necessary assistance to enter into Syria. Furthermore, unjust financial, economic and oil sanctions have been imposed on us, resulting in deaths and the destruction of homes and forests. All that the colonizing countries are interested in is the so-called Syrian revolution. To date, the war has resulted in the displacement of more than 3 million Syrians, both within and outside the country. It has led to the death of tens of thousands of Syrians, of thousands of workers and employers, and to the loss of more than 3 million jobs. Thousands of industrial enterprises and large industrial cities have been destroyed, looted and burnt during the war. Infrastructure, such as our railway network, bridges and tunnels have been destroyed, roads have been cut off, cereal and cotton crops have been stolen and millions of Syrians have suffered for serving the interests of capitalists, arms dealers and warmongers. We declare that the only crime committed by Syria and by President Bashar al-Assad was to oppose the war in Iraq, the intervention of NATO in Libya, the occupation of the Syrian Golan by Israel, and to have supported the rights of the Palestinian people to return to their land and rebuild an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital. This is why President Bashar al-Assad has been accused of being a dictator and of exterminating his people, but if he had bowed down to the diktat of the United States, he would have been considered by the United States and by the colonial States as a democratic President with the highest respect for human rights.

We call on you all to condemn this vicious aggression against Syria and to request the sanctions imposed on us to be lifted. The sanctions against certain businessmen are the reason for the absence

of a representative of the social partners, the President of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Industry. We do not understand the position taken by the Director-General and by the ILO offices, which have ignored the deaths and injuries suffered by Syrian workers, who have had to witness the destruction of their homes and workplaces. We sent a list of workers who had been killed, and of the damages suffered by workers and employers, and to trade union property. We would also like to point out that, for the second year in a row, the mission sent by the Director-General to examine the situation of workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and to submit a Report to the Conference, has not visited Syria or contacted the social partners, relying on information from sources that do not represent the real employers and workers. We wonder whether Syrian workers and employers do not deserve support, if only in word. The destruction in my country, due to the race between colonial powers to send arms and fighters, has greatly harmed the Syrian people.

We call on all the participants in the Conference to take a stand against these warmongers and arms dealers, requesting them to stop sending arms and fighters to Syria.

I wish you every success during the Conference.

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

We would like to begin by congratulating the President of the Conference on his election, and we would also like to congratulate the new ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder.

Technological developments, the replacement of human beings by machines, large industrial conglomerates seeking labour for the same product in different countries, new forms of communication, economic crises, social networks, growing migratory flows and, finally, the phenomenon of globalization: these are what lie behind the rapid changes in the labour market, which are forcing us to go in search of new answers.

Throughout the 93 years of its existence, the ILO has always been, and in future will continue to be, a forum for discussion on the relations between capital and labour, and a place for consideration and analysis of the international standards to be applied by all governments and member States in the shape of their respective labour laws.

Despite the work of the ILO, we still see forced labour, the exploitation of child labour, failure to comply with safety standards, the gender wage gap, environmental destruction and other activities which do nothing to help achieve decent work as our final goal.

Even where we find a solution to a particular type of work that might be considered not decent because of the conditions in which it is done, we have to be careful not to create another social problem with the adoption of new rules. Here I am thinking in particular of domestic work, which is a widespread phenomenon across the world and is covered by a recently adopted ILO Convention.

Furthermore, if the social, cultural and economic development of some peoples is not accompanied by that of others, there is a greater risk of non-compliance with standards and the persistence of exploitation of child labour and women verging on slavery.

The tripartite system of representation, which has existed since the inception of this Organization, with growing power for member governments, has been unable to respond adequately and resolve the problems of the world of work. The reasons for this may be the low rate of unionization of workers, with a global average of barely 10 per cent, a lack of representation of large industrial conglomerates, the non-participation of employers' unions and the ambivalent policy of governments which support the adoption of standards here at the Conference, but then fail to implement them fully in their countries.

Even if these obstacles are surmounted and rules applied, we find a new labour market where most workers are in the informal sector and are unskilled or, on the other hand, we have the SMEs, the individual entrepreneurs or, as in our case, the professionals for whom the rules provide no framework or are simply insufficient.

The ILO's importance for the world of work is beyond question. The success of its 93 years of existence is demonstrated by its Conventions, standards and Recommendations. But it is time to think of the future, the very close future, the future which is actually already here. If our cherished and respected ILO does not change, its decisions will apply to just a small section of the labour market, ignoring the increasingly important role of those who are not in formal employment relationships.

The "three-legged table" based on formal tripartite representation at the ILO is wobbling. There is a growing need here for the voices and opinions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and also, importantly, of representatives of another world of work, such as the World Union of Professions.

We are many millions of professional people across the world, in all spheres of human knowledge, and we provide services in all countries, contributing to social, technical, scientific and legal development. We are part of the "fourth leg" of the world of work table, and we are here to work with the ILO in seeking improved labour relations and a fairer, more ethical, more highly developed society.

Original Arabic: Mr HAMAD (Worker, Iraq)

It is a great honour for me to greet you on behalf of the Iraqi Workers and on behalf of all the recognized trade unions. We hope that this session of the Conference will prove successful and will culminate in objective decisions that will uphold the social dimension of development.

We also wish to express our esteem for the efforts made by the Governing Body and the competent ILO officials regarding the choice of subjects, which are of prime importance, including social dialogue, social protection in the new demographic context, and skills and job creation in the context of sustainable development. These subjects constitute guidelines for tackling the financial and economic crisis, the effects of which are still being keenly felt, particularly in the least developed countries.

We are facing difficulties owing to the rise in poverty. I would like to mention here the suffering of migrant workers, who are struggling to survive and who dream of a decent life but who see this modest dream crumbling under the weight of the measures confronting them.

It is an undeniable fact that, since 2003, Iraq has come a long way in its march towards national independence, the building of a new multiparty de-

mocratic experience, the modernization of its economy and the establishment of a legislative and technical environment conducive to investment. Nevertheless, this is being undermined by terrorism, which is a threat to the whole of mankind, and in particular to workers in places where they assemble and in the workplace.

I would like to give you a brief outline of the situation of trade union organization in Iraq. In recent decades, trade union action has had to face many challenges, first and foremost with the domination of a dictatorial Government that interfered in trade union affairs and structures. The situation did not improve after 2003 following the arrival of the occupying forces; on the contrary, the political, economic and social situations deteriorated. The bad security conditions disrupted life in general and prompted the increase in the number of young people, both men and women, out of work, with the possibility of finding decent work becoming virtually non-existent. All this had negative repercussions on the trade union movement, in respect of both its objectives and its labour strategies. The interruption of the activities of economic and manufacturing enterprises, in both the public and private sectors, resulted in a reduction in job-creation capacity. The national leadership of the workers' movement in Iraq, all affiliations together, managed in Damascus in 2005, under the auspices of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, following considerable efforts and thanks to national commitment, to unify the workers' organizations. The door has remained open to all those who wish to be part of this unification, with the aim of coordinating efforts and offering the best possible services to the workers. There is only one remaining goal to achieve and this is to organize elections to appoint an elected leadership that represents the free will of the trade union organization. We have encountered difficulties in this endeavour but we have continued to strive to achieve our noble objective with the help of the faithful social partners and of all those who believe in our just cause. We achieved our objective in 2012. Elections began at the beginning of June that year and ended on 24 July with the convening of the general committee and the election of the federation's officers, under the supervision of the Higher Council of the Judiciary and overseen by the parliamentary committees concerned, organizations of civil society and the media, in accordance with prevailing national legislation.

Our trade union organization is currently comprised of 84 trade union branches, six general trade unions and 14 local federations, and covers more than 1,612 trade union committees in the private, mixed and cooperative sectors. Our general federation believes in trade union plurality in the framework of the new Iraqi Constitution and of legislation that protects the interests of the working class. It stands firm in the face of attempts to break it up in order to benefit individual and sectoral interests.

The trade union movement in our country has always been active and resolute and has always participated in the various aspects of our national life. It played a constant role in the struggle to grant legitimate rights to our people and our working class. It has long struggled to achieve the promulgation of a series of laws to govern relations between the social partners and to ensure a dignified life for workers.

Our trade union organization protects the rights of women workers and takes measures to ensure equal employment conditions and equal remuneration, opposing all forms of exploitation, arbitrariness and discrimination against women workers and taking a firm stance against child labour. It works resolutely to promote the promulgation of legislation to prohibit such practices. Our trade union organization also participates in drafting legislation relating to work and to workers, aligning itself with international and Arabic labour standards.

The Confederation is working hard to include public sector workers in the trade union organization and to integrate them into the family of workers. Our trade union organization is seeking to develop the legal foundation for social dialogue with the other social partners with the purpose of initiating constructive dialogue to serve the interests of workers and production and to promote progress in the country. The Confederation is also proceeding with the examination of the amendment of the Labour Code, the Social Security Act and the Trade Union Act, promulgated some time ago. Our objective with our partners and with the competent legislative committees is to achieve the promulgation of modern laws that provide the working class with new rights. In the framework of ongoing dialogue with the other social partners, namely the Government and the Iraqi Federation of Industries, we have managed to raise the minimum wage to approximately US\$200, with the aim of improving the standard of living of unskilled workers.

Our General Confederation, which is the legitimate representative of workers in Iraq and which performs its activities at the worker, trade union and national levels, firmly supports the workers' unions in the region of Kurdistan, which have achieved notable progress in their struggle, in collaboration with the Government and the Parliament of Kurdistan. Their achievements should encourage Iraqi workers to pursue their action to advance their cause.

To conclude, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for having provided the necessary foundations for tripartite representation, which plays a very important role in helping to align points of view and in the adoption of effective policies to promote fundamental principles and rights at work and to ensure the modernization of labour legislation.

Original French: Mr CELI VEGAS (Representative, Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America)

On behalf of the Centre for Exchange and Cooperation for Latin America (ECCLA), an NGO based in Geneva, I extend my warmest greetings and congratulate the President of the Conference on his election.

The report submitted to the Conference entitled *Employment and social protection in the new demographic context* deals with the implementation of social policies linked to the ageing of the population. World population will increase from 6.9 to 9.3 billion by 2050 and ageing will follow the same trend. In 2030, there will be more people over 60 than children under 10, and three-quarters of elderly persons will live in developing countries.

Two factors account for this phenomenon: first, the decline in the fertility rate, which was 2.5 chil-

dren per woman in 2005–10 and which is set to fall to 2.2 in 2045–50; and second, the increase in life expectancy at birth in all regions of the world due to improved living standards and, in particular, access to health care. The report examines measures to protect elderly persons, but who are these people? There is no UN definition of the term “elderly”, nor is there an ILO definition of “elderly workers”. For the purposes of demographic comparison, the UN refers to persons of 60 and over as “elderly persons”. This classification was also used in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, in 2002. The Older Workers Recommendation, 1989 (No. 162), defines older workers as “all workers who are liable to encounter difficulties in employment and occupation because of advancement in age”. How can state policies protect elderly persons? First, by guaranteeing their income and their level of activity. There is an evident correlation between the levels of activity of men and women over 65 and public spending on social protection. Second, we should regulate part-time employment. Part-time employment has increased among elderly workers. These jobs are often occasional with no annual or sick leave, and reduced job security. They are also generally less well paid than permanent jobs. The development of atypical forms of employment has greatly reduced the impact of labour legislation, thereby creating salary gaps and conditions that are conducive to exploitation. Third, they should be protected against poverty and the informal economy. As a person becomes older, labour income accounts for a constantly diminishing percentage of their overall income. Fourth, the increase in migration should be controlled as this has an important influence on the make-up of the labour force in many countries. Fifth, measures should be adopted in times of crisis. The worst hit workers are often the youngest and the eldest, and they are often the first to lose their jobs and the last to re-enter the job market. Those who manage to keep a job are often compelled to accept more precarious contracts and harsher working conditions. What about elderly persons in Latin America? Among young adults, labour income on average accounts for 90 per cent of overall revenue, whereas the percentage falls to 44 per cent for people over 60. In Latin America, less than 40 per cent of elderly persons receive a pension. To remedy pension coverage problems, some countries have established non-contributory social pensions or subsistence pensions.

It should be noted that the ageing of the population has ramifications for the global economy. This demographic trend may well lead to a labour shortage. Industrialized countries are the most vulnerable in this respect. Europe may encounter significant shortages of labour after 2018. Ageing also has an effect on investments in education, by altering individuals' choices. The general tendency has been to introduce national regulations banning a wide range of grounds for discrimination, including real or attributed age. Social dialogue plays an essential role in managing demographic change and combating age-related discrimination, and the NGOs recognized by the United Nations system play a dominant role in promoting the claims of marginalized populations, such as elderly persons.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.25 p.m.)

Tenth sitting

Monday, 17 June 2013, 10 a.m.

President: Mr Katamine

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

Original Spanish: Mr MORANTES (Worker, Colombia)

On behalf of Colombian workers, we extend our congratulations to the President on his election. To the Director-General, Guy Ryder, we would like to express our satisfaction at the way in which he has been making his valuable contribution at the helm of this great Organization, which represents the hopes of workers around the world. We also express our gratitude for his broad-ranging and innovative proposal for action and commitment by the whole of our society, faced with the challenges and the crisis affecting the world.

There are many important issues on our agenda, including demographic change, environmental sustainability, new forms of poverty and prosperity, increasing inequalities, technological progress and developments in production and employment, and the question of how to reconcile competitiveness and productivity with fundamental rights at work and social justice. As we move towards the ILO centenary, the various workforces around the world have been able to find consensus in acting appropriately and overcoming the challenges.

It is important to mention the desirability of promoting collective bargaining as a fundamental aspect of social dialogue and tripartism. Here I must say that the current situation in Colombia is very disquieting. According to recent figures, only 1 per cent of workers in the country are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. This has come about under the influence of so-called collective contracts and counterparty agreements, which are among the methods used to undermine this fundamental right. I must also mention that there are a number of honourable exceptions as there are companies that do respect these rights in the proper way.

The situation concerning freedom of association is very serious, because here the State has more tasks to accomplish than progress to point to.

The Ministry of Labour has announced an increase of more than 800 trade unions last year, but the vast majority of these are so-called sham trade unions. With the pressure and support of the labour movement and this House on the associated labour cooperatives (CTA), the Government has placed some legal restrictions on them, but to avoid the law the unions are registered with the Ministry of Labour and sign a contract with companies to supply

workers through outsourcing, so making the exploitation worse and distorting trade unionism, as happened in the past with cooperatives. There are other denominations in abundance, such as simplified limited liability companies (SAS).

In terms of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), it has become difficult, or even impossible, to create legitimate trade unions, or join existing ones, because of the psychological pressure, the threats and hostage taking, and recently the fabrication of false legal proceedings against leaders involved in organizing trade unions. This is in contrast with the ease with which sham organizations are set up which do not encounter any obstacles, nor do they experience the consequences I have mentioned. Although it is true that deaths among trade unionists have gone down, violence is continuing. In 2012, 20 trade unionists were murdered and 431 were threatened, seven fell victim to murder attempts and five to forced disappearance, among other things. In 2013, there have been 77 violations, including four murders, four attacks, the destruction of a trade union office and many threats, including threats against the leaders of workers' organizations, all in recent days. Impunity for crimes against trade unionists stands at 97.57 per cent, and for those who conceive and plan them, the figure is 100 per cent.

Since 4 September 2012, the Government has been in peace talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). This has been welcomed by the trade union movement, which has asked that as far as possible, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and other groups interested in the dialogue should be included, for the sake of putting an end to the armed conflict and beginning the process of building peace for which the Colombian people yearn.

We must also mention the promulgation of the Victims' Law, on which progress is being made, although not without some difficulty. It will incorporate the theme of reparation for the trade union movement as a collective entity, along with the workers' organizations themselves and their affiliates. The land restitution measure is also important, involving a process of restoring land to those from whom it has been seized by force.

We are reaching the end of the collective bargaining process in the public sector now (the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154)). Although a national agree-

ment has been reached, a number of difficulties have been encountered at the territorial and sectoral levels, because Decree No. 1092 of 2012, on which consensus had been reached, was promulgated unilaterally by the Government, and it contains a number of restrictions which do not contribute to the process of consensus building, and in fact discourage it, and there is no formula for deciding when there is no agreement between the parties.

The initiatives of the Director-General for the centenary of the ILO are very significant, and we value them all equally. I would mention especially making poverty history and the green jobs initiative, which seeks to reduce carbon emissions and pollution in general, as well as to eliminate the use of substances which damage human health, such as asbestos. We would also like to welcome the presence of the recycling workers at this Conference, as they do excellent work in our society.

Original Arabic: Mr MATTAR (Employer, United Arab Emirates)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to steer the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Vice-Presidents, as well as express my appreciation and thanks for their wise management of the deliberations of this Conference.

We would like to express our broad satisfaction with the Director-General's first Report to the Conference, and thank him for the methodical and practical vision which is contained in the Report, especially with respect to the institutional challenges. In this respect, we, the Employers, would like to commend this initiative, which targets the completion of the reform process of the ILO structures, including with regard to good governance, supporting a balanced representation of the three sets of social partners and the attainment of their common interests based on consensus and joint work.

We, in our capacity as employers in the State of the United Arab Emirates, pay great attention to the contents of the Report on the issue of job creation since we are major contributors to the creation of new job opportunities in the country. This is set against the backdrop of a developed commercial and economic structure which provides strong support to projects and attracts manpower, in view of existing regulations and working mechanisms which guarantee the rights of all workers, and which stimulate production in all sectors especially in transport, energy, water, health care, housing and information technology centres.

We would also like to emphasize our commitment to our responsibility to provide decent job opportunities in partnership with the Government, by adopting initiatives and seizing every opportunity. We, in the Emirates, are especially looking forward to Expo 2020, which will be hosted by our country, as the preparatory work for this exhibition will create thousands of jobs.

We also work at the regional level in support of development plans within the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries. This is an important step towards building a dynamic region, whose aim is to address the challenges posed by society, and to achieve true development. The purpose of development is to provide many job opportunities, contribute to the exchange of experience, provide employment and draw on the resources enjoyed by the Gulf countries. This will consequently promote the overall

development efforts and reduce unemployment rates at the local, national and international levels.

We would also like to express our deep regret at the suffering of Palestinian employers and workers whose rights are systematically flouted, and who are exposed to hurdles and obstacles in their daily lives, in their jobs or in obtaining a decent job. In this connection, we would like to quote the Director-General in the Appendix to his Report who indicates that: "the restrictions arising out of the continuing occupation and expanding settlement activity are effectively blocking the Palestinian economy, and importantly its private sector, from further significant progress".

We call for a just and peaceful solution which will guarantee the right of Palestinian employers and workers to live in an appropriate economic and social environment and to a decent living.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our appreciation of the new directions of the Organization that the Director-General has submitted to us. We invite all parties to participate in their gradual application, which will take into account the requirements and needs of such parties.

Original French: Mr AWASSI (Worker, Gabon)

The Gabon Workers' delegation, through me, is very honoured to take the floor before this august assembly to give our impression of the first Report presented by the Director-General.

We would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of this session of the International Labour Conference. We are certain of the success of this Conference under his guidance.

To the Director-General of the International Labour Office, brother Guy Ryder, we would express our congratulations on his brilliant election last year. Our joy is even greater since he comes from the great trade union family, and we wish him every success in his very difficult task.

Turning to the Director-General's Report, this very well summarizes the major preoccupations of workers everywhere in the world at this time, in the areas of decent work and particularly the problem of the employment of young people, social protection and social justice, the elimination of poverty and inequality. The environmental question is not being neglected either, because we have to implement a global strategy for the sustainable management of our resources and our ecosystems.

Our country, Gabon, feels, as do many other countries, the harmful effects of the world financial and economic crisis. The theme for this year, which turns on the construction of the future through decent work, challenges us from many points of view. This is why in 2009, led by His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Republic and Head of State, Gabon launched a vast programme of reforms and development called the Gabon Emergent Strategic Plan, which is based on three pillars – green Gabon; industrial Gabon; and a Gabon of services – enshrined in the programme entitled "The Future with Confidence". This ambitious programme invites the people of Gabon to raise their country to the pantheon of the so-called emergent countries by 2025. For more than three years now, the Government has been working to translate this strategic plan into action.

This is evident in the area of health, with the construction of hospitals and ultra-modern health centres, and in social protection, with the introduction

of a national fund for health insurance and social insurance, now extended to workers in the private sector. In the area of education, a new law has been adopted on career guidance, training, education and research. In agriculture, food and agro-industrial plantations are being developed. In the timber industry, wood is processed locally. In the energy sector, hydroelectric dams are being built to increase the country's energy production in order to meet public demand. Moreover, in the public sector, the Government has launched an administrative reform programme, with particular emphasis on regularizing the administrative and financial positions of civil servants.

Although the economic indicators are favourable in our country, with a growth rate of around 5 per cent in 2013, the workers of Gabon do not yet enjoy the fruits of this growth. The high cost of living is a problem, and there is also the problem of unemployment and jobs for young people. There is the inadequacy of health services, the problems of housing, problems in elementary and higher education, problems in water supply, transport and food security, problems in the management of the environment and low wages. These are the main problems as far as Gabon is concerned. In the trade union area, we note active intimidation of trade union leaders, wage stoppages, illegal arrests and arbitrary detention, disciplinary proceedings and sanctions against trade unions, and other acts of violence.

Moreover, the signing on 3 December 2011 of the national charter for social dialogue between the

Government and the social partners, in the presence of the Head of State, for setting up the national council for social dialogue, has not yet resulted in its establishment. This indicates a lack of will on the part of the Government to create a framework and conditions for continuing open social dialogue. This is why, against this background, we the workers of Gabon, call on the International Labour Office to give us more support in this desperate struggle which we have entered into in order to make international labour standards better known, observed and implemented, faced with governments and employers who are determined to interfere in the trade union movement.

From this rostrum, we invite the Government of Gabon to set up the national council for social dialogue as soon as possible, to relaunch negotiations on collective bargaining, to give official recognition to trade union leaders and ensure they are protected, and to increase the powers and the role of labour inspectors in protecting those at work.

Gabon is aware of the crises which are shaking the world from north to south and east to west. Despite all this, our active population cherishes the hope that new generations of leaders will emerge in the African States and throughout the world. This would make it possible to promote and usher in real social justice in the world and to improve the protection of human rights, a task in which the ILO will be the cornerstone.

(The Conference adjourned at 10.20 a.m.)

Eleventh sitting

Monday, 17 June 2013, 12.50 p.m.

President: Mr Katamine

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

*Original Spanish: Ms VELÁSQUEZ DE AVILÉS
(Government, El Salvador)*

Our delegation from El Salvador congratulates the President on his election. We would like to say that the Reports, which we have studied with great attention, tend to reaffirm the leading role that has been played by the ILO in the world of work, as a reference point and also in guiding and bringing together the many countries that belong to it.

The Director-General's Report is food for thought and reminds us of the importance of having such a body to set the standard and find the right solutions for the rapid changes occurring everywhere in the world, for example, globalization, into which we have been plunged for some years. In this global world, unfortunately, the institutions that regulate the market face every day a whole range of very complex situations in trying to convert the need for labour into effective options for transformation and social inclusion for all. In this context, we can see that the fundamental value of labour for human development is undermined to the extent that the notion of the integration and development of the individual, in both living standards and in prosperity and dignity, is lost. But the concept of work as reflected in the Report considers it as the source of basic income for families. Without a job that is properly paid, the realization of all other human rights, from the most basic such as the right to food, to health, to housing, and even those rights relating to political action and workers as essential players in a democracy, becomes impossible. That is why work becomes a criterion for measuring to what extent economic policy is successful. An economic policy that creates decent work creates wealth and well-being. So we have to reflect that instead of flexibilizing, deregulating and undermining the right to work, the time has come for our economic policy to revalue it, not only as a factor of production but also as a component of human development.

Since 1919, the ILO has brought together the efforts of States, workers and entrepreneurs, in a mission to tackle and improve conditions of labour that, as its Constitution says, involve such injustice, poverty and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled. In 1999, the ILO

launched its concept of decent work, which is still a work in progress. It has a highly ethical content, supported mainly by respect for human rights, and its effectiveness was to become clear with the passage of time. However, its great strength lies in having obtained, at that time, international consensus on minimum standards of protection at work, below which the situation is one of exploitation. In this way, the ILO makes a valuable contribution in the context of globalization, and decent work becomes a new rallying cry for action on economic and social development. It is also a mechanism for social inclusion and an additional factor in fostering a climate of togetherness while setting the groundwork for stability and democratic governability.

We see in the Report that there is a reference to the difficult social and economic situation in which we find ourselves. It is having an ineluctable impact on the world of work. We have to face this as tripartite partners and respond appropriately. The ILO should pursue its efforts, consolidating bilateral alliances within the multilateral system as a whole, reaffirming its role and its leadership in the world of work.

One of the subjects which we must keep in mind is the issue of youth unemployment, not a new phenomenon but one that has caused alarm with its gathering pace. It ties in with the wider world employment crisis. Here, in addition to poverty and inequality, we see the influence of society's approach to social problems. For example, there are millions of children in the world today between the ages of 5 and 12. They should be playing. They should be studying. Instead they are working, and then when it comes to the time when they should be working, we deny them the opportunity to get that first proper job. We cannot attempt to solve these problems unless we approach them from the perspective of social justice. If we look at the issue of child labour, which has been one of the ongoing concerns of the ILO, we can see that it is possible for young people to make the transition from school to decent work. This is a challenge we have to meet, by generating commitment and awareness at a worldwide level, and translating them into action.

I would also like to touch upon demographic change, that is, the ageing of the population and its impact on the world of work, as well as poverty and social exclusion, which is typical of many of our societies. I would remind you of the factors which play a role, such as the market, the dialogue mechanism, social cohesion and of course the role that public authorities can play by regulating markets

and breaking with the absolutist notion that markets can regulate themselves, because States have a decisive responsibility to make sure that the economy works for the majority. That is why we say that there has to be a balance; there have to be clear rules. There have to be well-defined policies, public investment in education, decent work, systems of social and health protection and, of course, we have to have a gender perspective on the adult population, given that women tend to outlive men. When it comes to this last point, it is time to look further, for ways in which tasks and responsibilities can be shared so as to combat, for example, the double working day of women, first in paid work and then in household tasks.

When it comes to the standard-setting function of the ILO, we have got to be aware of the fact that this Organization is at a critical stage in adapting to changing needs and realities in the world of work. That is why the ILO must not lose its backbone. It needs to continue its standard-setting function, although we are clear that this has to be restructured in a collective rather than an individual sense, to reaffirm the system of standards in a coherent manner. We are here to support you, Director-General, in this ongoing process.

The conclusion of this interesting and instructive Report is that the ILO needs to prioritize its tasks in keeping with its mandate and leadership, and to continue re-engineering itself both internally and outwardly, through a form of consensus or agreement in which the tripartite parties, without forgoing their interests, aspirations or responsibilities, redefine their actions in line with a common vision of the future, inspired by full employment, decent work and human dignity and by the implementation of the human rights Conventions, important objectives of social justice.

Original Spanish: Mr BOBIC (Employer, Chile)

On behalf of the Chilean Confederation for Production and Trade (CPC), I would like to welcome the new Director-General of the ILO, Mr Guy Ryder, and wish him every success at the helm of this significant international Organization, the home of the tripartite system and social dialogue.

I would like to recall the emphasis which the Director-General has placed, in his first Report, on the importance of the ILO preparing itself to meet the needs of its constituents, bearing in mind the new forces which are transforming the realities of the world of work. In our businesses, we know how important it is to adapt appropriately to change in order to be sustainable and competitive. Leading companies understand that they are currently operating in a much more demanding environment than in the past, and that good relationships with their workers and the communities in which they operate are pivotal in their success.

Chile is a country with a robust democracy where respect for institutions, freedom and the rule of law are a positive environment in which to start businesses, create jobs and attract foreign investment. This, hand in hand with appropriate tax management, has made it possible for our economy and our labour market to avoid the impact of recent international crises, and this is reflected in consistent reductions in the unemployment rate, growth in the economy and moderate inflation.

However, the growth which our country has undergone presents challenges in ensuring that more

people each day can fully benefit from it. This is something that civil society requires of us, and it is a requirement placed on governments, but also on organized social partners. In this light, I would like to stress the significant efforts which have been made in recent years, and this year too, by employers and workers in my country under the flag of the confederation which I represent, as well as by the United Workers' Federation (CUT).

At a time when the country is seeing a number of student uprisings demanding improvements in the education system, employers and workers believe it is important to give a signal to the public about the importance of social dialogue as an efficient tool for generating trust, overcoming differences and achieving progress resulting in agreement.

The starting point of this endeavour for us has been not to exclude any question relating to employment, and on this basis we were able to discuss openly, over a period of several months, subjects which have traditionally been regarded as highly complex. This was how, on 31 January 2012, both sides signed a statement of intent consisting of eight points detailing how the social partners believe that they can resolve questions on which there are divergent or different points of view.

Today, we are continuing our work with the intention of putting on the national agenda the questions on which agreement has been reached. But we also intend to continue finding areas in which we can advance together towards a more cohesive country, one that takes into account the differences between types and sizes of companies and the particular characteristics of each worker.

In addition, a thorough overhaul of employment indicators in our country shows us that while unemployment is low, there is a lot of room for increasing labour force participation, especially by young people and women.

The youth unemployment rate remains more than three times higher than the overall rate, and although women have steadily increased their participation in the labour force, they still lag significantly behind men, and there is still a wage gap for women. We believe it is necessary to have legislation to generate more job opportunities to match the various patterns of people's disposable time and responsibilities. This would enable many companies to adapt a significant part of their operations to a broader labour supply, which could result in higher productivity and access to valuable talent and skills.

However, for women to participate fully in the Chilean economy, it is important to modify the legal provisions for nurseries, establishing a funding system that, without increasing costs for the employer, enables every working woman to have the right to specialist care for children below the age of two. Finally, I would like to stress the significant progress which has recently been made in terms of reducing the rate of accidents at work in our country. This is an important issue for our society at large, and it is also one area in which we can see that meeting points between workers and employers are greater than their differences.

Mr BATERIKI (Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development, Kiribati)

I join previous speakers in congratulating the President on his appointment to the presidency of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Allow me to offer a brief update of the progress Kiribati has made on the Decent Work Country Programme, an important workplan for ILO technical assistance to member States in their efforts to enhance decent work in the working environment.

Kiribati joined the ILO in 2000 and since then has ratified the eight core Conventions. In 2011, my Government ratified the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), which sets out provisions for the social protection of our seafarers working abroad on South Pacific Marine Service merchant ships. The maritime sector has been providing our people with huge employment opportunities for over 40 years, and it is only proper that I should thank the Director-General, governments and shipowners, who have continuously cooperated with Kiribati in this important area. The ratification of the MLC, 2006, illustrates Kiribati's commitment to fulfilling the ILO Decent Work Agenda.

In order for Kiribati to meet its obligations under this ratified labour standard, the Decent Work Agenda Steering Committee, a tripartite forum established to collectively discuss labour issues with the social partners, is progressively moving towards labour law reforms to give effect to this ratified Convention.

My Government is currently embarking on implementation plans for the MLC, 2006, before it comes into force in August this year. This includes amending our legislation on employment and shipping to give effect to these maritime labour standards.

In addition to seafaring, the fishing industry is also a vital sector that provides a large proportion of the employment opportunities for our youth, particularly on Japanese and Korean fishing vessels. I wish to take this opportunity to convey my deepest appreciation to these countries for their ongoing cooperation in the important fishing sector.

Last month my Ministry attended the Global Dialogue Forum for the Promotion of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), thus highlighting our commitment to enhancing the social protection of our fishers employed in the fishing industry. I am glad to report that my Government is moving towards ratifying Convention No. 188 in the very near future.

Our main challenge is the growing youth population, compounded with the limited number of job opportunities. This has prompted my Government to look at offshore employment as a top priority. At present, the employment and work programme schemes offered under bilateral arrangements with New Zealand and Australia have provided our unemployed youth population with a great opportunity. By highlighting this I want to say that we greatly value the support we receive from New Zealand and Australia under ongoing employment

schemes, which contribute greatly to our national economic development and, above all, help to alleviate youth unemployment in Kiribati.

I am also pleased to mention that, under the partnership arrangement with the Australian Government, an additional programme is now being introduced in Kiribati that is designed to deliver skills training courses to our youth on trades and other internationally recognized sectors through our Kiribati Technical Institute. This will provide openings for those of our people who wish to work locally and abroad.

At the opening sitting last Wednesday, the Director-General mentioned a number of new initiatives that will become the focus of the ILO's work in 2013 and the years to come. Kiribati strongly supports the new proposals, which correspond to my Government's own priorities.

The new initiative to promote the participation of women in decision-making and in employment closely matches my Government's plans to set up a new ministry to empower women and promote their interests. The new Ministry for Women will be set up once an amendment to the Constitution has been approved at the next sitting of Parliament in August 2013.

The green initiative highlights the need to devote more attention to the future of our planet. The proposal fits in with my Government's long-term vision of protecting the environment and our citizens from the effects of climate change.

In a country with a maximum height of 3 metres above sea level, the effects of climate change can be treacherous and, therefore, exploring employment opportunities abroad is an integral part of the country's labour mobility strategy.

My Government also strongly supports the ILO's initiative to alleviate poverty by 2030, because this will help to address the problems of rising unemployment.

Rapid population growth can exacerbate poverty, and I am pleased to report that my Government has placed the population issue at the top of its agenda for 2013. At present, these issues can be highly sensitive and the Government is taking the lead by consulting key stakeholders.

I wish to thank the President for his leadership and to extend my sincere appreciation to the ILO for its continued support of its member States. We look forward to working closely with the new Director-General in advancing the ILO's agenda so that we can attain this session's goal of building a future with decent work.

To conclude, I bestow upon us all our traditional blessings of *Te Mauri, Te Raoi Ao Te Tabomoa* – Health, Peace and Prosperity.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.15 p.m.)

Twelfth sitting

Monday, 17 June 2013, 2.35 p.m.

Presidents: Mr Katamine and Mr Paulauskas

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

Mr MRSIĆ (*Minister of Labour and Pension System, Croatia*)

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, I would like to thank you today for giving me the opportunity to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Republic of Croatia greatly appreciates the ILO's strong commitment to addressing the challenges we are facing today in the world of work and to bringing prosperity and social justice around the world.

I believe that the future we all want to see depends very much on the action we take today. Almost every day we hear shocking stories of redundancies in countries around the world. Millions of people are losing their jobs and poverty is on the rise.

By promoting its universal principles of protection of human rights and respect and protection of fundamental principles and rights at work, the International Labour Organization has a crucial role to play in formulating a global response to the challenges that we are all facing today.

The Decent Work Agenda, the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact set a clear vision of the goals we want to achieve. The Republic of Croatia shares this common vision and is fully committed to achieving these universal standards.

For that reason, creating conditions for full employment in an environment that generates the development of new workplaces, promoting both inclusion and productivity by facilitating social welfare provisions for everyone and promoting social dialogue at every level are the key areas where the Republic of Croatia is committed to introducing decent work for all in a job-oriented economy.

Here today, I also have to say that the results we are aiming to deliver will be largely determined by the economic and social challenges currently posed by the global economic and financial crisis, but they will depend also on our wisdom in overcoming its negative consequences.

Unemployment has reached an unacceptable level and no clear sign of recovery is yet visible. In this context, the main challenge is not just to achieve sustainable job creation successfully but also, and more importantly, to protect and preserve employment during the crisis. We are pursuing a balanced

and ambitious reform of our labour market in order to remove the obstacles to quality employment and to ensure that those who lose their jobs in the economic downturn get adequate support to help them find a job again or to retrain.

One of the biggest concerns in Croatia today, as in the whole world, is the growing problem of youth unemployment. Building a knowledge-based society demands a strategic vision of economic development, but it also calls for continuous investment in human resources based on well-designed policies at both the national and the international level.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia, together with all stakeholders, is engaged in a proactive reform of the education system in accordance with the concept of lifelong learning.

The social effects of the global financial crisis continue to be felt by our societies. Furthermore, demographic change, including the ageing of the population, has made it clear that we need to modernize our welfare systems. As in many other Member States of the European Union (EU), the proportion of the older population in Croatia has increased and the fertility rate has decreased; we expect the share of the working-age population to decrease by 9 per cent by 2050.

Croatia believes that the problem of depopulation is a problem for the whole of society that needs to be addressed at every level, from the international to the local level, by means of particularly innovative, mutually supportive and balanced policies and good governance.

The Republic of Croatia is fully committed to social dialogue. Its Government and social partners strongly believe that close tripartite cooperation between them is crucial for promoting and creating fair and productive industrial relations in accordance with the ILO's basic principles.

The contribution of the ILO and its partners to combating the consequences of the crisis has been significant and gives us hope that together we can achieve a better future. We very much welcome the support of the ILO in this difficult task.

Mr MHOTSHA (*Worker, Botswana*)

It is my honour today to address this august gathering during the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Let me start by congratulating Mr Guy Ryder on his first Report to the International Labour Conference since assuming the position of Director-General of the ILO. It is a comprehensive and timely report in the light of recent and current chal-

lenges within the world of work and the global economy as a whole.

The Report of the Director-General covers very important issues that are faced by the world of work in almost every corner of the world. These include, inter alia, environmental sustainability, technological advancement, poverty and inequality, and changing patterns of production and employment.

These challenges are of particular relevance in developing countries such as Botswana and in the rest of Africa. Developing countries face difficulties in employing new technologies to deal with global production competition and, as a result, job creation becomes a difficult task.

Not only do countries like Botswana face technological challenges but they find themselves confronted by the related problem of providing the necessary skills for new industries and forms of work. Although unemployment rates remain very high, new jobs are elusive for the local population because of the lack of commensurate skills.

My country, Botswana, is one of those where income disparities between the richest and the poorest continue to pose a serious challenge. Although official reports indicate that poverty is declining, the level of poor people in my country remains worrisome. Despite Government social spending, a vast majority of our people still bear the burden of low-paid workers who find it difficult to make ends meet.

Botswana has not been spared the global trend towards the privatization of state assets and functions. In my country we have begun to see some areas of government employment being outsourced to the private sector. This has caused difficulties for workers who find themselves retrenched, such as lower earnings, less social protection and a lack of job security.

Since 1997, Botswana has made tremendous strides in improving the conditions of work for all its workers. It has done this by ratifying ILO Conventions, including the eight core Conventions and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

In 2004, my country amended most of its labour laws to accommodate the ratified Conventions, and in 2008, a new Public Service Act came into being to ensure compliance with them.

Prior to these developments trade unions were not allowed in the public service, which is the largest sector of the economy. It was therefore a great victory for the workers who fought for it for so long when they obtained the right to do so.

I must pause here to pay tribute to the ILO for the technical assistance it has rendered, not only to the Government but to the social partners as well, in bringing about these advances.

In concluding my statement, I would like to point to some of the concerns of my organization and of Botswana's workers in general.

Although my country has ratified 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), some of our employers still engage in anti-union activities. There are still a number of employers who actively ensure that a union presence in their workplaces remain a dream for many workers. Workers who join trade unions are constantly being harassed and in some cases dismissed.

My organization and all the workers of Botswana wish to take advantage of the Decent Work Country Programme by having the Government and the employers' confederation commit themselves to improving the working conditions of men and women workers in Botswana and to restoring decent employment.

Mr BATUR (*Government, Turkey*)

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of this session of the Conference.

I would also like to thank the Director-General for his inspiring and comprehensive Report on the role of the ILO as it approaches its centenary. I commend the Director-General's Report on the current situation of the workers in the occupied Arab territories and hope that the brutalities and inhumane blockade will soon end and that peace will be restored in the region.

We are at a historic moment when in five years we shall celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the ILO. It is therefore a timely moment to discuss what we expect from the ILO and how it will tackle existing and possible future challenges in the world of work.

The crisis which hit the world five years ago has been adding new and harder challenges to those which already existed. In order to meet both old and emerging challenges, such as youth unemployment, the need for more quality jobs, the ageing of society, the sustainability of social security systems and environmental degradation, the ILO definitely needs a comprehensive programme of reform.

In this sense, we agree with the Director-General that the ratification of the long-awaited amendment of the ILO Constitution, dating back to 1986, should be promoted so that it can enter into force and provide the Organization with a more representative administrative structure. There is a clear need for the ILO to adapt its governance structure to the new political realities. We also hope that the reform will help the ILO to become something more than a battleground between its constituents.

One of the ILO's major and unique functions is the setting of standards within a tripartite structure. However, as mentioned in the Director-General's Report, there has been a growing suspicion that the ILO's supervisory system has targeted certain countries and regions. We also think that the supervisory system should not be allowed to go beyond its mandate by assessing countries from a political perspective. Favouring some countries while constantly criticizing others raises a concern as to the credibility of the ILO's supervisory machinery.

Despite the economic crisis, and while countries around the world are planning or implementing austerity measures, significant and historical reforms have been undertaken by the Government of Turkey in recent years. Allow me to present some of these reforms, which will have a profound and long-term positive effect on labour relations in Turkey.

A constitutional amendment was adopted in 2010 that allows civil servants to conclude collective agreements and not just engage in collective negotiations. Following the corresponding changes in our legislation, a collective agreement was signed for the first time between the Government and the civil servants' trade unions in 2012. Moreover, the civilian staff of administrative institutions were given the right to join trade unions.

A separate new Occupational Health and Safety Act was enacted in June 2012. The new law, which covers all workplaces regardless of size and type, requires enterprises to provide occupational health and safety services for their employees. Furthermore, the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), was recently approved by Parliament.

In a most significant step, a Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements Act was enacted by Parliament in October 2012. The new law not only simplifies the rules and regulations concerning trade union activities and membership but harmonizes the definitions used by merging two laws into a single text. Under the new law, restrictions on the activities and functions of trade unions have been lifted and the protection of union officials has been strengthened. Furthermore, the ban on strike action has been made less restrictive and the sanction of imprisonment under the former legislation has been replaced by administrative fines. The new law has also reduced the threshold for purposes of union representation from 10 per cent of the workers to 1 per cent.

All the reforms that I have mentioned here were undertaken by the Government in a very short time and in a genuine spirit of social dialogue. The reforms were adopted at a particularly appropriate time when the Turkish economy is growing steadily despite the financial crisis.

Turkey's average annual growth rate for the past ten years was 5.1 per cent, which was translated into employment through the creation of additional jobs for 4.5 million people over the past four years. We have succeeded in reducing the rate of unemployment to 9.2 per cent against 14 per cent in 2009.

Thanks to its economic achievements Turkey has become the 16th largest economy in the world and the sixth in Europe.

I would like to emphasize here that at the time when most of the world is suffering from the crisis, Turkey has doubled its annual contribution to the ILO budget and to all United Nations (UN) agencies.

We are dedicated to the effective functioning of this Organization, which we believe can be achieved with all the means and resources at its disposal. What it needs to do is to increase its efforts and efficiency. It is crucial that we work harder to maintain and strengthen the credibility of such a deep-rooted and unique international organization.

In closing, I wish the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference every success and a fruitful discussion as we approach the centenary of the ILO.

Mr RØNNEST (*Employer, Denmark*)

I am speaking on behalf of the Employer delegates from the Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Let me first thank the Director-General for his Report. This year's Report represents a very different approach to dealing with the challenges facing the ILO. We welcome and appreciate this change.

The goals and aspirations of the ILO's agenda can only be realized if we recognize that this is about real people and their lives. If we want to improve the living conditions of people and give them opportunities to prosper, policies will have to be put in place that establish the right framework conditions

for all actors, including private businesses, small, medium-sized and large.

People and businesses respond to the incentives they encounter and not to the aspirations or intentions of politicians, whether national or international. These aspirations can only be met by offering the proper business environment for enterprises, so making it possible for companies to invest, to produce, and to grow and create jobs.

It is necessary to recognize the role the private sector has to play if we are to have job-rich growth or for that matter, sustainable growth at all. Jobs are not coming automatically. Policies will have to support growth by modernizing labour markets and social security systems and by increasing employability.

We believe that the Director-General in this Report recognizes this, and we support his attempt to turn the ILO into an organization belonging to the twenty-first century.

We think it is positive that the Report recognizes that developments in production and employment are challenging traditional views, at a time when atypical forms of work are becoming typical and when standard forms of employment are becoming the exception.

We think it is positive that the Report stresses the importance of attitudes towards social dialogue, and that it acknowledges the positive and negative impact different types of behaviour have on the functioning of social dialogue.

We think it is positive that the Director-General points out that efforts since last year's session of the International Labour Conference have clearly demonstrated that all constituents are actively committed to a strong, relevant, impartial and coherent ILO standards system. The Employers are convinced that improvement of the ILO supervisory machinery needs to be explored without further delay if the system is to remain relevant to the needs of the world of work.

We think it is positive that the Director-General introduces a new and ambitious approach towards companies. We call on the Director-General to ensure a proper role for the actors most directly affected, and also to develop a comprehensive policy and strategy for ILO engagement with enterprises.

We think it is positive that the Report points to the need for the ILO's own work to address the consequences of demographic change. In particular, we find it important to deal also with the consequences of demographic change for workforce developments.

We think it is essential that these plans are carried through to reality and do not remain wishful thinking only, as has been the case both in the ILO earlier, and as plans and goals often are.

Mr MUDHOFIR (*Worker, Indonesia*)

First of all, I would like to thank the ILO for giving me the opportunity to speak at this Conference.

Indonesia is the only South-East Asian country that is a member of the G20. In Indonesia, economic growth has been at a steady pace – 6.5 per cent. Compared to its South-East Asian neighbours, Indonesian gross domestic product (GDP) is five times that of Singapore, four times that of Malaysia, and three times that of Thailand. However, this high economic growth has not translated into better pay for workers.

Outsourcing is widely used in Indonesia. The wages of a contract worker are 17 per cent lower than for permanent workers. The wages of outsourced workers are 26 per cent lower than those of permanent workers. Contract and outsourced workers are largely not covered by social protection schemes. The implementation of outsourcing has also tended to shift the role of trade unions and bring down the number of union members.

Union busting and violent repression is still rampant, particularly when workers start to organize and demand better working conditions. Public servants and state enterprise workers still find it difficult to join unions and bargain collectively, because of the lack of labour inspection.

In spite of the above challenges, I am proud to inform you that trade unions in Indonesia have been successful in consolidating their unity and building workers' power, through the coalition movement of the three largest confederations, namely KSBSI, KSPI, and KSPSI under MPBI.

After the successful national strike that attracted almost 3 million workers, some progress and results have been achieved.

First, the Government has limited outsourcing to five areas only: cleaning services; catering services; security services; support services in the mining and oil sector; and transportation services for employees.

Second, by 2014, all citizens will be covered by state health insurance. Old-age pensions and accident and death insurance will be implemented in 2015. Under the law, workers and the poor will get full protection and coverage for even severe or complicated illnesses.

Third, from 2014, 1 May will be celebrated by Indonesian workers as a public holiday.

In order to limit violence against workers' rights in Indonesia, we call on the Government to work together with the trade unions to improve the labour inspection system in the near future.

I do believe that through unity and solidarity among workers, better working conditions can be achieved.

Mr DE MEESTER (*Employer, Belgium*)

Allow me to share with you some observations, comments and proposals regarding the Director-General's Report and the topics of this session of the International Labour Conference. The topics I will cover in my speech are "realities, renewal and tripartite commitment". I am sure you recognize those words. They are the Director-General's words; they come from Guy Ryder's Report.

The realities that we know are that the challenges ahead are huge – unemployment, underemployment, structural reforms in the labour market, sustainable and just social security schemes, placing people in decent jobs, adjustments to demographic change, the skills gap, safe and healthy working conditions, respectful employers, and arming people with the necessary capacities and behaviour to be mobile and remain in employment throughout their working life.

We need to remove barriers to employment, enterprise creation and development. We need to reduce the administrative burden and complexity. We need to seek a development that makes wiser use of nature and wider use of people, sustainable development, in other words. How to deal with that? The answer is renewal, or resilience if you like, the abil-

ity to cope with changes and challenges, because change is the law of life. We need to embrace change, not to shield ourselves from it, but to use it as an arm to improve, to create a prosperous future for all. So let us be the motor of change, not merely undergo change. When nothing in life seems to be going right, go left. That is resilience. I suggest we look for levers: levers for change, levers for improvement, levers for sustainable growth. The reform process the ILO is undergoing right now can be such a lever, but just one warning, make sure it is not just top-down. Top-down needs to meet bottom-up in order to be effective. Also key is having the ILO walk the talk, practise what it preaches.

The Committee on Sustainable Development, for example: it is unacceptable that this Committee was not working paperless or papersmart. The report we received this morning was still warm, as if it wanted to warn us about climate change. What we need to do is continue to work with the same values and the same principles – tripartism, decent work, sustainable enterprises and sustainable development, justice and fairness, but with different methods and procedures that are more efficient and sustainable, and I am happy to see that this is reflected in the report.

The real challenge is to design multi-purpose policies, to seek collaboration and synergies while continuing to focus on ILO core business as a centre of excellence, for the world of work. An ILO with transversal action and a Conference with committees that are interlinked and mutually supportive.

What is the key instrument to make this work, you ask me. Well, that is tripartite commitment, not just promoted with words and papers, but a strong and responsible social partnership, as it says in the ILO Oslo Declaration. Committed with our spirit, our soul and body, as a tripartite being is defined in the Bible in the epistle to the Thessalonians. Will the ILO be able to do that? Will we be able to do that? Guy Ryder said in his visit to the Employers' group, "If you do not find any merit in my Report, at least the merit is that it is short, only 26 pages, 15 times shorter than the previous one." For me, his real message was: let us focus on quality, let us focus on real outcomes. All member States on an improvement path is much better than ten idealistic, ambitious but non-ratified Conventions.

We, as Employer representatives, may have different views on certain topics, but we are realistically optimistic and confident with the new style and focus the Director-General has introduced. So back to his Report: only one man can do better when it comes to short text messages, and that is my fellow countryman, Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, who visited the Conference last Friday. Herman Van Rompuy, he says things in just three lines – haiku. So here is my contribution: Words we want to hear in a tripartite dialogue – yes, we do agree.

Mr BOŠKOVIĆ (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro*)

Montenegro attaches special importance to the holding of the International Labour Conference, and it is truly a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to address you here today on behalf of the Government of Montenegro.

The Government of Montenegro is committed to internal reforms and the promotion of fundamental European values, primarily human rights protection

and the rule of law. Confirmation of the results of this policy has been expressed through the initiation of negotiations between Montenegro and the EU. Human dignity is a basic right of every individual. Protection of the dignity and integrity of those in the workplace is a fundamental right of workers, and employers are bound to protect employees from any kind of discrimination or harassment.

Montenegro hopes to accede to the EU and to join the system of Euro-Atlantic integration. In that light, the Government's priorities are: an improved standard of living and quality of life for all citizens; mutual respect and protection of dignity in the workplace; sustainable economic development and protection of human rights; and continuing improvements in the institutional legal framework, compatible with international standards and norms and based on the protection of human rights and the development of a transparent business climate.

Dignity at work calls for a higher degree of social justice and higher ethical standards both in work and in daily life, where fundamental social rights are fulfilled. When labour rights are not protected in effective and efficient ways, the result is a steady decline in human dignity.

This is also true in the context of psychological harassment and violations of privacy in the workplace. Harassment and bullying in the workplace violate the dignity of the employee subjected to them, and create a hostile work environment. They can also disrupt interpersonal relationships among employees and with the employer. Those employees who are not themselves direct victims often fail to provide any support to the victims for fear of exposing themselves to the same treatment. Harassment has a negative effect on the overall situation in society. If not properly addressed, it leads to a dysfunction in the values of the social system, and causes trouble both for employees and for those who are seeking employment.

Harassment in the workplace is a violation of a number of social rights and a violation of the right of privacy and dignity at work. It also affects employees' health and is therefore a violation of the employers' obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment. This approach has been confirmed in current domestic regulations on the subject, in conformity with international law.

Protection of victims in the event of harassment at the workplace is provided for in a number of EU texts. In 2001, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on harassment which called on all Member States to confront abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace.

This is particularly important since it has an impact on productivity. States are therefore encouraged to amend existing labour legislation to provide effective protection machinery. However, only a small number of European countries have specific laws on this issue.

Montenegro recently adopted a law on the prohibition of harassment at the workplace, thereby legally protecting the employee's integrity and reputation.

The need for a separate law containing specific regulations stems from the fact that workplace rights are at the core of basic human rights. Moreover, preventing harassment at the workplace helps to foster a culture of human rights and social dignity, as well as respect for cultural diversity.

Last but not least, I wish to reaffirm that the Government of Montenegro will continue to protect the dignity of labour in the future by implementing the provisions of the law and ensuring its enforcement. In addition, the Government is stepping up its bilateral cooperation on decent work with the countries of the region, the Council of Europe and the International Labour Organization.

We recently started discussions with the ILO on the inclusion of Montenegro in the Bureau for Gender Equality's programme of specific protection for lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual workers at the workplace. Montenegro stands ready to continue its constructive cooperation and discussions on all issues pertaining to social dialogue and to the protection of labour at this time of global economic crisis.

(Mr Paulauskas takes the Chair.)

Mr CHIBANDA (*Employer, Zambia*)

It is my singular honour and privilege, as the Employers' delegate from Zambia, to speak to this important plenary gathering at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, which has been ably organized under the theme "Building a future with decent work".

Let me start by congratulating the President and his team on their election as Officers of this session of the Conference.

The Zambian Employers' delegation has been motivated to speak today by the fact that the Conference, which is the first to be held under the leadership of Mr Guy Ryder as Director-General, has a very important item on the agenda, namely, the Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for 2014–15. The proposed measures or reforms under this agenda item are meant to improve service delivery to the ILO's constituents and to the world of work at large. The proposed programme and biennial budget has focused on equality and efficiency as its key objectives and as the cornerstone of the work of the Office and of the ILO's constituents.

The world today is facing the challenge of high unemployment, the workers most affected being young people. In his Report, and in particular in the section on the impact of demographic change, the Director-General acknowledges that the pressure to provide decent work opportunities for new entrants to the labour market will be particularly acute in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The Zambian Employers' delegation also notes with appreciation the timely discussion by the Conference of the demographic transition and its impact on the global workforce. Indeed, the world being a global village, the ILO should be unrelenting in its efforts to implement the resolutions adopted on this subject.

The million dollar question that the Director-General has asked the Conference to answer is: "Where are the jobs going to come from?"

There could be many solutions to the question of employment creation. One of them lies to a great extent in developing an enabling environment of policies, institutions, relationships and behaviours that foster private sector growth. National employers' organizations and workers' organizations must have the capacity to effectively engage in policy development with governments and other stakeholders, so as to ensure an environment that is con-

ductive to business development and sustainable enterprise. The resources of the ILO's field offices, especially in terms of staffing levels, must be raised to levels that allow them to assist their constituents in capacity building. Demand-driven national skills development programmes are needed if we are to provide opportunities for young people to acquire skills that are marketable.

In its effort to provide an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, the Government of the Republic of Zambia is implementing a private sector development reform programme that seeks to address the high cost of doing business in Zambia, for the private sector to be sustainable.

In line with the pillars and guidelines for sustainable enterprise proposed at the June 2007 session of the International Labour Conference, the ILO field office responsible for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, working with the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), recently helped the Zambia Federation of Employers to undertake a perception survey on an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises. The survey, which was launched on 30 May 2013, is meant to serve as a basis for the commitment by the private sector and the Government to provide an enabling environment for a sustainable private sector in Zambia. I thank the ILO for its technical and financial support for this project.

Finally, the Employers' delegation from Zambia supports the adoption of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2014–15 submitted to this 102nd Session. Allow me, on behalf of my Employer colleagues from Zambia and on my own behalf, to commend Mr Guy Ryder, the ILO's Director-General, and his team at the International Labour Office for coming up with the innovative budget and programme that have been placed before the Conference.

May I also take this opportunity to commend and thank the members of the Governing Body, under the leadership of Mr de Robien, for their valuable input to the programme and budget proposals.

The strategic objectives and measures for improved service delivery proposed in the Director-General's programme are well-thought-out measures that must be supported by the Conference.

*Original Spanish: Mr LLORENTE CACHORRO
(Government, Spain)*

My greetings to all the tripartite delegations to this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, which is a good time to think about the ILO's role in the current crisis!

We are, of course, all aware of the difficult economic and social situation we are in. Overcoming high levels of long-term unemployment and eliminating inequalities must be priority items on our agenda. The ILO therefore faces the challenge of finding the right response to the transformation of society and the world of work, which is becoming increasingly technological and environment-conscious and whose population is gradually ageing.

Very much aware of this state of affairs, Spain is continuing to push for essential structural reforms for eliminating inequalities so that the economy can recover while, at the same time, generating quality jobs and guaranteeing social justice. With these objectives in mind, the Government presented the EU

with a national programme of reforms at the end of April that received a very positive response.

The Government of Spain is well aware of the value of social dialogue and practices it systematically in defining and implementing its reform programme. Social dialogue was very much at the forefront recently when Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy met the highest representatives of employers' organizations and trade unions on 16 May, and when agreement was reached to accelerate dialogue on social protection, employment and social security. Among other measures, the Government and the social partners agreed to set up a unit within the European institutions to further the country's interests at the community level.

A forum for dialogue is needed to look at social protection for those most affected by the crisis in employment and offer a negotiating table for the reform of vocational training. Agreement was reached on all these issues by the Prime Minister and the most representative employers' organizations and trade unions.

The important reforms that I am going to refer to here are all the result of dialogue among the social partners, as was the case with our new Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Strategy 2013–16, or are going to be hotly debated in the framework of social dialogue, such as the reform of our social security system to guarantee its sustainability.

As far as this last point is concerned, Spain is currently reforming its social security system to make it sufficiently sustainable for it to be possible to adjust its basic parameters in line with changes in life expectancy and other demographic and economic factors.

Only last week the Government received a report from an ad hoc committee of experts that was set up specifically to study the viability of the public pension scheme. Its recommendations will be taken into account in the new social security regulations, which will be debated in Parliament and in social dialogue with the employers' organizations and trade unions.

We fully realize that a stagnant economy means higher unemployment, and especially youth unemployment, and we are very concerned about its social, economic and other repercussions.

We share this concern with many international organizations. For example, the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference examined the issue under the heading of "The youth employment crisis: Time for action". The issue was also addressed last April at the Ninth European Regional Meeting in Oslo.

It is also a concern of the EU, which is due to adopt emergency measures to promote youth employment as recommended by the European Commission's Youth Opportunities Initiative.

In Spain, too, jobs for young people is a high-priority political issue. Last March, following discussions in the EU and in the ILO, we adopted a Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Strategy 2013–16 to reduce unemployment among young people. The strategy, which was the product of social dialogue with more than 30 working meetings with the social partners, and is due to cost €3,485 million, will enhance the employability of our young people, improve the quality and stability of jobs and promote equality of access to the labour market.

The strategy is already bearing fruit and in just three months has benefited more than 50,000 young people, 38,000 of whom have entered the flat-rate system of social security contributions.

Education and vocational training also have to be improved and linked so as to equip young people with the skills they need to enter the labour market. We have therefore completely reformed the dual system to encourage training and apprenticeship contracts. In the first half of 2013, some 30,000 such contracts were entered into, 73 per cent more than in 2012.

Another important boost to the economy is the Entrepreneurship Support Act focusing on tax incentives, the internationalization of enterprises and the promotion of foreign investment. The new Act, which was recently adopted by the Council of Ministers, has benefited 2.3 million self-employed workers.

Finally, allow me to recall my Government's commitment to finding shared and effective solutions to our social and labour problems. The European Council at the end of this month is clear evidence of this and will help us to continue adopting measures aimed at the rapid recovery of youth employment and at providing future opportunities for our young people.

Original Spanish: Mr TOMADA (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Argentina)

On behalf of the Republic of Argentina, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his first Conference and also on his first Report, which shows how dynamic a major organization like the ILO can be on two levels: first, the updated agenda, which reflects the changes that the world of work is undergoing today; second, the challenge facing the ILO and the need to change its organizational structure to meet new trends and the requirements of its constituents.

I would also like to express my appreciation of the appointment of Argentina's Vice-Minister for Labour and respected colleague, Ms Noemí Rial, as Chairperson of the Committee on the Application of Standards, a permanent and essential part of the ILO's machinery for monitoring and supervising its labour standards.

Thanks to the consensus reached by the Workers, Employers and Governments, we are glad to have successfully dealt with the matters that were submitted to that Committee, which is now fully operational again.

South America is currently enjoying an unprecedented period of growth, peace and social inclusion, a new phase of state policies and international involvement in employment and production that contrasts with the ill-famed neoliberal policies of the 1990s.

A central feature of this development is the revival of the State both as a link between society and the economy and, above all, as the manager of national resources and the centrepiece of national and social integration.

Though plagued by contradictions and challenges, this rich new regional process has in recent years had to confront the greatest political, economic and social crisis encountered under the capitalist system since the 1930s, at a time of strong financial globalization that has done much to weaken the welfare state.

Sad to say, Europe's so-called austerity policies have once more brought fiscal equilibrium and monetary policy to the fore, to the detriment of social policies, employment policies and the survival of private enterprise.

As head of the Ministry of Labour of a developing country for more than ten years, I can say with some experience that the focus of state policy has to be employment, that employment is the key to social inclusion and social cohesion. If we cannot offer quality employment, if there is no social protection floor, there can be no sustainable economy or democracy. This means that States have to be proactive in creating the right conditions for investment, innovation and increased productivity of enterprises that are ready and willing to invest in the real economy and forget about financial speculation – the right conditions also for stronger, responsible trade unions that are committed to the collective well-being.

With both humility and pride, I would like to tell you of some of the changes that have recently come about in Argentina on the basis of these convictions.

Argentina has exchanged exclusion for inclusion, unemployment for jobs and food handouts for vocational training. We have exchanged flexibility laws for employment protection. We have exchanged government indifference for labour inspection, declining wages for powerful collective bargaining. Instead of leaving young people, pensioners and children to their own devices, we have opted for policies, actions and laws to defend them. We have exchanged discrimination against certain labour collectives for equal rights, an attempt to justify a culture of exploitation for a constant fight to eliminate slavery and child labour.

The ILO's *World of Work Report* for 2013 recently heralded Argentina's progress in terms of wages, employment and social protection.

For that, we have to salute Argentina's entire workers' movement, which has accompanied us in making such progress possible.

Those who would like to present our labour situation as fragile are mistaken. Argentina has wrought a fundamental change. It has modified its occupational structure, which is now as solid as it is stable. This is obvious from our employment levels, which have again risen in recent months, and from the growing purchasing power of wages in recent years.

We know that there is still much to be done in terms of economic and social development, and that is why we must continue investing in technological innovation and social inclusion, in health care and safety, and in the fight against precarious employment.

But we can also boast social achievements that nobody can contest without falsifying the facts.

We would like to stress that the challenges presented in the Report of the Director-General are not just a question of a particular policy, or even of a purely labour and social policy. What they call for is a whole set of interrelated policies with employment as their unifying feature, not just because employment is the ILO's business but because it is the business of society. It is employment that is the link between the economy and the day-to-day welfare of households, because it is their wages and income in general that rescue people from poverty and generate consumption, domestic market production and, hence, growth.

In every forum, the President of Argentina has repeatedly called for this same coherent approach from international organizations, an area where the ILO has to strive to make its voice heard by the other world bodies – the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the G20. It is a matter of building a sustainable world with a future for our children, for our children's children, and for generations to come, a world of peace, a society where people have jobs.

I invite you all here to use your imagination and to be innovative in this area too. Let us build a world where there is more equity, less inequality, fewer banks, more production, more employment and more happiness.

Ms KABAKA (Minister of Labour and Employment, United Republic of Tanzania)

I am greatly honoured to be availed of this opportunity to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Allow me to congratulate the President and his Officers on their well-deserved election to preside over our work. My delegation commends their leadership and wisdom in steering the work of the Conference and assures them of our full support.

I also wish to thank the Director-General for his inspiring Report, which sets the agenda and offers us a vision of how the Organization will respond to the challenges facing the world of work.

The Conference is discussing issues of critical importance to the world of work, which include, but are not limited to, sustainable development in the context of decent work and green jobs, employment and social protection in the new demographic context, social dialogue and fundamental principles and rights at work.

As we are all certainly aware, youth unemployment continues to pose great challenges for both developed and developing countries. The United Republic of Tanzania is taking various measures to address this challenge, which include supplementing the National Youth Employment Creation Programme, undertaking demand-driven skills development programmes for promoting self-employment and productivity, improving the business environment to promote and attract more investment, transforming youth-led entrepreneurship groups in the informal economy into more productive enterprises, facilitating the access of youth and women to loans from financial institutions, and transforming subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture.

Given the importance of social dialogue in resolving the complex issues that affect the world of work, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has put in place enabling policies and legal frameworks for effective social dialogue.

Apart from the social dialogue structure provided for in the legal system, His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, has been convening regular meetings with leaders of workers' unions to discuss issues of paramount importance to the world of work in the country.

It is equally important for me to point out that this year, in a spirit of social dialogue, we have managed to set minimum wages in the public and private sectors.

Regarding the extension of social protection, the Government is taking various measures to ensure that many people are covered. As of now, only 3 per cent of the total population of about 45 million people are covered, mostly in the formal sector.

Those measures include but are not limited to: (i) the amendment of social security laws to allow the establishment of supplementary schemes, with a view to increasing membership and extending coverage; (ii) the establishment of a Tanzania Social Action Fund – a unique intervention and a social safety net that empowers poor people to determine their own priorities, plan their response to the challenges they face, mobilize their own resources and make the best use of external support; and (iii) a government study of the possibility of putting in place a universal pension scheme for older people.

HIV/AIDS continues to be a challenge in many developing countries, and we would like to applaud the Office for its continuing support of Tanzania. With the Office's support, we have been able to review a National Tripartite Code of Conduct on HIV and AIDS at workplaces, with a view to providing guidelines for responsible parties in the world of work, that take into account the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200). We wholeheartedly support the Office's campaign "Getting to zero at work".

Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work is another matter of great importance. In this regard, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Office for its financial and technical support to our country under a special programme account on the effective application of the Conventions relating to forced and child labour.

The Government, with the support of its development partners, is implementing various projects in the country to combat child labour. In this regard, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the ILO, the Government of Brazil, the EU, Winrock International, Plan International and the International Rescue Committee for their support in this endeavour.

With these few remarks, I again thank the President for this opportunity and I thank you all for your kind attention.

Original Spanish: Ms CORTÉS AGUILAR (Minister of Labour and Career Development, Panama)

On behalf of the Government of Panama, led by His Excellency Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, allow me to congratulate the President on his election at this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to extend greetings and congratulations to the Vice-Presidents.

I bring the greetings of my Government to Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO and Secretary-General of this Conference, to Gilles de Robien, Chairperson of the Governing Body, and to the spokespersons of the social partners, Luc Cortebeek and Daniel Funes de Rioja.

This session of the International Labour Conference is of exceptional importance. It is the first session of the Conference under the leadership of Mr Guy Ryder, to whom we have entrusted the post of Director-General of the Organization, to initiate a process of reform and transparency in keeping with the times in which we live. The Panamanian Government has confidence in the leadership of the Director-General to turn the ILO into a high-level organization that is a point of reference for the whole

world in everything that has to do with the world of work. We fully realize that his leadership will depend on, and benefit from, the involvement of all the ILO's constituents.

At the 317th Session of the Governing Body, the Director-General outlined the progress that had been made in the reform process being carried out by the Office, along with his Programme and Budget proposals for 2014–15, which Panama supports. We trust that the ILO, in this way, will be able to use and improve its results-based management system and meet the challenges that lie ahead.

In the Director-General's Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, Mr Guy Ryder examines the transformations and challenges facing the real world of work and presents a set of initiatives for meeting those challenges head-on as we move towards the centenary of the International Labour Organization.

The Director-General asks us for guidance in addressing the situation and presents seven initiatives leading up to the ILO's centenary which he has chosen for their relevance, topicality and impact. Against that background, allow me to tell you about the measures, programmes, plans and projects that the Government of Panama is implementing, which may to some extent respond to the questions posed by the Director-General in his Report.

Four years into the implementation of the strategic plan of the Government of President Martinelli, policies have been devised which have helped to strengthen the institutional capacity and socio-economic and political development of Panamanian society, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Projects have also been carried out to eliminate inequalities and to develop a society in which men and women have equal access to work, education, health and housing, projects that naturally include young people for whom programmes have been designed to offer them their first opportunity to join the labour market.

The Government is aware that attaining its goals of growth, investment and employment does not depend solely on macroeconomic factors, but also on integrated public policies at the microeconomic and sectoral levels that can bring about an economy that is conducive to increased competitiveness. That is why my Ministry has initiated and encouraged social dialogue for the sake of stable and completely harmonious labour relations.

I am pleased to inform you that, on 11 June, the President of the Republic signed new legislation that grants certain labour rights to civil servants who have been, or may be, unjustly dismissed. This step towards equal rights for public and private sector workers is something that unionized workers in the public service have been fighting for for many years.

We are working together to consolidated democracy through a new system of labour relations that guarantees social and industrial peace for the various economic and social actors.

Panama's extraordinary economic growth in the last few years has brought better working conditions and decent jobs, while reducing unemployment to nearly 4 per cent in 2012.

To conclude, the Government of Panama would be happy to provide more detailed information on all the measures it has taken to achieve the objectives set out in our decent work programmes, which

have enabled us to combine poverty reduction with fair and inclusive globalization.

We are grateful to the ILO for the work that we have been able to do together over the years and for the shared experience and ideas that have helped us to bring about major changes. The experience we have gained will stay with us and not be forgotten as we continue to strive to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Original Spanish: Mr PENINO (Employer, Uruguay)

The Director-General has presented a Report which describes some of the challenges of concern to the tripartite constituents: Governments, Workers and Employers. In a new, shorter format, the Report contains proposals which call for in-depth tripartite analysis.

The importance of social dialogue, the new challenges of the world of work, atypical forms of employment and the need to establish a close link between work and education are some of the themes referred to in the Report that we consider relevant. From the Employers' standpoint, it is also important that we include in discussions the need for a conducive environment for the development of sustainable enterprises. This is an essential element and one of the main drivers of jobs recovery, decent work and social cohesion.

The success of the proposed initiatives and the dialogue processes that will have to be launched will depend on various factors.

One of these factors was mentioned by the Director-General a year ago when he recalled that the ILO must "represent faithfully and equally the views and the interests of all this Organization's tripartite constituency – Governments, Workers and Employers". Recently, the Director-General also referred to the role of the employers in these processes and emphasized that transforming the relationship between the Organization and the business community is essential for shaping the ILO of tomorrow. We share this view and aspiration.

I would now like to refer briefly to this year's session of the Conference and to certain subjects which relate directly to Uruguay.

In my country, we have deep respect for the ILO. The majority of its Conventions have been ratified and are applied in Uruguay. Many of its Recommendations are introduced as standards which then regulate our labour relations. The discussions which take place at the Conference are followed with great interest by governments, workers and employers, and the benefits for the development of labour relations in our national context are analysed.

However, this habitually close relationship with the ILO does not mean that we have absolute compliance with all its standards.

This year, the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) made some comments regarding the application of seven international labour Conventions in Uruguay. Of the seven which were the subject of observations, two are regarded as fundamental ILO Conventions and deal with freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The observations made by the CEACR on failure to comply with those fundamental ILO Conventions are in response to a complaint made by the Uruguayan employers and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE). This concerns a case which had also been examined by the Committee on

Freedom of Association and the Committee on the Application of Standards.

As can be seen from the background to the CEACR report, the situation is virtually unchanged. A solution was found to only one of the issues covered by the observations and so the case continues to be examined by the ILO supervisory bodies. On behalf of the employers, we would like to be very specific in referring to this case because we are talking about non-compliance with fundamental principles and rights at work.

First, we would like to emphasize that, despite this failure to comply, the employers' sector participates actively in all collective bargaining bodies, without exception, in which our presence is required. We see this as the way ahead and we demonstrate this day-to-day in practice.

Second, we repeat that we are not seeking preferential legislation. We only aspire to follow all the directions that have been given by the ILO tripartite supervisory bodies.

These observations rightly consider not only standards-related and legislative aspects but also the Government's obligation to take care of principles in the application of fundamental standards in practice.

We hope that this case will be resolved and not prolonged indefinitely. Then we can approach on a tripartite basis the new challenges for the development of our country that are arising from the world of work.

Original French: Mr TRAORE (Minister for Labour, the Public Service and Relations with Institutions, Mali)

I would begin by adding my congratulations to the President of our Conference on his election. My congratulations are also extended to the other Officers for the confidence placed in them.

In the past two years, Mali has undergone the worst moments of its entire history. The combined occupation of the northern regions of our country by rebel movements, terrorist groups and drug dealers has had incalculable human, economic and social repercussions.

In the name of Sharia law, Salafist terrorists have for months been inflicting all kinds of punishments on a vulnerable and peaceful civilian population: hand amputations, sexual abuse, arbitrary imprisonment, extrajudiciary executions, desecration of religious buildings classified as world heritage sites, to name but a few.

To escape this barbarous behaviour, some 480,000 people have left their homes in the northern regions, of whom 292,000 have become refugees in their own country and 177,000 have sought refuge in other countries. Those who decided to stay or simply had nowhere to go have had to face hunger, thirst and humiliation.

Another particularly serious consequence of the political and security situation engendered by this terrorist aggression is the almost total suspension of public aid for development, which has caused a serious setback for the economy. Whole sectors of the domestic economy, such as tourism, the hotel business and public works, have been affected by the crisis, which has resulted in many businesses closing down and many workers losing their jobs.

Until the international community intervened, for which I once again express the gratitude of my Government and of my people, all our previous efforts to provide basic social services in the occupied

northern region were inhibited by the destruction of health centres, the systematic pillaging of pharmaceutical storage facilities, the closing of schools and the cutting off of water and electricity services.

If I have dwelled at some length on these painful circumstances it is only to highlight the economic and social challenges that my country is currently facing: unemployment, underemployment, deteriorating working conditions and declining purchasing power. Because of the internal displacement of the population and the activities of terrorist groups, child labour has obviously grown considerably, just when the fight against this scourge was finally making progress thanks to the technical and financial support of the ILO.

If child soldiers have been used in Mali, it is the armed militias that have done so. Neither the Government nor the armed security forces are even remotely involved in the use of child soldiers.

The donors' conference for Mali in Brussels gives us genuine cause for hope, and I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the Government's thanks to all the countries that were present at that meeting for their generosity and solidarity.

Turning now to the Report of the Director-General, I would like to thank the Office for its efforts to convince the Organization's constituents to put decent work at the centre of their development policies, programmes and projects. That is, and will remain, the best way to build a genuine future for peoples, by implementing more integrated decent work policies for creating quality jobs and thus breaking the vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion.

In a global context characterized by a rapidly changing world of work, the ILO must, as indicated by the Report of the Director-General, be given the resources to meet the institutional challenges that are posed, inter alia, by union representation, labour standards and the adaptation of the ILO's own means of action to promote the creation of sustainable enterprises.

For countries emerging from a conflict such as that which is taking place in Mali, job creation is the best way to achieve balanced economic growth. The Government is therefore hoping soon to undertake a Decent Work Country Programme with the ILO that will serve as a framework for all Mali's efforts to generate decent jobs.

To conclude, my delegation welcomes the inclusion of a recurrent discussion on social dialogue and of a report on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs in the Conference agenda.

Mr KUDATGOBİLİK (Employer, Turkey)

It gives me great pleasure to extend my personal best wishes, as well as those of the Turkish Confederation of Employers' Associations, for a successful session and constructive Conference. I would like to congratulate the President on his election to this session of the International Labour Conference.

As indicated in the first Report of the Director-General this year, we need to take a long-term view and a broader perspective when we address the major developments and challenges in the world of work and the ILO's role in the twenty-first century. We live in a world of continuous change. Usually, it is the pace of technological development that determines the direction of these changes. In addition to major developments in our individual countries and in the whole world, we also face serious global

challenges, such as those created by the latest global economic and financial crisis. Even if we only take the tragic unemployment problems created by this crisis, we can easily understand the huge size of these challenges. To face them, we need to challenge our mentalities, attitudes and the structure of international institutions like the ILO – especially the ILO – among many other things. As the Director-General correctly points out in his Report, the lessons of the ILO's past are that its future has to depend on constant renewal in the face of evolving relations.

As Turkish employers, we are proud to declare that Turkey has undergone profound economic transformation since 2001. It has recorded a remarkable average GDP growth rate of 5.2 per cent for the period of 2002–12. Thus, per capita income has increased to US\$10,000 from the modest figure of US\$3,500 in 2002.

Due to the global crisis, the majority of the emerging markets suffered a significant slowdown in economic activity. Being an open and free market economy, integrated in the global economic and financial system, Turkey was no exception. Turkey was also adversely affected by declining external demand and falling international capital flows. However, the Turkish economy bounced back and achieved a growth of 9.2 per cent and 8.8 per cent in 2010 and 2011, respectively. This year, we also expect a growth rate of no less than 4 per cent. Today, Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world with a GDP of about US\$800 billion in 2012. The monetary policies of the Turkish Central Bank played a very crucial role and we have gained a lot.

I would like to emphasize the importance of social dialogue in achieving these positive results in the world economy. I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate with satisfaction that throughout this legislative process the social dialogue mechanism was effectively used with the appreciable efforts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. With all those activities, we believe that Turkey achieves conformity with ILO norms. There will also be further arrangements, and for the time being the preparation of secondary legislation continues with a positive social dialogue atmosphere.

As the Turkish employers, we strongly support the ILO's centenary initiatives put forward by the Director-General in his Report. We totally agree with him that the centenary provides an opportunity not to be missed to launch a number of the key initiatives to equip the Organization to take up successfully the challenges of its mandate in the future. In this context, I would like to take this opportunity to offer the Turkish employers' views on the ILO supervisory mechanism in today's atmosphere of global crisis.

Last year we witnessed a historic discussion in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, and now this year it has changed. However, the Conference Committee has once again short-listed Turkey for violation of Convention No. 98, but the Committee's negative approach towards Turkey gives the wrong impression of my country's efforts. This clearly runs counter to what I have tried to explain in this connection. So I invite the ILO to respect Convention No. 144.

Mr BIEL (*Government, United States*)

I am pleased and honoured to represent the United States Government at this 102nd Session of the In-

ternational Labour Conference. On behalf of our Acting Secretary of Labor, Seth Harris, let me congratulate the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, for his thoughtful and far-reaching Report. It raises questions that are difficult, provocative and somewhat uncomfortable, but that need to be asked and need to be answered.

The continued upheaval and uncertainty that have marked the global economy have taken a severe toll on working people around the world. Unemployment and underemployment remain at unacceptable levels and far too many young people do not even have the chance to enter the job market. For many working people and those who want little more than the opportunity to work, these past several years of economic downturn and economic crisis have been times of loss and exclusion.

While helping to put people back to work is our highest priority, the past few years have made clear several truths about the world of work that we simply cannot ignore.

First of all, we must recognize that the twentieth-century model of industrial relations, based on formal employment relationships and wage contracts, is not the reality for many working people today. Millions work as migrants or seasonal or temporary workers. Many others toil in the informal sector and often are underemployed.

Work once performed by regular employees is now increasingly performed by indirect employees, such as dispatch workers and workers hired by independent contractors or other intermediaries. This use of third-party contractors often circumvents the traditional wage system and creates a more flexible workforce, but one less protected by labour laws and thus in which workers are more afraid to assert their rights.

Now we can argue about whether the growth of these more precarious employment arrangements is due to economic necessity, competitive pressures or simply greed. But whatever we think about how the world should be, this is the way it is. If the ILO is therefore to remain relevant, it is crucial that we recognize this and use our collective knowledge to develop solutions that ensure workers in these situations enjoy their basic rights, are able to sustain a livelihood and benefit from the security afforded by social protection systems.

Second, as the Director-General aptly points out in his Report, the ILO must make a better effort to engage enterprises. Long-term sustainable growth and employment are dependent on a private sector that is strong, creative, productive and responsible. We endorse the creation, therefore, of the new Enterprises Department that will help make the ILO more understanding of, and more relevant to, the modern business community.

Recent events remind us not only of the vital importance of business to emerging economies but, at the same time, of the catastrophic consequences when rights are undermined and workers' concerns are not heeded. We therefore strongly endorse the Director-General's suggestion that the International Labour Conference take up the issue of international supply chains. We are at a crossroads on this issue – international supply chains – unlike anything we have seen in roughly the past 20 years. We see signs that business-only, strictly voluntary models, which typically provide little independent monitoring, transparency or financial commitment and accountability, may be giving way to more robust

and binding initiatives, negotiated along with workers' organizations. This is a critically important subject that we simply must not ignore.

Finally, in a world where political and economic power is more diffuse and where capital and labour have become increasingly mobile, the role of universal international labour standards that are effectively applied everywhere is more necessary than ever before.

Over the past 94 years, the ILO's tripartite process has created a powerful body of standards that have defined, for the world of work, what is right and what is wrong, which practices are acceptable and which are not. As this Report notes, the supervisory machinery has evolved so that our mission is not simply to adopt and ratify standards, but to apply them. The work done by this extraordinary system has helped form the basis for labour law and practice throughout the world. We strongly endorse continuing efforts to promote, respect and realize these standards.

At the end of the day, the relevance and value of the ILO will not be measured by the quality of our internal dialogue, but rather by how well we address the real world problems faced by governments, workers and businesses. To do this, we must draw on our experience, our history and our expertise, and apply the wisdom to the world of today so that we may better shape the world of work tomorrow.

Mr PANAGIOTOPOULOS (*Minister of Labour and Social Security, Greece*)

It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference at this crucial and challenging point in time because it is at this point in time that the burden of the economic crisis weighs heavily on the very future of work, on the essence of social cohesion and the path to sustainable, as well as equitable, economic growth.

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and also the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization have established the policy platforms to address the challenges of the globalized economy, in the spirit of the ILO principles of decent work and social coherence. They have been the guiding lights for national policy platforms in addressing the challenges before us, namely: eliminating poverty; sustaining social coherence; fostering economic growth while safeguarding decent work; and achieving economic growth while enhancing social justice. In a context of sincere social dialogue and tripartite commitment, these are the challenges ahead of us. This is the spirit of the ILO principles.

In light of these policy challenges, I wish to express my compliments to the Director-General of the ILO for his insightful Report to this year's session of the Conference.

The Government of Greece welcomes the efforts of the ILO towards a profound and reinvigorated dialogue with international organizations, including the IMF and the World Bank, in order to formulate policy objectives that would combine sustainable economic growth and decent work.

We take note of the observation of the Director-General's Report concerning the growing inequalities and the dilemmas raised for government policies to balance economic growth and competitiveness during times of economic crisis, as well as the

effects of the increase in labour cost competitiveness in a time of social and economic uncertainty.

We acknowledge the contribution of this year's recurrent discussion on social dialogue under the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. Today, more than ever, social dialogue is absolutely necessary as an instrument to balance policy priorities of the real economy and decent work conditions, including wages.

Now, with respect to my country, Greece, drawing on our recent experiences: after three years of painful fiscal restructuring on the basis of a broad austerity programme, the first positive signs of recovery are emerging. We are not out of the woods yet but we are well on our way. Our national policies have taken into account the facts and figures of the real economy, as well as the social impact of the austerity measures we had to implement in order to cut public expenditure and tackle public debt.

Nevertheless, the policy priorities we have implemented – which have been quite painful, given the harsh options we had to consider – have secured the core rights at work in accordance with ILO values. Our vital priorities are, and still remain: combating youth unemployment; getting the long-term unemployed (including jobless households) back to work and on their way to social integration; and providing a social safety net system on the basis of an integrated plan, instead of a series of inefficient and fragmented interventions that were the case in the past.

The task before us is quite clear now. We must make sure that fiscal responsibility is not achieved at the expense of social cohesion. Through the painful sacrifice of the Greek people, we are now managing to put behind us decades of fiscal excess. However, if we proceed in balancing the budget, while at the same time wiping out the welfare state and sinking large segments of the population into mass unemployment and poverty, then we are risking social upheaval on an unprecedented scale, in Greece tomorrow and elsewhere the day after tomorrow.

If we focus only on fixing the ship's engine, while eliminating passengers and crew, then this ship is bound to become a ghost ship. For the sake of democracy, we must not let that happen because, let us not forget, a downtrodden, despairing society is the breeding ground of extremist politics.

So let us work together, member States and international organizations, workers, employers and governments, to achieve, through enhanced and effective social dialogue, a balance of economic growth, stable employment and social justice. Let us invent our own social multiplier. The task before us is quite clear now indeed.

Original French: Mr SAPIN (Minister of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue, France)

I would like to extend my greetings to the President. In the few minutes which have been allotted to me I would like to elaborate on France's vision of labour.

My first point is to underscore the importance of the International Labour Conference and applaud the convening of the first World of Work Summit, which is part of the ILO's political and functional relaunch.

By bringing together all Worker, Employer and Government representatives, this Conference is an opportunity to place the struggle against unem-

ployment, on the one hand, and working conditions and social progress, on the other, at the heart of our international agenda.

I would next like to say that the struggle for decent work is all the more important given that unemployment, worsening inequalities, the shock of restructuring and economic imbalances in the world are hitting workers and, in particular, the most vulnerable members of society.

I would like also to applaud the work of the Director-General, Guy Ryder, and the high quality of his Report, and reiterate France's full support in pursuing his efforts, undertaking reforms, and making the ILO a key institution in the field of expertise, research and employment policy analysis for the benefit of the constituents.

France was present at the beginning of the ILO's work and its commitment stands unwavering.

I would also like to pay tribute to the social partners and their sense of responsibility, which has led to the establishment of a list of cases, just as they had promised. I would like dialogue to continue in such a positive manner.

I would like now to establish a number of priorities, from our point of view.

First, tripartism should be given new impetus, looking forward, and bringing together all those who defend social justice and sustainable development to reflect on the standard-setting system and the way it is monitored, to bolster the legitimacy and efficacy of the ILO and take account of the realities of the modern world.

Like the Director-General, I believe that the standard-setting activities of the ILO can emerge undamaged and even strengthened from the current debates. A number of significant steps forward were taken since the 2008 reform.

Second, the reinforcement of institutional cooperation on the ground between the ILO and the other UN organizations and the multilateral system. The G20 can also help to make multilateral action more coherent. In this regard, it is important for the G20 Task Force on Employment to pursue its work. The ILO must take its rightful place in international governance.

Another key issue for us is creating new jobs, particularly for young people. France is committed to this in an unprecedented effort jointly carried out at European level. Indeed, Europe finds itself at a crossroads at present. We need to begin a new phase which ventures beyond purely budgetary concerns – creating jobs, giving employment, and not just any jobs, but good jobs, sustainable and quality jobs, decent jobs.

This is not simply a matter for developing countries. No country's policies can be reduced to competitiveness and the market share obtained through international competition.

The implementation of the Decent Work Agenda, with its four pillars, should continue to be our roadmap, shared among workers, employers and governments. We should foster the creation of jobs that pay rewards while respecting rights and providing social protection, also enabling enterprises to adapt to current conditions.

I stand convinced that it is possible to broker a compromise between economic and social concerns.

In light of this, the French social partners reached an agreement on 11 January this year, which has led to the law on job security, promulgated just recently. I think it is also important to mention how

crucial national legislation is and the support which the ILO can give to labour inspectorates and administrations, including in the development of their services, so contributing to effective worker rights, even in the most informal kinds of work.

I am running out of time now, but I would like to conclude by saying that globalization must also extend to human and social rights.

Original Spanish: Mr VACAS (Minister of Labour Relations, Ecuador)

Ecuador is currently going through a new period that we are calling the labour revolution. It seeks to boost labour relations in a dignified way and with profound respect for workers' rights.

How is this being done? First, we have started to raise public awareness of compliance with obligations relating to workers' rights. We consider that the role of the State as regulator, as the applier of sanctions, as the inspector of compliance with obligations, must evolve into an approach whereby the employers themselves also collaborate with the workers. This is what we are trying to achieve with wide-ranging awareness campaigns, dissemination and training, so that the employers collaborate with the workers with a view to reducing conflict and creating a climate of productivity and fairness.

Above all, the aim is to ensure a balance in labour relations in which the State, through bodies such as the labour or labour relations ministry, will play a key role, since it is the State which is calling for a balanced relationship between workers and employers. Following on from the awareness-raising stage, we will give support and guidance to labour relations, so that in the best way possible we can create opportunities and options to make labour relations more dynamic, more fluid and, consequently, more productive.

We have carried out vigorous inspection campaigns, involving 25,000 inspections per year relating to some 2.5 million active workers. With regard to social dialogue, we are resolving more than 90 per cent of complaints submitted through this process. We are eliminating child labour in sectors such as waste disposal, slaughterhouses, agriculture and street work. This is not just the responsibility of the State but also of the general public. It is a responsibility shared by all.

We are also seeking to achieve universal social security, including the proposed comprehensive reform of the Labour Relations Code, which we have been preparing for two years with support from the ILO. In this, we are recognizing work done by women at home, which is unpaid and does not involve an employment relationship but is now actually recognized and involves compulsory affiliation. Under the reform, it will be possible to determine who will make the relevant contributions so that women or men who do long hours of domestic work at home will actually be entitled to a fair retirement pension, and whether they will gain self-employed status in some form.

In addition, we are recognizing the work done by persons in prison. Although such work is an established right within the processes of social rehabilitation, it is now recognized as work with all related rights, namely with remuneration, bonuses, profits and, of course, affiliation to the social security scheme.

The proposals for comprehensive change and reform of the Code include an important proposal to

strengthen the trade unions in our country, especially in the private sector, since less than 20 per cent of trade unions are in the private sector and less than 5 per cent have a collective agreement. This proposal relates to collective agreements and the right to organize according to branch of activity. It will enable us in the short term to give all Ecuadorian workers trade union representation and a collective agreement guaranteeing minimum rights. The aim is to ensure that all workers in all branches, regardless of whether they have their own trade unions, are covered by collective agreement and the right to organize according to branch of activity.

In addition, we have raised the possibility that the Ministry of Labour through its inspectors will not only penalize employers for non-compliance but will also have the power to order them to make any outstanding mandatory payments. The inspector will not only impose the penalty but will have the power to enforce payment, thereby upholding the right of workers to receive all payments due to them.

In conclusion, I should like to commend the ILO for all the work and support that it has provided on our behalf. We need this support from a body that has a global vision of the whole world of work so that these positive experiences can better serve all of us in order to improve labour relations and share experiences which are useful to everyone.

Ms KNUPPERT (*Worker, Denmark*)

Let me start by seconding Director-General Guy Ryder's first Report to this Conference. The Report raises more questions than answers. Very important questions for all stakeholders, because the economic crisis has had devastating consequences on employment and social progress.

Millions of workers have lost their jobs, living standards have fallen dramatically, rights are under attack, and precarious and informal work is on the increase.

The race to the bottom in respect of workers' rights is an extremely worrying trend.

We believe that the ILO has a crucial role to play in reversing these trends and in putting decent work, rights and social justice at the centre of economic and social policies, as well as recovery measures.

We therefore also strongly support the process of change within the ILO to better serve trade unions and their members to make decent work a central element of policy-making.

The tragedy of the garment factory building collapse in the Rana Plaza in Dhaka, which killed more than 1,000 workers, reminds us precisely of what is needed in the world of work.

We therefore also agree to engage more with enterprises. We, as the ILO, need to connect better with the realities of business and respond to business and workers' needs.

I would therefore like to propose to the Governing Body, without delay and as a priority, to place this issue on the agenda in the near future.

We need to equip ourselves with the means needed to make the world of work a better and more humane one.

This may include a close look at the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) and the creation of a new instrument.

For these and many other reasons, we therefore also need a strong, independent and respected su-

pervisory mechanism to define and protect the rights of working people, one which is respected and supported by all parties in the ILO.

The move towards green jobs has a huge potential for job creation. However, such transformation should not merely be about more jobs, but also about more quality jobs.

Issues like sustainable investment in green and decent jobs, the greening of the economy, social dialogue, workplace action, employee-driven innovation, skills and training, and social security are all important and need to be addressed.

The world's population is growing and ageing. The fact that we are living longer and healthier lives is one of the most important achievements of human development.

The new demographic context has implications for the labour force, for social security systems, for employment and for economic development. Over the next decade, it is estimated there will be 420 million more people in the labour force than today.

At the moment, 200 million people are unemployed. It will therefore be necessary to create more than 600 million jobs globally. Many young people are neither in employment nor in education or training. We cannot afford to lose a generation, either socially or economically. We have to deal with this problem and we have to do it now.

In the first guiding principle in the conclusions from the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Dialogue, I would like to highlight that it is stated that social dialogue has many forms and collective bargaining is at its heart. I completely agree.

In future, it is also important to focus more on social dialogue in the context of a more globalized world and multinational enterprises. Therefore, I support the conclusion from the Committee to convene a meeting of experts to analyse experiences and to discuss the item for a session of the Conference no later than 2016.

Finally, I also have to address the Committee on the Application of Standards. This year the Employers, again, in strong terms, questioned the Committee of Experts' mandate and the interpretation of Convention No. 87 and the right to strike, not only in the general discussion, but also in specific cases under Convention No. 87.

We succeeded in agreeing on the list, but the Employers decided to initiate the agreed conclusion process outside this Committee, which is not acceptable.

I therefore, again this year, call on the governments and especially the Government members of the Governing Body, to defend, protect and respect this Organization in its integrity and our universal principles in the world of work.

Ms NONDE (*Worker, Zambia*)

On behalf of the Zambian workers, I welcome the Reports of the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, and the Chairperson of the Governing Body, as well as their elaborate guiding principles for the work of the ILO towards attaining the desired goals of social justice. It is a fact that workers are, in most cases, on the receiving end when it comes to unfair labour practices in the world of work. Therefore, the Reports have attempted to address the plight of workers by prioritizing issues where solutions can have an impact on fulfilling their expectations.

We are grateful that the workers in the informal economy are being taken on board through the consideration of the 2014 agenda of the International Labour Conference. We support the idea of transition to the formal economy but this should be done taking into account various dimensions surrounding this sector. It should not be imposed but there should be dialogue with the stakeholders. The benefits of transition to the formal economy should be gradually communicated to allow for easy adaptation. We are aware that informality has become a structural feature of the developing countries and cannot be addressed in isolation from the mainstream development strategies.

As observed by the recent African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission meeting held in Addis Ababa in April 2013, on average more than 70 per cent of the workforce is engaged in the informal economy and rural sector activities in Africa. The labour market institutions do not address the needs of the workers in these sectors in terms of social protection, skills development, employment services and workforce management, productivity improvement, social dialogue and knowledge development. To a great extent, these challenges also apply to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are poorly covered by the services offered by the labour market institutions, in particular the labour inspection and public employment services.

We also appreciate the update that, with regard to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, a reporting rate of 100 per cent for the second consecutive year has been recorded. We also well receive the increase in the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in the process, as well as the number of new ratifications of fundamental Conventions, which went from six in 2011 to 15 in 2012. Member States should continuously be reminded that they are legally bound to respect, promote and realize the eight core ILO Conventions, regardless of whether they have ratified them or not. In essence, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation have thus become mandatory in nature.

The work of the Committee on the Application of Standards needs a collective approach by member States in terms of listing cases of violations for discussion. It is encouraging to note that this year the Committee was able to list 25 cases but, as mentioned by other speakers, consideration should also be given to other technical Conventions, such as those relating to occupational safety and health, and not focus on freedom of association principles as in most cases.

We are also pleased to note the report from the March 2013 session of the Governing Body on technical cooperation approaches and capacity development of constituents. In this report, the members of the Governing Body stressed the need for demand-driven capacity development efforts that were owned by constituents. In Zambia, the Zambia Union of Financial Institutions and Allied Workers, of which I am the General Secretary, launched its first ever training centre for its members and is open for capacity-building programmes for other trade unions as well as employers' organizations. It has

modern facilities and a conducive environment for workshops and seminars for any level of society. We have received overwhelming support from the Government during the launch of the centre and we hope the ground is well set for other partners to invest in it. We, therefore, appeal for further technical assistance to bring the standards of the centre to a desired level of excellence that contribute to the world of work in Zambia and at the regional and continental levels.

Zambia has made significant strides in the follow-up to the adoption of the resolution concerning the youth employment crisis: A call for action, adopted by the Conference at its 101st Session in 2012, as well as on the "Declaration on creating employment for accelerating youth development and empowerment" adopted during the 17th African Union Assembly Summit in Malabo in June 2011. I wish to report that, as workers in Zambia, we commend the efforts by the Patriotic Front (PF) who have come up with a review of the labour laws. If you recall, I personally, in 2008, came before the experts to report the ill-treatment of them and the Government towards labour, but I am happy to report that the new PF Government in power has included all of us as partners to review the labour laws and replace them, those that were in 2008 under the Industrial and Labour Relations Act and including other labour laws. So we are very happy that this has happened and we thank the CEACR, who were there for us during this period.

Mr IBRAHIMI (*Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*)

Allow me first to express my satisfaction at being here as a representative of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, together with the social partners, in order to participate and deliver my address to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

In my short address, I will talk about the strategic objectives in relation to social dialogue in the Republic of Macedonia that we have been developing and enhancing in cooperation with the social partners, the good practices from countries in which social dialogue has been developed to a higher level, as well as the recommendations from the EU, the European Commission and the International Labour Organization in connection with this issue.

I would like to inform you that the foundation, that is to say the appropriate legal framework, for the functioning of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue has been established in the Republic of Macedonia. We work on these issues together with the social partners and we also have strong support from the experts within the ILO. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them and, at the same time, to ask for such support and assistance in the future.

Drawing upon experience and knowledge from international practice, we were aware that social dialogue in the country should present an important instrument and mechanism in the creation and implementation of policy measures in the economic and social sphere. In view of the above, the objectives and priorities of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia will be directed in future, as they were in the past, towards the development and enhancement of functional and efficient social dialogue at all levels. The establishment of social dialogue and the functioning thereof at all levels as-

sume an important role in achieving and ensuring decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality and human dignity.

The Republic of Macedonia is a candidate country for EU membership, which implies the responsibility of further harmonization of the country's policy and national legislation with the policy and legislation of the EU in order to completely fulfil all prerequisites for EU membership.

One of those requirements is the development and strengthening of social dialogue as a means of achieving consensus on important economic and social issues in a modern society based on the market economy and democratic relations. This is an area in which the social partners undoubtedly assume a role of great importance as one of the parties to the tripartite dialogue that is being achieved with the work of the Economic and Social Council. Together with the social partners, we have also been working continuously on improving bipartite social dialogue and most recently on encouraging tripartite dialogue at the local level as well.

However, efficient and functional social dialogue can be established if the capacity of all the partners is built. For this reason, in the past, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia continuously undertook various types of activities aimed at increasing capacity and inclusion in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of policy, strategic documents and project implementation. Some of the activities within certain projects were intended for the social partners exclusively, which produced positive results. We enjoyed continuous support and assistance from the ILO in this respect as well.

In conclusion, allow me to point out that the strategic objective of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia is to ensure social cohesion and the rule of law, not only by establishing instruments and mechanisms but also by creating social partnerships which include all forms and arguments and negotiations on issues of mutual interest.

Original Russian: Ms DROZDOVA (Government, Ukraine)

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I should like to greet all participants at this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, and to wish you every success in your work. I am sure that the results of the Conference will promote sustainable economic growth and stimulate the creation of new jobs, better living standards for the whole population, consistent and consensual action at international level, and the strengthening of social dialogue.

In his annual message to Parliament, the President of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovich, noted that 2012 once again showed up the many contradictions and the changeability of the modern world. The beginnings of a recovery of the world economy after the 2008–09 crisis are accompanied by an increase in social tension, while the efforts of countries to find optimal measures to deal with the crisis are resulting in complex geopolitical trends.

The President of Ukraine stressed that Ukraine has to continue its strategy of reform and modernization of all sectors of public life. Despite economic difficulties, the country has succeeded in implementing a number of social initiatives to improve social standards for the vulnerable sectors of the population. In Ukraine, we managed to achieve the stabilization of the macroeconomic situation, and we have taken serious steps in deregulating the

economy. Last year, the level of unemployment dropped from 7.9 per cent to 7.5 per cent. It should be noted that on 1 January this year a new employment law came into force in Ukraine. This will contribute to achieving a high level of total employment, improving the quality of jobs and the prospects for young people of finding decent work. We are planning to improve the system of internships for students from universities and vocational training institutions, so that they can obtain employment in their specialist fields. We will implement the entitlement of persons over 45 years of age to one set of vouchers to improve their competitiveness through retraining, specialist training and skills upgrading.

I should like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the experts of the International Labour Organization for their assistance in preparing the new version of the Ukrainian employment law. As correctly stated in the Report of the Director-General, Guy Ryder, technological innovation will directly affect demand for specific professional qualifications and skills in the labour market. Today, indeed, a professional career in a single job is becoming a rare phenomenon. We all face new challenges, as the demographic context changes and technology marches forward, in creating favourable conditions and enabling the workers of our countries to benefit from lifelong learning. Today, in Ukraine, we are modernizing the legislation and principles underlying the education system in line with European and world standards and best practices in this area.

I should like to stress that, to achieve sustainable economic recovery and improve the labour market situation to create decent jobs and to provide effective protection for the population, it is essential to continually strengthen the mechanisms of social dialogue. Systematic social dialogue between the Government and social partners is an effective and reliable tool for the development and implementation of state social and economic policy, so making it possible to take account of the interests of all sectors of the population. All our legislative initiatives, and also our draft laws on social, economic and employment policy, are examined by the Government of Ukraine, taking account of proposals and observations by the social partners. I am sure that by the centenary of the ILO the member States will have achieved substantial practical results which will demonstrate the effectiveness of tripartism in meeting the social and economic challenges of our globalized world of work.

I should like to take this opportunity to express on behalf of the Government of Ukraine our gratitude to the ILO for its broad-based technical support in our efforts to reform social and labour relations and to regulate labour migration. I reaffirm our commitment to continuing cooperation in promoting decent work and ensuring social justice in Ukraine.

Original French: Ms AWASSI ATSIMADJA (Employer, Gabon)

I am very glad to be here in representation of the Gabonese Employers' Confederation, of which I have been a member since 2002. As the Employers' delegate from Gabon, I congratulate you on being elected as President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Employer, Worker and Government Vice-Presidents.

The Director-General's Report this year is entitled *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. It focuses on the future role of the ILO, and records the views of the constituents in this respect.

The Director-General recognizes and reaffirms the unique character of our institution, which is a tripartite one, and encourages the involvement and commitment of the social partners working as field experts, in tandem with the human resources departments of the ILO and its partners, to try to pinpoint and carry out actions to bring about social justice.

I should like to focus on sustainable businesses. In paragraph 133 of the Report we read: "The ILO has a mandate, recognized in the 2008 Declaration, to promote sustainable enterprises as an integral part of the Decent Work Agenda. Discharging that responsibility is a major and relatively recent endeavour for the Organization, and requires it to reflect on the adequacy of its means of action to the task."

It is essential to note that the great majority of non-sustainable businesses are to be found in the informal economy. However, these enterprises are not adequately represented in the ILO tripartite system. The ILO must refine its strategies to include them, for example, by establishing formal employers' associations to cover them.

Empirical evidence, I am sure, will help us to map out this situation. We have got to get off the beaten track, we have got to engage all the social partners as much as possible and help the countries affected by this problem. Some countries, such as Gabon, have witnessed a considerable expansion of the private business sector through the informal economy, especially, but not solely, in connection with large migratory flows. These enterprises can engage in the process of formalization by registering with the Centre for Enterprise Development (CDE) in my country.

Participatory observation as a method of finding actors and beneficiaries of ILO action who are not yet covered could be a very useful method of ascertaining the theoretical extent of the informal economy in countries. The Decent Work Country Programmes are a move in this direction.

I would like to refer to paragraph 134 and the creation of the Enterprises Department in the context of the restructuring of the Office in Geneva, as a response to the practical needs of modern businesses and as a tool to enable the ILO to lend a more attentive ear to these enterprises.

The operation and services of this new department must be extended to the various types of enterprises, to respect the inclusive nature of the ILO's mission, and they must be made available and explained to the full range of wealth-creating enterprises.

Quality and governance in the local processes for involving social partners in countries, a dearth of information technology and legal skills, and the methods of appropriating the volume of ILO tools available, or in preparation, can impact on the effectiveness of ILO action. Legal literacy is a basic necessity for making use of the ILO's services. It is up to the ILO to strengthen the capacities of the tripartite constituents and those of other national bodies aiming for economic independence and decent and productive work. The essentials of national employment laws and international labour standards would thus be assimilated and applied, on a voluntary basis, by the stakeholders in the informal econ-

omy in fields such as occupational safety and health and the prohibition of child labour.

I would just like to refer to the establishment of public-private partnerships for the formalization of enterprises. In the microeconomic context of my country, there are a number of new independent associations which are part and parcel of our strategic plan for an emergent Gabon. They aim to foster the independence of women in our country. One of these is the Gabonese association AFSAPA, which has just been formed and of which I am Secretary-General. It draws on a wealth of local knowledge and on the publications of the ILO and the IOE on the informal economy, and its aim is to achieve the economic independence of women, young and not so young, by setting up enterprises which are formal from the start, in the shape of self-employing enterprises, micro-enterprises and SMEs. These enterprises therefore play a role in strengthening the formal private sector in Gabon.

Now, finally, I would just like to say that I hope that my proposals will be fine-tuned and taken into consideration.

I should like to echo what was said by the President of the Employers' group, reproduced in *Provisional Record* No. 5: "The Employers very much support the reform process regarding the governance of the Organization and internal management in the Office ... We are very impressed by the reform activities which have already been undertaken so far by the Office. The Employers strongly encourage the Director-General to continue his work in this regard and wish him the best of luck and support."

Mr ASATRYAN (*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Armenia*)

It is a great honour for me to address this session of the Conference on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia.

The International Labour Conference has a unique role in the promotion and reinforcement of the ideology and principles of the ILO and it provides great opportunities to identify the real challenges in the changing world.

Let me express my gratitude to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for his comprehensive Report. The policy priorities identified by the Government of Armenia in the labour and social sphere are in compliance with the main principles and approaches prescribed in the Report of the Director-General.

The Government of Armenia is committed to consistent reforms in line with international standards and to the development of social partnerships to ensure social protection, sustainable employment, decent work and social justice.

Comprehensive reforms have been implemented in the sphere of labour, employment and social protection. In particular, the Government of Armenia adopted an employment strategy for the years 2013–18, which aims to promote active labour market measures and increase the employability of vulnerable groups. Special attention is paid to strengthening the interrelation between the economy, labour market and education systems.

The wage policy is in the process of reform. The minimum wage is going to be increased as of July of this year. In parallel, certain steps are being taken to bring the minimum wage definition mechanism into compliance with ILO standards.

In the context of the obligations undertaken by the Republic of Armenia under international agreements, relevant steps are being taken to improve occupational safety and health conditions in the country. In this context, it is worth mentioning that current labour inspection reports aim to increase the efficiency of state supervision of the rules and norms of occupational safety and health systems. Large-scale reforms are being conducted to introduce a system of integrated social services into the country to ensure that social services are accessible, targeted and effective, which is a cornerstone of poverty elimination. In line with the ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), Armenia has conducted a national survey with the assistance of the ILO. The findings and results of the survey are a good baseline for further reforms and actions to ensure relevant social protection for citizens. In the context of current demographic challenges and trends, I would like to point to our pension reforms under which a multi-pillar pension system is being introduced in the country.

In 2011, the Government of Armenia adopted a policy and action plan for the regulation of migration, which first of all aims to protect the rights and interests of labour migrants. Considerable action has been taken to strengthen social partnerships in the country. The Republican Tripartite Commission has been functioning effectively since 2009. Currently, efforts are being made to develop a social partnership institution at the sectoral level. The Government is working closely with the social partners in the framework of legislative, functional and institutional reforms in the labour and social sphere.

I am pleased to mention that the ILO has been actively involved and has supported the reform processes I have mentioned. On behalf of the Government of Armenia and the social partners, I would like to express my gratitude for its continuous cooperation and support.

To conclude, I sincerely hope that the consistent work and common efforts of all ILO constituents will enable current challenges to be tackled to ensure social justice, decent work and prosperity.

Mr GIOVANNINI (*Minister of Labour and Social Policies, Italy*)

It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of Italy at the International Labour Conference and I would like to start my intervention at the point at which the President of the Italian Republic, Mr Giorgio Napolitano, ended his speech when he addressed this assembly one year ago. He concluded by saying that we cannot define goals for our society only in terms of GDP growth or greater financial stability, but that achieving full employment should stand above all other measures in terms of human dignity. This statement lies at the centre of our concerns and it is particularly relevant in a time of rising unemployment: a phenomenon that is not only a hindrance to economic prosperity, but also a denial of human dignity.

This is why the new Italian Government has made the fight against unemployment, especially youth unemployment, its top priority, feeling a huge responsibility vis-à-vis its citizens, and the need to avoid creating a lost generation of hopeless people.

In this perspective, I would like to thank the International Labour Organization for its continuous efforts worldwide to make the advancement of labour and social justice a key point on national and international political agendas.

The Report of the Director-General, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, is a source of significant information. Beyond a certain point, I quote from paragraph 53 of the Report, "inequality will simply not be tolerated socially or economically". This is one of the greatest challenges that we have ahead of us. Scholars have developed several studies that indicate the existence of specific thresholds, beyond which we need to take corrective action in order to avoid macroeconomic or financial instability. Policy-makers and the media pay a lot of attention to this on a daily basis. But we do not have similar indicators of the level of inequality or unemployment beyond which there is a threat of social instability. Therefore, the Director-General is right to affirm that mounting concerns about inequality have yet to find expression in a distinct policy agenda. Furthermore, let me add that the absence of a consolidated theory indicating a particular instability threshold for social factors does not mean that inequalities should be allowed to grow unchecked.

Italy is proud to be a founding Member of the EU and things have gone so far that we could not even imagine our future without it. In a few weeks, an important meeting will take place in Europe, bringing together the Heads of State and Government. We expect that this event will further progress in this direction and, in our dealings with our partners, we are actively promoting the search for the right solution to fight against unemployment and to achieve social progress.

This is the first session of the International Labour Conference under the leadership of Mr Ryder, the new Director-General, whose efforts to reinforce the position of the ILO in international decision-making, particularly on issues that affect the world of work, are real and very much appreciated, especially in this time of global crisis.

I would like to stress here the need to be forward-looking. In this discussion, the issue of the selection of the new sustainable development goals is, of course, of special importance. The question of labour should not be considered as a stand-alone issue but needs to be seen in the wider picture of equitable and sustainable well-being, also taking into account the post-MDGs framework. The global landscape is very different from the one in which we used to implement and assess policies in the twentieth century. The multidimensional approach aimed at reaching an equitable and sustainable well-being can represent a common ground for every country in the world, thus becoming a universal principle which countries will have to develop according to their specificities, capabilities and priorities.

I would like to refer here to the current worldwide debate about the need to go "Beyond GDP", also in terms of indicators of equitable and sustainable well-being. The future model of development which has to emerge from the post-2015 discussion, must be common to all regions of the world, but, in a globalized world, all countries need to take their responsibilities and in industrialized countries these are significant. The achievement of global sustainable development goals is impossible without a change in the way people look at the way we live and, of course, the impact of the standard of living on people.

Let me conclude by saying that Italy values the cooperation with the Organization enormously and stands ready to further enhance our dialogue on the

basis of its principles and standards. Italy is one of the Members with the highest level of ILO instrument ratification and this is why we support its political and social messages, its programme of work and its expertise, such as that provided by the Turin Centre.

Original Russian: Ms ELTSOVA (Government, Russian Federation)

The Report of the Director-General, Mr Ryder, of the International Labour Office, accurately describes trends and problems in the area of labour and employment, and also notes the importance of achieving tripartite consensus on building confidence in the ILO system for monitoring compliance with its Conventions and Recommendations.

We are ready to participate actively and work to achieve this objective. The concept of decent work is key to us. One of the tools for achieving it is the Programme of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the ILO for the years 2013–16.

In December 2012, at the initiative of the Russian Federation and with the support of the ILO, an international high-level conference on decent work took place in Moscow. The participants unanimously agreed that practical activities to implement the Decent Work Agenda have to be stepped up.

Today in the Russian Federation, systemic economic changes are under way. A target has been set for creating 25 million modern, highly productive jobs by the year 2020. The new economy will bring far-reaching changes in the labour market. To promote effective labour market development, we have approved a programme of action. This programme will be implemented under difficult demographic circumstances. Despite some stabilization of population numbers, by 2020 a fall of 7 million is predicted in the economically active population, and we expect there to be a labour shortage. In order to avoid this, we are focusing on maximizing the effective use of existing manpower resources. Our objective is to promote employment throughout people's working lives, and encourage them to retire later. Special employment assistance is provided for citizens who need extra support.

We have adopted a set of measures to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, and over the period 2013–15 we plan to create annually 14,200 specially equipped workplaces. Active measures are in place for the vocational training of women on maternity leave until the child reaches its third birthday. This will help to ensure that family responsibilities can be combined with employment.

We are developing flexible forms of employment, including distance working and work from home, for those approaching pension age and existing pensioners.

The second group of objectives is to modernize the system of vocational qualifications. The plan is to prepare at least 800 vocational standards by 2015, on the basis of the European qualification framework, and to develop an independent scheme of assessment of qualifications, with the participation of the employers. The system of continuous vocational training will be geared to modern professional standards. We are setting up resource centres for the training of specialists, and intensive in-house training in companies is developing.

A key concern is reducing workplace injury and reducing the number of jobs with harmful working conditions. We are going to develop a new classifi-

cation for jobs according to working conditions, along with new safety standards. On 7 June, the Russian Federation ratified the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176). Moreover, in 2013, we introduced an additional tax on the wages fund of workers employed in harmful conditions, and we think this will encourage employers to reduce the numbers of such jobs.

Very important also in employment relations are measures to regulate wage differentials between management and workers. In the state sector, in 2012, we adopted a decision to put a ceiling on managerial pay. In organizations where the State has a share of over 50 per cent, we are planning to reduce this year the separation benefits paid to managers.

For the private sector, from 2014, the Government is inviting the employers and the workers to undertake, as part of their sectoral agreements, to fix a properly based differential between the pay of managers and workers.

It is very important to note that, in our country, social policy measures and economic policy measures, as well as economic programmes, are always discussed with the social partners on a tripartite basis. We have a government commission in which employers and unions participate on an equal footing. In our Parliament, all social legislation has first to be examined by this tripartite commission.

In 2013, the Russian Federation holds the presidency of the G20. The main objective of the Russian presidency is to focus the efforts of the major economies of the world on developing measures on the key economic and financial issues, upon which economic growth and job creation in all countries depends.

On 18–19 July this year in Moscow, there will be a Meeting of Labour and Employment Ministers of the G20. This Meeting will be held in a new format. The issues of job creation and decent working conditions, especially for vulnerable groups of the population, will be discussed together with the Finance Ministers. This format will make it easier to coordinate the interests of the social and the financial institutions, and ultimately to devise joint programmes to extend rights and opportunities for our people. I invite the relevant ministers to participate in this event.

Original Spanish: Mr NAVARRETE PRIDA (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Mexico)

From this podium, I would like to express the warmest greetings of my Government to Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the International Labour Office and Secretary-General of this Conference. Likewise, the President of Mexico, Mr Enrique Peña Nieto, has asked me to convey his heartfelt greetings, thanks and congratulations on the occasion of this International Labour Conference.

Mexico and the ILO have embarked upon a new relationship, anchored in frank and open dialogue, coordinated efforts and close collaboration. We share the vision set out by the Director-General in his Report, where he stated that the transition to a sustainable economy should be seen as an opportunity to create new jobs. We also support his determination to see the ILO reach its centenary as a modern institution contributing effectively "to make the world of work a better, more humane, kinder and fairer one".

In this light, this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference is of particular importance to Mexico. At this event of great international importance, I would like to share a number of activities that the Government of the President, Mr Peña Nieto, is undertaking to ensure the full enjoyment of rights by all members of society.

Mexico has established a development strategy based on five national goals, namely to achieve peace, inclusion, quality education, prosperity, and to see Mexico become an actor with global responsibilities.

To drive the structural reforms needed in our country, the current Government and a number of political and social actors have established the Pact for Mexico. Six months after this significant agreement was signed, the Pact for Mexico is helping us meet national challenges and achieve highly positive results in a number of different domains. In this way, we have managed to carry out significant educational reforms to increase the quality of education in our country. We undertook a reform in the telecommunications sector to promote competition and modernization. A financial reform has been presented to Congress, to reinstate credit for SMEs. In the coming weeks, we will submit two further reforms of the utmost significance in the energy and financial sectors, respectively, aiming to boost economic growth, bolster productivity and provide incentives for integration in the formal sector.

It should also be noted that Mexico has adopted new labour laws, which constitute an important basis for bolstering the labour market and promoting productivity, especially considering that the Labour Code had not been reviewed in 42 years. Through these new labour laws, the Mexican Government has adopted a new labour policy based on four main lines of action, which are: promoting formal job creation, democratizing productivity, safeguarding workers' rights, and maintaining peaceful labour relations.

Today, the Workers, Employers and the Government of Mexico stand firmly united in a common front, the front for Mexico. Similarly, the Government of President Enrique Peña Nieto is moving towards the ratification of a number of ILO Conventions. Alongside this Conference, Mexico and the ILO have, today, signed a cooperation agreement to promote and develop social protection floors, which the Director-General, Guy Ryder, qualified as "historic".

In November, Mexico and the ILO, along with a number of international bodies and academic institutions, among others, will hold an international forum to analyse and discuss the most important issues on the labour agenda.

Mexico would like to express its gratitude to Guy Ryder for his leadership, as well as its full commitment to the ILO, to work in close collaboration with the Office for the defence of workers' rights. Mexico, thus, fully subscribes to the ILO's efforts towards "Building a future with decent work".

*Original Portuguese: Mr ROQUE DA VISITAÇÃO OLIVEIRA
(Secretary of State for Employment, Portugal)*

Allow me on behalf of the Government of Portugal to convey special greetings to the Director-General, Guy Ryder, and all his team.

Portugal continues to feel the effects of the crisis. We have public debt with enforced and accelerated consolidation, unprecedented unemployment rates

and difficulties in creating jobs, and the sustainability of social security is under great pressure. On top of this, there are the problems of an ageing population and youth unemployment. The concerns and problems that we are facing are also the topics and issues that the International Labour Conference has been discussing intensely. However, the problems that Portugal faces are unfortunately shared by many other countries which are represented here.

In economic terms, Portugal seeks to grow in a sustained way to overcome its current difficulties and prepare for the future. This is why we are committed to making our economy more competitive and more attractive to investment. It is an ongoing task and the fact that Portugal is subjected to a bailout package means that there is a need for greater involvement on the part of the social partners – more dialogue, more proposals, more agreements and more collective bargaining: all of these are the guiding principles of the ILO.

Within this framework, the Government of Portugal, the social partners and the Portuguese people as a whole are aiming to boost the economy and increase the competitiveness of companies, which is fundamental for the future of the country.

We are also aware of the concerns raised by the Director-General at the opening of this session of the Conference, when he said: "The most important question, the one asked everywhere, the one asked with growing urgency and sometimes with alarm is: 'Where are the jobs coming from?'" It has also been said here that there are no ready-made solutions. However, I think there is a general consensus that it is only through tripartite dialogue that we will find solutions.

The Government of Portugal will continue to combat youth unemployment and promote active labour policies through necessary and healthy tripartite dialogue, in accordance with the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). We are encouraging new programmes, apart from those that already exist, to improve the employability of young people and adopting specific measures geared to entrepreneurship and boosting business.

As regards vocational training, Portugal, with the involvement of the social partners, has also been committed to expanding and constantly adapting this training to the needs of the labour market. In this way, we are aiming to increase vocational training to cover 50 per cent of young people with full support for the dual learning system. We remain committed to vocational retraining programmes for unemployed workers, giving substance to the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142).

In terms of tripartite dialogue in Portugal, it was possible in 2012 to establish an agreement on growth, competitiveness and jobs, which is constantly being monitored through frequent consultation meetings with the social partners. We also hope that, in the short term, we will be able to reinforce collective bargaining and increase union representation of workers and employers.

We must also stress that the Portuguese experience in combating child labour has made for healthy and active participation within the community of Portuguese-speaking countries through the ILO's Lisbon office, which has received the full backing of the Portuguese Government.

Lastly, I would like to add that, despite the difficulties, the Government of Portugal is still commit-

ted to the Decent Work Agenda, to seeking a sustainable economic system, fostering entrepreneurship and boosting business activity, promoting social cohesion and encouraging vigorous social dialogue. All of this, of course, is necessary and we need to safeguard and sustain social security systems, maintaining the spirit of the European social model as well as the founding principles of the ILO, namely dialogue and social justice.

In view of the above, the Portuguese Government would also like to stress the importance of the Director-General's Report as well as the strategy he proposes for the future of the ILO. We do believe in the preparatory work for the centenary of this Organization which is so essential to the world of work. The documents that have been presented are of undeniable quality and represent a major programme for deepening and extending social dialogue and for achieving consistent policies both within our own member States and alongside other supranational bodies.

Ms FAUSKE (*Worker, Norway*)

The Report of the Director-General addresses major challenges to the world of work, such as the urgent need for a transition to environmental sustainability and also growing inequality and social injustice. We are all aware that the current patterns of consumption and production are unsustainable. Climate change is accelerating, leading to an irreversible loss of biodiversity, increasingly extreme weather conditions, floods, droughts, water scarcity and raised sea levels.

Climate change is magnifying existing patterns of gender disadvantage. When floods strike or droughts persist, the struggle women experience to secure water, fuel and food gives them less time for education or earning income. As migrants and refugees, they confront greater risks of disease and violence. It is therefore imperative that we recognize women's roles as active agents in shaping gender-sensitive climate policy and green jobs.

Environmental degradation is causing a loss of jobs and incomes. It is already a strong driver of migration and has the potential to escalate existing conflicts and create new disputes.

A transition towards a more sustainable and climate-resilient society is urgent. It should be built on the principle of just transition, based on decent work with full and productive employment, respect for workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue. Sustainable development is possible only with the active engagement of the world of work. We need to define roles and responsibilities and to operationalize a just transition. The ILO has an important role to play in supporting this process and should therefore be given a proper mandate as suggested by the Committee on Sustainable Development.

Inequality is a persistent problem. Around 70 per cent of the world's population can be counted as poor. Women constitute a disproportionate percentage because of the systematic discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and control of assets. Efforts to improve the situation for women in the labour market must continue to be strengthened.

The greatest inequalities are found within countries rather than between countries. This is a cause for concern because inequalities can create instability, a breakdown in democracy and even war.

The situation in the Middle East and North Africa is a reminder of how quickly the political and economic situation can change.

The Appendix to the Director-General's Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, describes how the situation on the ground, created by 46 years of occupation, impacts Palestinians' rights and livelihoods. The steady expansion of settlements affects the lives of ordinary Palestinians on a daily basis. Livelihoods are threatened, freedom of movement is restricted, homes are demolished and education and employment opportunities are reduced. Settlement activity is illegal under international law and must be stopped. It is time to impose sanctions against the import of settlement goods and demand that Israel put an end to occupation.

The ILO has, since its inception, been guided by the principle of social justice. Evidence shows that the most economically competitive countries are also the most gender-equal countries. Equity transforms social protection floors into growth for people, economies and societies. The ILO should therefore strive to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda addresses inequalities and fosters inclusive growth and a more sustainable and green economy.

Original German: Mr WILMS (Representative, European Economic and Social Committee)

I thank you for the opportunity to address the Conference today in the context of the world of work.

I am very glad to have this opportunity. We in the European Economic and Social Committee, because of our composition but also because of our priorities, feel particularly attached to the ILO.

How sustainable, I ask you, is our action? The formulas with which we are reacting to new challenges, are they in keeping with the times? Can we afford to continue a "business as usual" approach when we consider our responsibility towards the next generation and generations to come? Above all, how can we ensure that we take people with us, and how can we react to people's understandable fears of change? At the same time, how can we actively tap society's potential for innovation?

You will not be surprised that we in fact welcome the ILO's activities on the green economy, especially those carried out in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other international organizations.

We have noted that Mr Ryder had added a green and a social initiative to his vision for 2019. It is of fundamental importance for the ILO to involve itself with the transition to an inclusive and green economy, and to contribute actively to it, because nothing will happen without the consent of the stakeholders here, that is, the social partners and government representatives.

We see the development of the inclusive green economy as the greatest challenge facing us in the years to come. At the Rio +20 Conference, the EU called for a green economy as a form of sustainable development. It now has to act accordingly, including in partnership with countries outside Europe.

Here, we need an economic model in which green research, development and innovation are priorities for public investment, and appropriate incentives are defined for private investment in this area.

These fundamental and necessary changes in patterns of production and consumption will not be

possible without the involvement of civil society as the decisive actors. Green jobs will emerge not only in certain new sectors, but also as a result of the greening of production processes and products in all sectors.

Here, I should like to stress the importance of having an industrial policy that is agreed between the social partners, to coordinate efforts in the area of technological innovation and to promote the conversion of manufacturing infrastructure in the many sectors involved in the building of an economy that emits less carbon dioxide and consumes fewer resources. This also calls for considerable investment on the part of enterprises.

I wish to add that the European Social and Economic Committee fully supports the initiative for a social protection floor.

Original Turkish: Mr KUMLU (Worker, Turkey)

I greet you with all due respect on behalf of all the workers in Turkey. I congratulate Mr Katamine on his election as President of the Conference. I should like to congratulate and express my gratitude to the Director-General and the ILO for their efforts to achieve social justice throughout the world.

I would like to focus on an important issue before giving my assessment of the Report of the Director-General. The mass demonstrations in Turkey, monitored by other countries, can be considered as a social reflection of various government practices. Understanding each other, establishing dialogue and avoiding all kinds of violent and confrontational attitudes during such social events are the essentials of democracy.

It is clear that stability can only be achieved by improving democratic and participatory processes.

Our Confederation is aware that political and economic success cannot be achieved without democracy and freedom. The Government should safeguard democratic stability by adopting and publicizing an inclusive approach, so as to overcome polarization within society, in a peaceful way.

I should like to express my gratitude to the Director-General for his Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, in which he describes the reforms to be undertaken within the ILO, in order to address social justice and the recent developments in working life.

The Report is significant, being the first Report of the Director-General, and it aims at improving the ILO's institutional capacity to address the expectations and requirements of its constituents.

I should like to draw your attention to the fact that employers and governments, chiefly in Europe but also in almost all other countries, are repressing workers' rights and freedoms, especially since the financial crisis.

The effects of this repression on the ILO's constituents is becoming clear. Last year's discussion on the right to strike, which is the most important component of collective bargaining, and the interruption of the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards, are examples of great concern.

If the ILO is aiming to establish social justice in industrial relations and in working life in order to address the changing conditions of the twenty-first century, it should carefully consider the growing pressure on workers and undertake objective assessments.

Economic growth in Turkey does not mean an end to the problems of the labour movement. The prob-

lems of the workers still have to be solved, and different issues are emerging now because of changing labour relations. For example, subcontracting has become one of the biggest obstacles to unionization today. Despite the amendments made to legislation regulating trade union rights, the unionization rate in my country is still very low.

In some workplaces, workers who become members of a union are still being sacked. The high rate of undocumented employment, the 50 per cent plus one workplace threshold, the abolition of compensation for workers dismissed for their trade union activities at workplaces employing 30 or fewer people and anti-union practices, continue to be the most significant obstacles to trade union organization.

Moreover, precarious employment in Turkey and related fatal work accidents are widespread and need special attention.

New arrangements have been introduced under the Constitution, with legal provisions to regulate the trade union rights of public servants in Turkey. Their right to collective bargaining has now been converted into a collective agreement.

However, the ban on strikes in all public industrial sectors and the unfair composition of the public employees' arbitration board still continue. Consequently, workers who want nothing but to live in peace and to have no concern for their future, want a fair share in terms of both wages and social rights.

The Report of the Director-General is quite comprehensive in its findings on significant issues, such as demographic change resulting from population growth and migration, increasing injustice, unemployment, growing poverty, the negative environmental impacts of certain kinds of production, and technological change and its impact on employment.

The Report guides us on many other issues, such as gender inequality and its negative effects for the economy, complications in the wake of austerity measures, unfair wage distribution, production and employment relations, working hours and types of employment, along with social protection.

We would once again like to express our gratitude to the Director-General for his Report and wish him and the Office all success in their future work.

Mr KALILANGWE (Government, Malawi)

I am one of the proudest Ambassadors to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. Our President, Her Excellency Dr Joyce Banda, addressed this august House just a couple of days ago and I am here today just to echo the words of wisdom delivered by the President on behalf of 15 million Malawians.

First, allow me to congratulate the President, his Vice-Presidents and all the Officers on their well-deserved election to chair and steer the deliberations of this very important Conference. So far, you have guided the proceedings very well and I have the confidence that you will lead the Conference to successful conclusions.

In my speech, I will mainly touch on the Report by the Director-General, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. The Report is a masterpiece that touches on real and fundamental topical issues affecting our countries today. We agree that we indeed have explosives in our midst. I would like, therefore, to congratulate the Director-General on the Report. We are proud that the ILO mandate has not changed since its birth

94 years ago. We are, therefore, very grateful to be associated with the ILO on our journey as we continue to critically examine forces that are transforming the realities of the world of work and come up with innovative solutions to tackle these multiple challenges.

Through the Malawi Decent Work Country Programme, developed with the assistance of the ILO, and other initiatives, Malawi is on the right path towards creating better and decent jobs, better social protection and better social dialogue.

In her address, Her Excellency the President of the Republic of Malawi, Dr Joyce Banda, mentioned that she inherited an economy that was on the verge of collapse, and governance issues including freedom of expression and rights were greatly compromised. This is the honest truth, and as a country our main focus now is on two broad objectives, namely, to unlock the potential of the Malawian people to regain their freedom, dignity and sense of pride and thereby give Malawi the opportunity to restore her socio-political and -economic freedoms, and to implement a peoples' joint agenda to enhance opportunities, reduce inequalities and overcome poverty through its political, social and economic programmes. These objectives are defined in the Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS). The MGDS is the overriding operational medium-term strategy of Malawi, designed to attain the nation's Vision 2020, and I am pleased to inform this august House that for the first time issues of labour have been included in the MGDS under the theme of sustainable development.

Coming to topical issues, on social protection, Malawi recognizes social security as an important tool to prevent and reduce poverty inequality, social exclusion and social insecurity. To this effect, we have enacted the Pensions Act, which makes it mandatory for employers to put their workers on a pension. We will continue, with guidance from the ILO and social security standards, to progressively make reforms to ensure higher levels of social security for as many people as possible.

Under the broader picture of social protection, we are implementing programmes such as the public works programme, social construction programmes, transfer programmes, the school feeding and bursary programme, a food aid programme and a farm input subsidy programme. These programmes are designed to meet the needs of vulnerable households, including the ultra-poor.

Furthermore, the Government has put in place a number of initiatives to enhance income generation at the household level. These include the community savings and investment programme and investment in the market, rich crops and promotion of livestock production. The community savings and investment programme aims at inculcating a cult of savings through capacity building in group dynamics, financial literacy, business management, skills training and corporate information.

The issue of demographic change is very complex, just like the issue of environment sustainability.

The major problem where I come from is youth unemployment, and we have come up with a national employment policy which places employment as a central market economy policy that mainstreams employment and labour issues in all areas of development.

The issue of demographic change and other emerging issues and their linkages with labour-related issues such as job creation and job loss may be obscure. The same is true of fundamental sustainability. As such, most of our developing countries need the support and guidance of the international community and for the UN specialized agencies, including the ILO and other international organizations, to come forward and assist us to come up with, or implement, specific policies that address migration, technology transfer, skills development, youth employment and green jobs. In this regard, I take this opportunity to call upon all these organizations to beef up their support to the ILO and its member States and to address these very important topics.

Lastly, I would like to thank the ILO for its support to our country through various projects and programmes, notably child labour and ILO-IPEC, the upcoming decent work for food security project, the pilot G20 education and skills for employment project, the organization of various successful high-level policy discussions on productive employment and decent work, and a study on an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises in Malawi. Considering the many employment and decent work deficits, I appeal once again to the ILO and other specialized agencies, to the donor community and to our bilateral and multilateral partners for more support to deal with the impact of demographic change, the transition to environmental sustainability and the onward march of technology.

Original Arabic: Ms SAYED MAHMOUD (Minister of Human Resources Development and Labour, Sudan)

At the outset, the delegation of my country would like to extend its greetings to the President, and to Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO. We would like to greet everybody present here.

We would also like to thank the ILO Director-General for his exhaustive Report which reflects the realities and real challenges in the world of work at a time when the ILO is preparing to celebrate its centenary in the midst of economic, social and financial developments which have serious consequences on the world of work. It is for this reason that we are looking forward to the ILO to play a greater role.

The meetings of this session are of prime importance because the effects of the economic and financial crises continue to make themselves largely felt in developing countries, especially in the least developed countries, as well as in those countries which are emerging from a conflict. My country is doing everything in its power to handle such problems and to focus on the achievement of the sustainable development of its people. We are doing this by better exploiting the huge resources of Sudan and by taking initiatives to address the problems of unemployment through important initiatives such as the microcredit projects intended to promote youth employment.

My country also pays attention to human issues such as the promotion of social dialogue between employers, workers and the Government. It also pays particular attention to the issue of human resources development targeting training, including vocational training, education and technical education, and capacity building. Furthermore, my country has formulated important labour market policies such as a policy to raise the minimum wage, in ad-

dition to policies for social protection and social security schemes.

The results of a survey on manpower will soon be announced by my country. Furthermore, a survey on the informal economy will soon be undertaken for the first time.

It is to be recalled here that the unilateral sanctions imposed on Sudan by the United States prevent us from benefiting from new technologies which are considered to be one of the drivers of the rapid growth of the economy as indicated in the Report of the Director-General. This has had a negative impact on the development of job opportunities in Sudan, on the vital economic sectors especially the transport sector and on development projects, which in turn restricts the right to development. It has also hampered our capacity to manage natural disasters, as these unilateral sanctions clearly limit the availability of early warning and prevention systems.

We commend the Director-General for his Report, in particular with regard to the need to hold an in-depth dialogue with other international organizations, and to build partnerships with organizations such as the IMF, regional development banks and the WTO. We welcome the ILO's effort to seek observer status in that organization. In this connection, facilitating the membership procedures of the WTO especially for the least developed countries will impact positively on expanding development opportunities in these countries, as well as in other countries, including through the creation of additional job opportunities in different sectors. This effort will also contribute to the strengthening of the "One UN" process.

In this context, we have to carry out an evaluation of the impact of global markets and global trade on labour. This should not be dissociated from other issues that were mentioned in the Report, such as the issue of social justice as described in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008 and the issue of fair globalization, which is closely linked to the issue of global trade and ways of making it fair so as to avoid any negative repercussions on employment and job opportunities. This is because achieving overall justice in trade and in other sectors is the way towards achieving universal peace and security. However, the rapid development of the global economy, characterized by a globalized world, a weak sovereignty of national governments to protect the vulnerable and increased social disparities in the world have all led to increasing inequality and poverty. Consequently, we have to stop for a while and focus on the statement made by the Director-General with respect to the middle class. In this connection, we are pleased to see that there is a rising middle class in the world of work. However, we may question whether the growing middle class stops at national borders or whether it goes beyond national borders to become a global middle class under the umbrella of an unfair trade system, which divides the world into rich and poor, and in which our African countries constitute the majority.

Here, we would like to commend the Director-General for the statement in his Report with respect to strengthening the role of the Organization vis-à-vis corporate social responsibility of enterprises. This statement is important and historical because it provides a framework for a new process, the aim of which is to achieve justice in a fair global economy,

characterized by a growing middle class and reduced poverty levels.

The delegation of my country would like to express its appreciation of the huge role played by the Director-General in leading the current reform process within the Organization. This process includes structural and institutional reforms, in addition to making the Organization more active at a global level through the creation of new partnerships with entities other than States. We are totally convinced by the seven centenary initiatives presented by the Director-General. They are: the governance initiative; the standards initiative to consolidate tripartite consensus; the green initiative; the enterprises initiative; the end to poverty initiative; the women at work initiative; and the future of work initiative. We are also convinced of the need to integrate labour issues in the post-2015 development agenda.

The delegation of my country would like to thank the ILO for the technical assistance to be provided to Sudan, which will start at the end of this month. We would also like to indicate that my country is deploying great efforts aimed at increasing youth employment, and promoting the rural economy in spite of the debts, economic sanctions and the war imposed on my country.

In conclusion, I would like to end my speech with the important question raised in the Director-General's Report, namely, how strong do we want the ILO to be today? This is the important question posed to this Conference. In reply, we would like to stress that we want a strong Organization which has a strong global impact, and which moves ahead on the path of social justice, and of combating poverty and unemployment in the world.

Original Greek: Mr FELLAS (Worker, Cyprus)

The Cypriot people are in a very difficult situation and we are awaiting the results of the Conference to assist us in emerging from this crisis and the dreadful situation in which it has placed us.

On the occasion of this 102nd Session of the Conference, we hope that the ILO will reassess its role in the world and allow decisions concerning the world of labour to be taken. This will allow adequate solutions to be found for collective bargaining and collaboration.

We hope that labour relations will find a new impetus. At the current time, inequalities are increasing and it is completely unacceptable that we continue to see labour conditions worsening.

The exacerbation of neoliberalism and the destruction of social relations do not allow greater competitiveness to be found; rather, they destroy the fabric of society leading to unemployment and social injustice.

The ILO held a Regional Meeting in Oslo recently which looked at the results of austerity measures and demonstrated the extent to which those measures have proven negative. In order to increase competitiveness and streamline our finances we have taken measures which have led to social strife.

Cyprus has seen a reduction in the number of posts available, and that also applies to the public sector. Dire working conditions have been witnessed and that has not allowed the country's financial situation to improve either. The collapse of the financial system and the memorandum which has been signed with the Troika have led to disastrous economic results and brought our country to the

edge of catastrophe. So we have already seen where the agreement has led us.

In Cyprus, we have been undergoing a period during which unemployment has been increasing, retirement is no longer secure and government wealth no longer leads to the creation of jobs. All this serves only to worsen working conditions and social dialogue.

We have seen that austerity is no way out of the crisis. The solution, rather, is to be found in economic growth as well as lasting growth leading to real social developments.

We workers have seen a number of groups fighting for workers' rights in the wake of the crisis. We subscribe fully to the Director-General's Report concerning the state of labour rights in Palestine. International law should be applied in that regard and the Palestinian workers' rights should be respected. Unfortunately, around 40 per cent of Cyprus has been occupied by Turkish troops for around 39 years. This violates UN decisions and documents.

Cypriots across the island aspire to the reunification of our country, liberation from the military presence and freedom of movement. We would like to seek a solution which will allow our citizens to choose their employer freely, so that all Cypriots can be employed on an equal basis and enjoy full equality as regards social and labour rights, regardless of their origin, religion or gender.

We aspire to the ILO's support and assistance in the area of tripartite cooperation and the preservation of workers' rights in difficult economic times. We also hope that the reunification of Cyprus and decent work for all will soon be achieved.

We conclude by expressing our desire for this Conference to reach a successful conclusion for the rights of workers around the world.

Ms CZUGLERNÉ IVÁNY (*Worker, Hungary*)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election. I also would like to express my gratitude to Mr Guy Ryder for his most inspiring Report.

I wish to express my full agreement with the spirit of the Report and the main underlying message that the ILO too must keep track of the changing world of work and employment in the twentieth century and must also place increased emphasis on areas which were perhaps of less importance in the activities of the ILO in the past, such as relations between the ILO and international financial institutions, the corporate social responsibility of employers or new partnerships with multinational corporations.

We fully support the committed tripartite structure of the ILO as a particularly important feature, which must continue to remain an essential means for the attainment of the ILO's targets in the future as well. We also agree that, amidst the turbulent changes in the realm of work, the enforcement of the principles laid down in the Declaration of Philadelphia, which focuses on social justice, the fight against poverty and universally guaranteed fundamental rights, is of top priority and a topical issue also at present.

Hungarian workers have in recent periods been compelled to face the challenges of the changed realm of work daily, in particular its negative effects which have been aggravated by the economic recession that started in 2008. These changes in the world of work have brought painful, negative changes in the living and working conditions of

Hungarian workers, combined with reduced social protection, undermined employment security and increasing poverty.

The Hungarian Government attempted to manage the changes in the realm of work and employment with a number of measures which, however, resulted in contradictory implications for workers on occasion, while the social partners were not always involved, or not all of the social partners were involved, in the process leading to these measures. In order to reduce unemployment, which increased dramatically as a consequence of the recession, the Government introduced a new institution called public work, the purpose of which is to provide work-related earnings other than social benefits for people who have been forced out of the labour market for years, living on the periphery of society. However, the remuneration paid to these public workers is only about half the minimum wage paid for the same amount of work in an employment relationship, and therefore some employers tried to replace their employees with public workers on account of the low labour costs involved.

Because of the ageing of society and the specific features of a pension system based on the principle of solidarity and the extensive system of early retirement and disability pensions that were prevalent during the period before the recession, the Government began to transform the system. In the interest of the long-term sustainability of pensions, the Government terminated or reduced eligibility for early retirement for a number of employment groups, stipulated more stringent conditions for retirement on grounds of disability and raised the retirement age. On the other hand, certain groups of civil servants, who had the right both to be employed and to receive a pension at the same time, were forced to choose between work and retirement so as to reduce public expenditure. While these pension measures were genuinely necessary in a number of cases, their immediate implementation gravely violated the human dignity of the workers and civil servants concerned, caused major difficulties in their livelihood and further increased the number of unemployed.

The new Labour Code that entered into force on 1 July 2012, despite the effective help of the ILO during its drafting, has significantly increased employers' powers regarding the flexibility and determination of employment conditions, particularly with regard to working time, with a view to improving competitiveness and creating jobs, but has considerably weakened workers' and trade union rights. Some of the provisions of the Labour Code led to a reduction in income too. These new legal rules result in increased exposure for workers, thus undermining their security, privacy, health and even their human dignity. Some rights of the newly set up occupational chambers in the public sector, with mandatory membership for civil servants, compete with trade union rights, thereby reducing the position of trade unions in this sector too. Some of these measures are not fully in line with ratified ILO Conventions, and we have therefore already turned to the relevant international bodies.

Hungarian workers support the use of the means identified in the Director-General's Report that are necessary for managing the changes that are taking place in the world of work and employment. A particularly important means is the implementation of a genuinely tripartite social dialogue structure at the

national level in which all the social partners can participate with equal rights. The economic problems and the changes in the world of work can be resolved and addressed only by effective and meaningful social dialogue among the three main actors of the economy and by measures which are fully in line with ILO standards.

Original French: Ms PRELICZ-HUBER (Worker, Switzerland)

I am speaking on behalf of the Swiss Public Service Trade Union (VPOD), so I represent the country in which the ILO was founded almost a century ago and where it has always had its seat. This is a country that has, on many occasions, contributed to the development of the ILO's Conventions, and a country that has ratified a large number of these Conventions, notably Conventions Nos 87 and 98, that guarantee union rights, the right to create unions, the right to become a member of a union and the right to strike. All of these are rooted in our country's Constitution.

Now you will probably be surprised to hear that our union recently had to submit a complaint against Switzerland, precisely because our country does not respect the commitments that it has adopted here in the ILO by ratifying these Conventions on union rights.

To give you a specific example, in the Canton of Neuchâtel, there is a collective labour agreement that covers all the institutions involved in public health. But, last year, a small private hospital was taken over by a major private investor who denounced the collective labour agreement. The hospital staff asked to remain under the health sector agreement but the employer refused and the staff went on strike. Instead of engaging in negotiations, the employer threatened to dismiss these strikers. Certain strikers gave in but others continued their strike so the employer dismissed all the strikers with immediate effect.

When our union brought the case before the Swiss courts, these confirmed the employer's right to dismiss the strikers. Swiss law provides the following: a dismissal, even if unfair, is always given effect. The labour contract is terminated so that, under Swiss law, the strikers in this hospital are no longer strikers. Their employment relationship has ceased to exist. How can you go on strike when you no longer have a job?

Less than a week ago, another case came up in the Canton of Argau, where 11 SPAR supermarket employees also went on strike to protect their working conditions. As in Neuchâtel, the employer laid them off with immediate effect.

These two examples indicate that Swiss law provides no protection against anti-union dismissals. According to our legislation, an employer can terminate labour contracts at any time. If a company employee goes on strike, it is simply a matter of dismissing the strikers and the strike will disappear. The facts on the ground are that the right to strike is enshrined in the Swiss Constitution but, in reality, it does not exist.

If the ILO's centenary is to be commemorated within the right framework, the country that has hosted the Organization since its foundation should, at least, respect the Conventions that it helped prepare here, in its own territory, and subsequently ratified.

With the assembly's support, I sincerely hope that Switzerland will soon change its laws so that we

can celebrate the ILO's centenary in a country that deserves its place in this Organization.

Mr PASKA (Worker, Papua New Guinea)

Let me begin by conveying the warm greetings of the workers of Papua New Guinea, and expressing their gratitude to the ILO for its continued commitment to advancing their interests and livelihoods and, by extension, those of employers and the nation as a whole.

This 102nd Session of the Conference has rightly directed the focus of member States to a number of critical areas that embrace a broad range of intertwined issues that call for a conscious articulation of the cross-cutting issues that either promote, transgress or stymie progress towards attaining desired outcomes.

On the question of the application of standards, a number of countries have been called on to justify their positions with regard to the upkeep, or lack thereof, of internationally accepted standards. The workers of Papua New Guinea do not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. However, in a shrinking global structure in which workers criss-cross national boundaries in search of work, it is almost impossible for workers of any nation to even begin to contemplate defining justice and democratic values within the narrow confines of individual preferences. It would be a bridge too far, the repercussions of which would always return to haunt the perpetrators. No, for the workers of Papua New Guinea, justice yesterday, today and tomorrow must, of necessity, remain the same always, anywhere and everywhere, without fail. International standards are a signpost for justice irrespective of whether they are cloaked in political, social or economic terms. It is therefore worrying to hear of countries that profess allegiance with justice and democratic values but that are prepared to violate their precepts with impunity.

In the context of the New Zealand case, we stand with the workers of New Zealand and urge the Government of New Zealand to move expeditiously to correct the situation.

There is, at present, no institutionalized anti-union legislation or policy in Papua New Guinea and, while there are pockets of anti-union activity in some sectors, as there almost always are in most countries, these are more the result of a lack of policing to ensure compliance. This is being addressed, however, through the strengthening of the inspection branches of the regulatory body.

The Committee on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs offers an opportunity to revisit the parameters of development and to map out an all-inclusive approach taking account of areas that have in the past been identified with new emerging trends. The United Nations Brundtland Report, published in 1987, defined sustainable development, and the 2005 United Nations World Summit went further to identify the interdependent and reinforcing pillars of sustainable development, these being economic, social and environmental protection.

This Conference has rightly canvassed the sustainable green development initiatives, asking member States to clearly articulate the intrinsic aspects of sustainable green development, and to introduce methods that ameliorate the prerogatives of all aspects of sustainable development.

What appears to be languishing on the periphery, however, and deserves some attention, is the sustainability of financial markets and transactions. The worst recession to hit the global economy in the twenty-first century brought home some unpleasant truths about unfettered markets and the potential for economic collapse if reckless, unsustainable financial transactions are allowed to traverse the globe at will and without limits. Many countries, including Papua New Guinea, have employed measures to combat financial adventurism but more, clearly, needs to be done. The report on *Employment and social protection in the new demographic context* also introduces a timely discussion on the changing demographic features of the labour market and population. We note, however, that the language on employment remains heavily inclined towards discussing employment within the context of labour market variables that revolve purely around the employer–employee employment arrangement, with very little emphasis on self-employment. This is a moot point for Papua New Guinea, considering that 90 per cent of the population owns 97 per cent of the land, are self-employed and take advantage of the subsistence and formal economy mix to sustain their livelihoods. A critical challenge for policy-makers is therefore to bring about policy penetration and programme implementation designed to enhance self-employment. One such policy initiative requiring ILO involvement is the introduction of cooperatives.

Meanwhile, the same subsistence and formal sector mix also absorbs much of the social security requirements of the vast majority of the population. This is a unique feature in Papua New Guinea and one which has worked well so far, but that clearly needs to be reviewed and supported. That said, a large proportion of formal sector workers in both the private and public sector are covered by a vibrant superannuation system. Free education has been introduced for the first time and a health insurance scheme is presently on the drawing board. A number of microcredit schemes and savings and loan society schemes are working well and paid maternity leave is also available.

The Report of the Director-General underlined the need for international discourse to centre on greater involvement in small business. We believe that serious discussion should be pursued on this front, and on tackling unemployment among women. A lot more clearly needs to be done on numerous fronts and we are working together with our social partners through established tripartite structures to resolve these issues. This is a far cry from the situation in the past and is a testimony to what is possible through improved social dialogue.

Finally, on a more sombre note, may I be allowed to pay tribute to my friend and mentor Harindranath Sandrasekera, who recently passed away in his native homeland of Sri Lanka. Harry was the resident representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in Papua New Guinea at the height of the Cold War, and was the head of the international effort to resuscitate trade unions in Papua New Guinea. I am a legacy of that effort. The workers of Papua New Guinea owe him a debt of gratitude. Harry also contributed immensely to the work of the ILO, regularly attending its Conferences. I would suggest that there is a seat in the Sri Lankan corner that remains vacant for him today. May he rest in eternal peace.

Original French: Mr WINDEY (Representative, International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions)

I am speaking on behalf of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS), which currently brings together 71 national institutions throughout the world, spanning four continents.

The relevance and the importance of the subject under general discussion at this session should be stressed. The facts and analyses are now relatively well known and they are well presented in the Report submitted by the ILO. The AICESIS has also published a report on this subject and, this year, our work has been piloted by the Economic and Social Development Commission of the Republic of Korea.

Report IV, *Employment and social protection in the new demographic context*, to which we ascribe, provides a good description of the diversity and complexity of the challenges we face, which include promoting the creation of productive and decent jobs, bolstering the overall employment rate, increasing the level of employment among older workers, women and young workers, and extending or continuing to guarantee access to reliable and viable social security systems for older persons.

Solutions will depend on separate national circumstances but they will all require integrated measures in economic, employment, social security and fiscal policies, not forgetting the need for a global approach throughout the whole process. It would be a mistake to think that such fundamental choices can be made and implemented without broad consensus among States. This need for social consensus raises the essential question of governance. It is through effective tripartite cooperation between governments, employers and workers that we will overcome obstacles and set up effective policies on employment, non-discrimination against older workers, improving their employability and training, and providing better access to employment and information services, while preserving social justice and cohesion.

It is therefore essential for the whole of organized civil society to contribute to taking up this fundamental challenge. The involvement of all economic and social actors is an essential prerequisite for achieving lasting success. The economic and social councils and similar institutions (ESC–SI), which represent civil society, have an important role to play in this respect. Through their involvement and thanks to their membership, they represent the life force of society and bring together the economic and social partners that can progress together. Being firmly anchored and well connected within society, and due to their position in the institutional system, the ESC–SIs operate very strong action levers.

In particular, the AICESIS welcomes Report VI on social dialogue and we would like to stress that the economic and social councils operating within member States constitute indispensable forums for the implementation of the action plan on social dialogue that will be adopted by the Conference.

Through its activities, our association also has a role to play as a platform to promote the exchange of experiences and good practices between its members and promote social dialogue. In this respect, by suggesting that social partners should be involved in the design and implementation of de-

cent work programmes, the ILO is calling upon civil society represented in the economic and social councils. The cooperation agreement signed between the AICESIS and the ILO in 2012 is, I am sure, a tool for, and a guarantee of, the mutually beneficial development of relations between our two organizations to serve these priorities.

This agreement will be instrumental in the implementation of the action plan on social dialogue. Thus, for example, as part of this agreement, the AICESIS and the ILO will organize an event in Madrid in December with the ESCs in Spain on “the role and impact of the ESC-SIs in the response to the global financial, economic and jobs crisis”.

Ms ADAM (Government, Republic of Maldives)

At the outset let me extend my delegation’s congratulations to Professor Nidal Katamine on his election as the President of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, as well as to the Vice-Presidents elected to this session. Let me also express my appreciation to the Director-General and to the Chairperson of the Governing Body for their comprehensive Reports to the Conference.

Over the years, the ILO has worked very closely with my Government and provided valuable support in familiarizing it with the international labour standards and in ensuring that our commitment to the implementation of those standards is in fact complemented by policy initiatives. As one of the new member States of the ILO, the Republic of Maldives is pleased to announce that the country has become a party to the eight core Conventions of the Organization, dealing with the rights to decent work, freedom of association, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining and the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the collective elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

We are pleased to highlight that the Conventions have already been incorporated into our domestic labour legislation. Furthermore, the Republic of Maldives hopes to enact legislation prohibiting human trafficking. A draft bill to this effect is currently being debated in Parliament.

My country’s economy is today heavily dependent on its foreign labour force. In fact, a third of the entire workforce is made up of migrant workers. Having an expatriate workforce of over 100,000 in a country with a population of 350,000 undoubtedly brings with it additional challenges. The Government remains committed to signing the International Convention on Migrant Workers by 2014 so that the rights of these workers can be better protected. It also welcomes the role played by our trade unions and workers’ groups in advancing the rights of workers.

The deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda within the ILO’s tripartite framework are relevant to the Republic of Maldives, as environmental sustainability and social development are important components in its wider development framework. With the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change, the Republic of Maldives has to focus on creating green jobs; however, this cannot become a reality without the tripartite partnership of employers and workers. The Rio +20 outcome document last year outlined how important it was for countries to encourage businesses and enterprises to adapt and contribute to a

greener economy. The Republic of Maldives is committed to moving forward towards achieving its carbon neutrality by 2020.

Trafficking in persons undermines labour relations and gives rise to human rights violations. Last year the Republic of Maldives was listed as a Tier 2 Watch List country in the United States report on trafficking in persons. Since then, the Republic of Maldives has acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and is working towards acceding to its optional Protocol. The Republic of Maldives has also come up with an action plan to tackle anti-trafficking in persons and is waiting for its endorsement by the relevant agencies.

The Republic of Maldives is committed to working with the ILO on reforming national labour legislation to bring it fully into line with ILO standards. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for its technical cooperation and assistance since we joined the Organization. I am confident that we will continue to receive such assistance and support in the near future.

Once again I wish to congratulate the President of the Conference and the Director-General on their leadership. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation in working closely with the ILO in the coming years and in advancing our role in the ILO as a responsible member State.

Mr KIRION (Worker, Kiribati)

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the ILO and its member countries for their continuing efforts in shaping their labour laws in consultation with the social partners.

The workers are making quite good progress with regard to important ILO Conventions, except for Convention No. 98. This Convention has been ratified since 2008 and is becoming part of Kiribati law. The workers are really happy about this new development, but the Government as an employer refuses to recognize the law. Enforcement of this law is rather clumsy.

The Kiribati Union of Teachers, which has already tried to use this legislative machinery, was refused recognition. The Government refused to negotiate and sign an agreement with the union. Workers are not being well looked after because of the increasing number of Government workplaces being downsized. The criteria used are those of the colonial days, which no longer correspond economically and socially to the workers’ circumstances. The Kiribati Trade Union Congress (KTUC) was not involved in the final decision.

Subcontracting is also becoming a strategy of the Government, which is passing some jobs on to contractors. At times, workers in these jobs are being seriously exploited. The pay is not good and other important terms of employment are also not being granted. Again, the KTUC was not consulted in the process.

With these few words, I thank you all for your attention.

Original French: Ms POLO (Government, Togo)

On behalf of the delegation of Togo, I should like to take this opportunity to convey my congratulations to the President on his election to preside over this session, and in particular on the excellent fashion in which he has conducted our work.

I should like to reiterate our congratulations to you, Mr Director-General, on your brilliant election to the helm of this tripartite Organization.

I congratulate you on the commitment and determination that you have already demonstrated during the past nine months by instigating a process of change and reform so that the ILO can better respond to the expectations and requirements of its constituents.

Togo is delighted that you have associated one of its citizens, Mr Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo, with the implementation of your vision for the future of the Organization. I would like to assure you of Togo's full support for the goals you have set in your first Report and of its commitment to the success of the ILO.

My delegation shares entirely the concerns expressed in the Report, particularly regarding the transformation of the world of work by rapid demographic and technological change and by the persistence of inequalities and poverty. As paragraph 41 of the Report points out, the ILO should attach great importance to poor middle-income countries, which are home to three-quarters of the world's poor.

Togo committed itself to decent work in October 2010 when it signed its Decent Work Country Programme, whose implementation so far has been encouraging. Our programme is tied to our Rapid Growth and Employment Promotion Strategy (SCAPE), which is a medium-term development framework for fulfilling the Government's general policy statement, the MDGs and the authorities' vision of making Togo an emerging country.

Specifically, the strategy aims to increase the average annual income in Togo by 3 to 4 per cent for the next five years, to create new jobs and to fight poverty.

With the introduction of mandatory health insurance into our socio-economic landscape, social protection in Togo is entering a new phase. We are currently investigating the technical implications of extending coverage to the agricultural and informal sectors, under a new social security system.

We are particularly attentive to the problem of youth employment, and the Government has spared no effort to create a climate that is conducive to job creation and, above all, to developing entrepreneurship among young people.

The National Council for Social Dialogue, which was set up in 2007, has played an important role in managing the problems caused by the dearth of financial resources.

However, the persistence of the crisis and its multiple implications for our population still pose enormous challenges, and that is why we welcome the strategic approach proposed in the Director-General's Report in the form of seven ILO initiatives.

My delegation invites all the ILO's constituents to make their contribution by incorporating this proposal into the ILO's programming instruments and would like to express its preference for the adoption of a new strategic plan.

Ms HAGEN (Representative, International Federation of University Women)

Let me begin by congratulating the President on his election to preside over the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Congratulations as well to the Director-General, Guy Ryder, in his first year as Secretary-General of

the International Labour Conference. We commend him on his Report to the Conference on realities, renewal and tripartite commitment. We resonate with enthusiasm for the recommendations in his Report and for this reason we especially appreciate this opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), a non-governmental organization that has long been accredited to the International Labour Conference.

The IFUW serves an important function by complementing the fundamental tripartism of the ILO with a strong network of national associations of educated women whose mission is to promote equal opportunity for men and women, for boys and girls, primarily through "Education for the Rights of Girls and Women", which is the current international theme of the IFUW. We therefore agree with the Director-General that there is added value to be gained from the expertise and knowledge of actors outside the tripartite community and that these actors, including the IFUW, should be included where there is demonstrated advantage and well-defined roles.

We encourage the recurrent discussion on social dialogue to continue facilitating engagements within the tripartite paradigm with actors outside the tripartite community. We are especially sensitive to this from the perspective of empowering girls and women to participate in leadership and decision-making in all forms of public and private life. In fact, we are holding our triennial conference in August 2013 in Istanbul on the theme of "Women's role in achieving a sustainable future: Education and urbanization and human rights and empowerment".

In the past, the IFUW was able to organize side events at the International Labour Conference to promote a dialogue on such themes as these and we hope that new directions will create innovative opportunities for engagement in the future. The isolation of accredited NGOs in recent years has been a deterrent to engagement, and we hope that this session of the Conference will help shift the tripartite community to a more constructive outreach to associations like the IFUW.

In addition to the recurrent discussion on social dialogue, we welcome the deliberations of the Committee on the New Demographic Context. Here is another topic of great importance to the empowerment of women and girls through lifelong education. As the secretariat's report to this Committee has noted, the demographic changes include the participation of increasing numbers and proportions of women in the world of work. The IFUW has been a strong supporter of the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and we continue to seek accommodations to ensure this balance in employment and career development opportunities.

The IFUW also emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and efforts to strengthen numeracy and financial literacy in the education of girls and women. In the gradual breakdown of so-called standard employment forms and relations the opportunities for women merit special attention. We are, therefore, especially sensitive to the linkages of women's work to both urbanization and global supply chains, as evidenced by the recent tragedies in Bangladesh in the garments sector but also by the borderline status of many women just above the

poverty line in agricultural and rural areas, as they too move to urban areas for new opportunities.

The IFUW is proud to announce the first winner of the Conchita Poncini Jimenez Human Rights Fellowship. We announced the establishment of this fellowship last year to promote the use of human rights instruments and agreements for the advancement of women and girls. The award is named in honour of Conchita Poncini Jimenez, who, from her professional career with the International Labour Office to her active volunteer work as IFUW representative to the UN and the ILO, until her death from cancer in 2011, spent her life fighting for gen-

der equality and women's empowerment. The first Fellowship was awarded last September to Bahija Alvan Aliyeva, a lecturer at Baku University in Azerbaijan. We wish her and the many applicants well, even as we encourage all to continue with their excellent work in support of women's and girls' empowerment.

With these words, I thank you very much for this opportunity to share the insights of the IFUW with the Conference and we look forward to continued engagement and cooperation.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.40 p.m.)

Thirteenth sitting

Tuesday, 18 June 2013, 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr Rahman

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

Original Chinese: Mr CHEN (Worker, China)

I am very glad to attend the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference and address the plenary session. I found that the Director-General's Report shows originality and its implications are far-reaching. I share his dreams for the ILO entering its centenary year.

At present, China is striving to promote world peace and development and to realize the dream of "revival of the nation". On the eve of the International Labour Day, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with model workers at the head office of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and stressed the need to respect labour, contribute to workers' welfare and put faith in the working class to achieve "the China dream". To this end, Chinese trade unions are doing their best to adjust to social changes and safeguard the interests of Chinese workers.

Enhancing the job skills of workers: Chinese trade unions have launched a skills development programme to build a well-educated, highly skilled and innovation-oriented workforce. Between 2003 and 2012, unions offered training to 31 million workers, of whom more than 17 million were unemployed workers and migrant workers.

Protecting workers' rights: Chinese trade unions are actively involved in drafting laws and supervising their implementation. Currently, unions are committed to enforcing labour contracts and collective agreements, participating in income distribution reform, boosting youth employment – especially for young graduates, improving social protection, raising the wage level of workers and creating an omnidimensional service network for workers.

Pushing for unionization and collective bargaining: Chinese trade unions are pushing for unionization and collective bargaining nationwide, working hard to increase union density and cohesion. At present, the membership stands at 280 million, with 2.6 million grass-roots trade union organizations. So far, the collective agreements signed by the unions cover 150 million workers.

Promotion of harmonious labour relations: While creating harmonious labour relations based on order, justice and win-win principles, Chinese trade unions aim to actively participate in social management, extend tripartite consultation and promote

a nationwide campaign to urge employers to fulfil their social responsibilities and help workers share the fruits of development.

The current political and economic situation sees a momentous shift. The principles of peace, development, cooperation and win-win results have been widely recognized. The faltering global recovery poses challenges to workers' rights and interests. Here, let me offer the following suggestions.

First: respecting labour and safeguarding the fairness of labour values. Labour is the source of wealth. Workers deserve wide respect. All countries should create a fair social environment and remove barriers that prevent workers from sharing the benefits of development and achieving decent work and development for all.

Second: pursuing innovation and increasing unions' social participation. Trade unions all over the world should participate in shaping national macro-economic policies to meet the diverse needs of workers, promote international governance reform and help build a new global labour movement that is fair, equitable, democratic and harmonious.

Third: expanding the influence of the ILO. The ILO should play a bigger role in promoting economic reform and development, attaining social justice, enhancing social dialogue and reshaping tripartism. Moreover, it should promote South–South cooperation, give greater voice to developing countries, enhance its authority in international affairs, keep abreast of the times and expand its influence over global governance.

Fourth: building consensus and pushing for inclusive global growth. Trade unions all over the world should stand in solidarity against all forms of protectionism, share opportunities, turn global diversity into economic vitality, pull together in times of crisis and build global development partnerships for social prosperity and progress.

Seeking peace, development, cooperation and win-win progress is our common aspiration and responsibility. The Chinese trade union movement will enhance its support for ILO initiatives and pursue exchanges with the trade union organizations of all countries. We are ready to contribute to improving the well-being of people worldwide and promoting world peace and development.

Ms BURROW (Representative, International Trade Union Confederation)

In 2013, the global economy is no more secure than it was six years ago. In this context, the Report of the Director-General raises critical questions and,

while I cannot address them in five minutes, the unions intend to take these as a framework for high-level governance debate over the next year.

Unemployment – youth unemployment – is an economic and social time bomb. Independent political action has been subjugated to the will of the market in too many countries. The crisis wrought by greed has resulted in massive inequality.

This inequality is both a social and an economic poison. The ILO's strategies to end poverty and address excessive inequality are urgently required, but 40 per cent of the global economy is comprised of the desperation of informal work where workers have no rights or social protection. The challenge is huge.

Tragically, the orthodoxy of austerity since 2010 has targeted working people and their families, with cuts in government expenditure, cuts in public sector jobs, diminished social protection, reduced minimum wages and the slashing of national collective bargaining.

We are particularly opposed to the attacks on decent work, or to the next round of attacks on pension systems in Cyprus and Greece, and we urge the ILO to intervene urgently.

The result is devastating: higher debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratios, prolonged recession. The truth is that international institutions have failed to prevent the crisis, have failed to accept that they were wrong, and they have not been able to rein in speculation. They have deliberately targeted labour rights with devastating economic and social consequences. It must stop.

In a world where workers' rights and trade unions are under attack almost everywhere, the need for a strong ILO is obvious and critical.

We concur with the importance of political coherence in a multilateral system. The Director-General rightly points to the mandate the ILO has to examine and consider all international and economic financial policies and measures, and to determine whether they are consistent with the fundamental objectives of the ILO. We need to start this work today. We need the ILO to act.

Likewise, the need to formalize work, to see sustainable business and decent work, to see a universal social protection floor implemented, to see a minimum wage on which people can live, to see collective bargaining strengthened – that is the ILO's business.

Attacks on these fundamentals must be resisted and expansionary gains realized. All this is ILO work, and it requires the reform capacity and intent that the Director-General outlines.

As social unrest grows and people fight back, governments are at risk of losing even fundamental support for democracy.

Today, Turkey stands as a brutal reminder of the vulnerability of democratic freedoms. When governments order attacks on their own citizens, label them terrorists and seek to rule with fear, they must be challenged. We know that, in varying degrees, the attacks on rights and democratic freedoms are not restricted to attacks on the right to protest. The war on workers' rights is global. Indeed, that is borne out in this assembly where, sadly, we see the Employers generating a crisis by not recognizing certain rights.

The quest for flexible labour markets is undermining the very capacity of working people and their

families to participate in key economic sectors ensuring stability and sustainable enterprises.

We need to work together to rebuild economies. We need economies that do not exploit workers, that do not impoverish their families, and certainly not economies that drive young people and migrants, predominantly, into the desperation of the informal sector.

Global production chains dominate the global economy, and the tragedy of Bangladesh underscores the need for labour rights in supply chains.

Governments must take responsibility for decent work. The ILO can help if we invest in implementing core labour standards, review existing standards, develop new standards to make up for the shortcomings of labour market regulation and policy, and build the capacity for country and regional implementation.

Ironically, just a few cents more on global products could actually offer safe work and a living wage for all. So, let us end this division.

There are forced labour States, like Qatar, where migrant workers are enslaved with no freedom of association, where they have no rights or protection, and where they are forced to live in squalor.

Together, we must use this House to demand an end to all exploitation. It must stop. We want an alternative, we demand a plan, we demand hope. Our message is jobs, jobs and jobs: jobs, wages and social protection.

Even the G8 communiqué calls for guarantees that actually provide for apprenticeships, for inclusiveness, for the participation of women. We can do it. A greener economy, infrastructure, the care sector – all these areas will generate jobs.

Can the ILO implement its mandate and count on mature tripartite social dialogue? Our children will be there to judge us.

Ms DALLI (*Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Malta*)

This year the ILO is focusing our attention on the need to effect changes to better address realities at the workplace, the importance of tripartism, and the fight against poverty and social injustice.

The Report of the Director-General, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, is an excellent and opportune review of the factors influencing the world of work and their effects on our societies.

The themes raised by the ILO this year have much resonance with the Maltese Government. Endorsed by the majority of the electorate just over 100 days ago, we have embarked on a process to initiate various changes, including to our institutions, based on an analysis of the realities affecting our citizens. These changes are aimed at reducing existent inequalities and improving social justice.

In working towards this objective, we remain strongly committed to social dialogue and to an enhanced cooperation with the Maltese social partners, where roles are respected and all contributions recognized. Their input will greatly improve the decision-making process. Policy decisions must underscore the importance of productive employment and decent work in a consolidated effort to combat poverty and social inequality. Improving the lot of the person and the family that is suffering because of situations, not necessarily within their control or that of the Government, remains our overriding aim.

Indeed, the effects of the global economic and financial crisis have affected us all and are still with us. The reality of increasing unemployment – especially youth unemployment – increasing poverty, economic migration, fewer resources for health, education and social services, and mounting debts are causes for concern. Therefore, it is of the essence that the ILO is, and remains, at the forefront to put forward policies and offer assistance to mitigate these negative effects.

Like the ILO, we believe that, even in these difficult times, a lot can still be done to provide the vulnerable at work with special attention and protection. Anecdotal evidence and scientific research in Malta highlights situations in which workers can be victims of abusive employment conditions. The Maltese Government is thus committed to addressing the issue of precarious work in the fairest way possible. Inaction on this matter is unacceptable. This month we will be forwarding a document on this phenomenon to the social partners to seek their views and to plan the way ahead.

As aptly put by the Director-General, it is necessary for the ILO to embark on its second century with “an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable in the world of work”, including those working in abusive conditions, who are excluded from decent work opportunities, and those whose work “threatens their human dignity and physical and moral integrity”.

It is important that the ILO Decent Work Agenda reiterates the point that “all workers, and in particular disadvantaged or poor workers, need representation, participation and laws that work for their interests”. It is therefore our responsibility, as governments, to continue taking action and enacting laws that safeguard the rights of workers in our countries. The public has a right to have the peace of mind that taxes are not fostering new inequalities. Allowing an uneven playing field where unscrupulous employers, through abusive working conditions, take an unfair advantage over their competitors is unacceptable.

My Government, as an employer, wants to lead by example. It will be taking the necessary measures to ensure that contracts for services supplied to the public service and public sector are not awarded to employers who breach employment laws in any way. It will consider the possibility of introducing mechanisms to facilitate compliance monitoring for both employers and employees, and it will increase awareness about employment rights through appropriate campaigns and encourage the reporting of abuse in efforts to ensure that abuse is seen not to pay. Strengthening the regulatory capacity of the labour inspectorate was considered to be one of our urgent priorities. For this reason, we have recruited additional labour inspectors. This underlines our commitment to fight for the reduction of abusive employment conditions.

Every person has the right to work. Without work there can be no sustainable growth. However, we must be vigilant in order to retain and improve competitiveness and decent working conditions. This is no easy task, especially in the current international scenario, but the ILO's results through tripartism will inspire us. With the cooperation and goodwill of all stakeholders, we are confident that we can effectively move closer to this goal.

Ms RAITT (*Minister of Labour, Canada*)

As the 100th anniversary of this Organization approaches, it is a good time for us to revisit priorities and identify future directions. This discussion is taking place at a time when the impact of the global economic crisis is still being felt in many countries and, of course, its effects on the world of work continue. In Canada we have been addressing the effects of this economic crisis domestically, through both employment policies and through economic policies, with the focus on creating jobs. In addition, we never forget that attention to safety and health in the workplace is quite literally a matter of life and death. Internationally, we are protecting workers' rights through our labour cooperation agreements and labour chapters in the negotiation of free trade agreements with a number of countries.

Domestically, the Government of Canada has taken action to address the challenges that are being faced today by businesses, workers and families. To give you some examples, we are protecting Canadian workers whose employers have gone bankrupt, or are subject to receivership and did not pay them the money that they were owed. We are also working to ensure the viability of employees' long-term disability plans, so that the promised benefits are there when they need them.

Our attention has also turned to the problem of a skills gap in Canada. While we have higher unemployment in certain areas of the country, we also have employers that are seeking to fill jobs that are vacant as a result of a lack of skills. So we have a new provision in this year's budget called the “Canada Job Grant”, and we expect that it will transform the way Canadians receive training to ensure that they are getting the skills that employers are seeking. This is going to equip Canadians with skills and training that they need for high-quality and well-paying jobs, but what it also does is that it puts the decision on what skills are needed where it belongs, in the hands of the employers and in the hands of the workers, not in the hands of government officials. We have also created targeted training for under-represented groups in the workplace, and employment programmes to help youth, older workers and persons with disabilities. In preparation for the future, we are promoting the enrolment of our youth in disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The Director-General stated in his Report to the Conference that the ILO requires constant renewal to face evolving realities and he asked us to suggest initiatives to help the ILO to strengthen its capacity to contribute in today's international community. We would like to congratulate him on his new position and we also look forward to working with him and the ILO to implement the current internal reform measures that he has undertaken. We will continue to encourage him to work with constituents to foster innovation and change.

The Government of Canada has made, and continues to make, tough decisions to address the current economic challenges. We are streamlining our programmes and we are eliminating duplication to achieve greater efficiency. We believe that the ILO can also meet similar challenges through the efficient and effective use of its own resources to achieve our collective goals. The ILO's focus should be on its core mandate to improve the conditions of work in the world. Adopting new technolo-

gies could help the ILO achieve these efficiencies and facilitate the participation of constituents in governance structures. The ILO should update its operations, adopt a modern and effective human resources strategy and embrace results-based management practices. Enhancing analytical capacity and improving delivery of services to constituents are also important priorities and the Organization should provide effective technical assistance and better respond to the needs of its constituents. These are important initiatives that need to be taken into consideration. I do believe that the ILO can make the greatest possible contribution to the creation of high-quality jobs in a global economy.

The Government of Canada appreciates this openness in considering proposals to strengthen the ILO and we look forward to working with the ILO and its constituents to ensure that the Organization remains strong and relevant as it enters its second century.

Original Portuguese: Ms ABREU (Employer, Brazil)

It is with great satisfaction that I address this plenary as a representative of the Brazilian business sector, specifically agriculture and livestock. In Brazil, the employers in all the economic sectors are aware of the current difficulties that the world is going through, as outlined clearly in the Director-General's Report.

I live in a country that still has a long way to go to reduce poverty, but in which more than 20 million people have recently got out of poverty. I therefore feel particularly at ease before the assembly at this Organization where it is the human aspects of the economy that come first. I hope that, whatever changes take place in society and in the economy, the ILO will never relinquish its responsibilities to human beings who suffer injustice, deprivation and, particularly, a lack of decent work.

These responsibilities should not be confused with compassion. They require ongoing effort to understand changes in the world that have nothing to do with the true nature of crises and to recognize what is and is not within our power to control. If we are too sceptical about our ability to intervene in economic and social processes, or are overly proactive or give in to the temptation of utopias, we do not allow ourselves to take the incremental steps that constitute true human progress.

While a significant part of the world is in crisis, suffering the most terrible effect of the crises – unemployment – we cannot fail to acknowledge that the world is improving. In the last 20 years, according to the internationally accepted poverty line, the number of people in absolute poverty has fallen by half – a reduction of 1 billion people. This progress is visible in my country and it is transforming the social fabric and the appearance of our cities and countryside. If inequality is increasing in the world's richest economies, inequality between countries and therefore between populations is clearly decreasing. Emerging and developing economies currently have a greater role in world production than developed economies. The world as a whole is becoming fairer.

It is important to acknowledge that all of this has happened mainly thanks to economic growth, which was the result of globalization, free trade and the market economy. These principles grew and established themselves in the societies of rich countries and they were these countries' best export. It would

be neither fair nor justifiable for these countries, when faced with transitory difficulties, to champion a return to protected markets and the all-powerful State, given that such a state of affairs did not aid them on their road to progress.

The organization of economic production and the world of work are undergoing rapid change. Production has split up into long chains that cross regions and national borders. Traditional forms of labour relations have not survived in these new realities. The Spanish sociologist, Manuel Castells, observed that productivity and competitiveness are the main processes of the modern economy. Productivity is dependent on a continuous process of innovation that ends up shifting work between industries, sectors and regions. Competitiveness, which now operates at an increasingly global level, is based on flexibility. All of this conspires against the stability of work and human lives. They are processes which, on the one hand, carry a great human cost but, on the other, create income and wealth and absorb many workers who were previously excluded.

However, whatever the final outcome of these changes might be, we must recognize that these processes are not going to stop. Protecting fundamental human rights in this context requires us to be innovative and creative. As clearly indicated in the Director-General's Report, questions of principle are sometimes a pretext for intransigence. Standards that have worked in the past may no longer be effective. We must not lose sight of the fact that social and cultural conditions in the world remain extremely heterogeneous. Recognizing this is not a sign of weakness but of wisdom.

Societies in emerging countries must continue to be optimistic with regard to the future and to current changes. The rich countries must not try to recreate the past, because that is both impossible and counterproductive. Mankind as a whole has no choice but to continue the path forwards into the future.

Ms EMILIANIDOU (Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus)

It is an honour for me to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

As we approach the ILO centenary, we find ourselves in the midst of an unprecedented crisis for the world of work. Although emerging and developing economies are reportedly continuing to experience robust growth, the financial instability in Europe and some other regions has had negative social consequences for many countries, through rising unemployment, income losses and social exclusion.

If efforts to support growth, as a matter of priority, are not accelerated, the impact of the crisis will have longer term effects on the productive capacity of countries.

The ILO's mandate is now more pertinent than ever, as it is called upon to adapt to the new global economic conditions and address the rapidly evolving realities of the world of work. Although the ILO should strive to adapt its practices, the Organization should at the same time continue to undertake actions that have always been at the core of its mandate and form the basis on which jobs, growth and social justice can be promoted, including in difficult times, by adhering to the principles of the Decent Work Agenda and international labour standards,

and ensuring respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.

Against the background of a continuing crisis and reduced economic activity, we believe that the ILO has to play an important and active role in delivering messages, inputs and contributions. Now, more than ever, the Organization must adapt its institutional practices and governance to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

As it approaches its centenary, the ILO, as the globally recognized authority in the world of work, must organize a concerted international response to the crisis, building on effective and strategic partnerships between key players. The ILO should also aim to become more relevant at the regional level, through sound and relevant policy advice and support to its constituents.

The ILO's contributions to the G20 are very important, and we welcome the Office's strong involvement in the preparation of the Joint G20 Finance and Labour Ministers Meeting under the Russian G20 presidency. This will be a good opportunity for the ILO to bring to the G20 debate its experiences and agreed policies in dealing with the challenges that the world of work is facing.

Cyprus is currently facing the same problems as many other member States across the European Union (EU) and the rest of the world. Increased unemployment, fiscal problems, increased insecurity in the labour market, the implication of the bail-in of depositors and the restrictive measures on capital movements remain an impediment to restoring confidence in the Cypriot economy and hinder the development of trade and investment activities. As a result, unemployment has reached very high levels, estimated currently at 15.6 per cent. Youth unemployment is also soaring, at 32 per cent. What is more worrying is the rate of unemployment increase in the last few months.

It goes without saying that we are doing our best to overcome the adverse conditions of the labour market and our financial challenges. However, we are worried that we will face a prolonged slump and that the economy will shrink even further. That is why we need to take all the necessary measures to ensure that we have a well-functioning labour market that will enable individuals and businesses to take advantage of new growth opportunities in a changing labour environment.

In view of the above, we need a strong and versatile ILO to assert its role as a determining force on the global market scene, adopting a more coordinated, hands-on approach to the challenges we are facing now, as well as those that may present themselves in the years leading up to its centenary and beyond.

Original Spanish: Mr MÉNDEZ (Employer, Argentina)

As President of the Argentine Industrial Union (UIA) and on behalf of the employers in my country, it is an honour for me to address this assembly, to congratulate the new President and Mr Guy Ryder, the new Director-General of the International Labour Office.

We are living through difficult times, both as regards production and employment. The shrinking markets in developed countries affect those countries, but also have an impact on the situation in emerging countries and the developing world, despite good export results for raw materials.

There is no doubt that Latin America as a whole, and our country in particular, has enjoyed the benefits of the price increase and sustained demand for commodities. That said, those of us in Argentina who maintain that "without industry, there is no nation" recognize the risk posed by the current international situation and the problems confronting our industrial export sector, as well as the risk that economic results could be affected by the fall in demand, which would lead to a drop in production and employment.

Over the last few years, our industry has been able to recover and modernize, leading to positive developments as regards industrial exports following the crisis in 2001–02. However, the current situation proves that we remain at the mercy of falling international demand for our industrial products and that this has a negative effect on development in the private sector we represent.

Therefore, beyond the issue of establishing a macroeconomic strategy to mitigate the effects of the international crisis, we have been promoting and will continue to promote the need for broad tripartite social dialogue. This is necessary to enable discussion of policies aimed at consolidating the development of the domestic and foreign markets, integrate the world according to rules that are fair for everyone, increase efforts to incorporate technology and innovation, and in parallel, promote on-the-job training for workers, access to employment and education for young people.

These policies, which are appropriate within the framework of an open and plural society, should aim to reconcile economic productivity with social competitiveness, and education with productivity, reaffirming our export profile while improving the quality of life of our workforce.

This is not wishful thinking. In the many years the UIA and the employer organizations who work with us have collaborated with the ILO, we have become increasingly convinced that harmonization is possible and that conflicts of interest can be resolved by adopting a holistic perspective that reconciles production with work and profitability with decent income and social protection.

The Director-General has said that his Report to the Conference aims to give the constituents the opportunity to provide guidance on the initiatives the ILO should take in order to reach its centenary prepared and committed to its mandate, in a world which, over the last 100 years, has tripled its population, multiplied its average per capita income by five and its trade volume by over 25. This is the challenge we share.

We also agree that technological change and information and communication technology is a strategic issue that does not depend solely on public policies, but also on commitment from employers and trade unions in terms of investment in skills and coordination with training systems. We believe that innovation and technological change in our countries, particularly in our case, has to be strengthened to enable us to keep pace with international competitiveness. This requires an ineluctable tripartite commitment and a range of joint, coordinated efforts in that area.

Given that time is short, I shall focus on the issues dealt with in Chapter 2 of the Report of the Director-General.

In that regard, we would like to stress the need at the national and international levels to engage in

dynamic and realistic – not merely nominal or informal – social dialogue, which ensures that workers, employers and governments act responsibly within the framework of their mandates and their respective competencies.

The Report rightly says that we must respond to the imperative to adapt, which inevitably calls for a transformation of the global production system, with environmentally sustainable technological substitution on one hand and, on the other, satisfying the demand that such technological innovation will generate in terms of professional training.

The national employers' organizations, together with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), thus constitute a cornerstone for access and networking with our member companies and we therefore undertake here and now to mobilize these relationships through appropriate means, respecting the Organization's tripartite structure.

We are aware of the effort that the ILO has made to set a proactive agenda in which employers, workers and governments, not only internationally, but also at the regional and national levels, can establish joint goals and meet challenges such as sustainable enterprises and decent work, formalizing informal work and promoting youth employment within the ILO and the G20.

We are convinced of this, and we therefore reaffirm our support, at the same time as calling on the Government of Argentina and our trade unions to ensure that these issues are also on the social dialogue agenda in the future in our country. Over and above urgent requirements imposed by the economy and finances, and beyond the electoral agendas set by the natural course of democracy, we believe that we are prepared to address an agenda for development and for the sustainability of employment and businesses.

In short, we are capable of responding to the challenges posed by globalization, the international crisis and outstanding tasks in societies which, like ours in Latin America, should not miss the opportunity to complete the journey towards full, effective development.

Ms HAMILTON (*Government, Bahamas*)

I deem it an honour and privilege to join those who preceded me on this podium to extend heartfelt congratulations to the President and Vice-Presidents on their election to this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. On behalf of the Minister of Labour, Shane Gibson, and the Government of the Bahamas, we wish you every success and privilege, and pledge our continued support as we work together for the betterment of our countries and people.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight that for the past three or four years, the delegation to this august body has been headed by a woman. In fact, I dare to say, women outnumber men among the delegation this year.

Additionally, I might add that as a former member of the Bahamas Nurses Union, I am pleased to be joined by my successor and recently elected President of the Bahamas Nurses Union. Also, I am pleased that the President of the National Congress of Trade Unions of the Bahamas, who is also a woman, is here today. So, I say it is truly better in the Bahamas for women who head the trade union movement, and I salute them all for their efforts.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for outlining in his Report the many global challenges facing workers and employers, and while we have made significant progress throughout the years, I am sure we will all agree that much more work needs to be done.

In May last year, general elections were held in the Bahamas, and once again the people of our great country voted overwhelmingly to have the Right Honourable Perry Gladstone Christie as our leader. The new Government immediately embarked upon several initiatives, including that of increasing decent work, improving social dialogue and strengthening our social safety nets for workers. We introduced to Parliament, for the first time, legislation to protect pensions for workers during economic crises so that, no matter what the circumstances are, workers upon their retirement would receive their pensions in accordance with agreed practices and policies. Additionally, we have completed a final draft of the Tripartite Consultation Bill, which will be introduced to Parliament in a matter of weeks. This will institutionalize social dialogue through the establishment of a legal entity independent of the Government. Further, there were legislative amendments aimed at enhancing the process for the registration of industrial agreements. The Government has also undertaken measures to ensure that only workers have the right to union representation. We have committed ourselves to providing the trade unions with a plot of land for the construction of a labour college, and have renamed our Labour Day national holiday, in the name of our Father of Labour, Sir Randol Francis Fawkes.

The Government of the Bahamas has committed itself to increasing the minimum wage in the country, after consultation with all the social partners. The ILO has, for many years, been championing the call for decent and productive work to be provided as a primary means for member States to alleviate poverty and to lift their peoples to a sustained level of self-sufficiency.

In his Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, the Director-General, in paragraph 38, states, and I quote: "Employers and trade unions are taking and must increasingly take more responsibility for investing in skills and in aligning their efforts with those of public policy and training providers. In an era of accelerated technological and organizational change, strengthening of education and training systems and the provision of basic skills to all have to be not just a top priority, but a shared one, with the ILO acting in full support of its tripartite constituents."

The Government of the Bahamas has, for the first time in its history, introduced to Parliament legislation for a national training agency, which will be tasked with strengthening the existing educational and training structures in the Bahamas.

I would be remiss if we were to end without congratulating Dr Giovanni Di Cola on his appointment as Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean.

Ms DE CONINCK (*Minister of Employment, Belgium*)

It is a pleasure, for a second time, to attend the International Labour Conference. This session is of particular importance. It is the first session of the Conference for the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, in his new role. I wish to thank him for his Re-

port. It contains concrete initiatives that set out an ambitious roadmap for a stronger ILO in the future.

Belgium believes in the key relevance of social dialogue in promoting social justice and decent work. The crisis raises tensions and threatens collective bargaining. The different actors should help create more confidence and demonstrate an ability to be part of the solution. In Belgium, an important issue being discussed by the social partners at the moment is the harmonization of the status of white-collar and blue-collar workers. I sincerely hope that the social partners will soon reach an agreement to put an end to these differences from the past.

I very much welcome the Framework of Actions on Youth Employment adopted by the European social partners last week. I call on national social partners to translate this framework quickly into action.

It is also important to ensure respect for social dialogue in multinational chains and outsourcing companies. Tragedies such as those that occurred in Bangladesh should be avoided. The general discussion on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs showed a large consensus that the ILO should further develop the link between the social dimension and sustainable development, in favour of the greening of the economy in both developed and developing countries. A shift to a fair and resource-efficient economy can boost growth and decent jobs, especially for young people. Quality education plays a paramount role in this regard. Low carbon goods and services can only blossom if national workforces are adequately skilled.

Living longer and more healthily is a significant social achievement of our modern society. However, the greying of our society is like a medal: it has two sides. Transition implies major challenges in terms of increased spending on pension and health care, as well as potential labour shortages. Yet population ageing also offers opportunities for society and the economy in terms of the “silver economy”. The large majority of retirees from the baby boom generation have a considerable potential as consumers. They have an increasing need of services, especially in fields such as health care, security, housing, wellness or home services. This has the potential to create local jobs, particularly for young people. Moreover, healthier people can also work longer. In Belgium, the average exit age from the labour market is 59. That is still young in present-day society, and the Government would like to raise it to 65 years.

I congratulate the Committee on the Application of Standards for reaching agreement on a number of cases this year and hope that a long-lasting solution will be found to ensure a sound supervisory system in the future.

Finally, I would like to recall the importance of making our policies more consistent. Belgium recently made proposals concerning the strengthening of the social dimension of the European Economic and Monetary Union, along the same lines as its budgetary, banking and economic components. In particular, Belgium supports the development of employment and social indicators to detect socio-economic imbalances. We also pleaded for convergence towards high common social standards.

Original Spanish: Mr CONTRERAS (Government, Guatemala)

The Government of Guatemala, which I represent here today, would like to express its satisfaction at

the contents of the Report of the Director-General. We believe that the Report is pertinent and visionary, both in the proposals it contains and in its timing.

The Director-General has rightly identified the areas in which the Organization has to position itself with regard to the challenges faced today: job creation; social protection; migration; and fragile and conflict-affected States.

Guatemala strongly identifies itself with this vision. Our motherland, Guatemala, is currently fighting to resolve the critical fragility of the State and to build democratic institutions that ensure an effective approach to the major problems of poverty, informality, weak labour production and, therefore, the fragility and weakness of its enterprises and its labour relations. While working to build democratic institutions, Guatemala is making bold efforts to develop programmes and formal approaches for large-scale job creation and the promotion of formality.

The clear consequence of precarious employment is a weak State and a society immersed in conflict and instability. This is the cause of the major challenges that the Government of President Otto Pérez Molina has taken on with lucidity and courage, especially in the area of labour and social protection. These challenges include strengthening democratic institutions, promoting decent work and ensuring a peaceful and prosperous society where rights are fully respected.

Our aim is not to promote employment regardless of the form that it takes and, in that, we agree with the Director-General. We are looking to promote structural and quality employment that meets the minimum conditions of decent work, not just to achieve this label but because we believe that Guatemalans should have a decent working life, and because we also want to achieve sustainable enterprises through innovation and productivity within a framework of legality and stability.

The achievement of our Government's objectives is possible. To this end, we possess three invaluable resources: a democratic State established by law over 25 years ago, providing a political framework of public liberties and rights; natural resources which, if used intelligently and responsibly, could provide significant support for production; and most importantly, our people – our hardworking and enterprising population.

Of course, to this context and vision we must add an explanation of how we will achieve our objectives. We are in full agreement with the methodology proposed by the Director-General in his Report. Social dialogue is the way forward – social dialogue which is representative, legitimate, that provides guidance, and is proactive and responsible. The Government of Guatemala systematically uses social dialogue in its working methods. It made a commitment to social dialogue at its first public act, two months before it came into office, and this has been a permanent commitment in all its actions to date. We believe in social dialogue, we use it and we will continue to be committed to it.

In the last few months, we have signed a number of major agreements and international commitments. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Chairperson of the Workers' group in the ILO on 26 March of this year and an agreement of good faith was signed with the United States on 5 April to resolve a dispute relating to our

relationship under the Central America–Dominican Republic–United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA–DR), marking an important moment in the history of Guatemala. Both agreements have been submitted to the Tripartite Committee for International Labour Affairs, which has adopted them through a dialogue and follow-up plan for their implementation.

Furthermore, through a team bringing together five ministries, and headed by the Ministry of Labour, the Government of Guatemala has engaged in intense dialogue with the main ancestral indigenous Mayan communities on the best way to carry out consultations on the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

In conclusion, the Government of Guatemala applauds and welcomes the Report of the Director-General with sincere enthusiasm and is ready to support his efforts to lead the Organization towards its centenary and beyond, as far as he can go, with our support.

Ms KOPAČ MRAK (Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Slovenia)

It is my great pleasure to participate in the International Labour Conference. I consider that this important event is a very valuable opportunity to share our views on the challenging topics discussed as well as to exchange experiences and good practices.

Many governments, and Slovenia is no exception, are experiencing a challenging economic and financial climate, involving difficult and justified decisions to achieve a sustainable level of public financing. These are exactly the main themes of this year's Conference, namely, demographic challenges and their consequences for society as a whole, especially regarding financial sustainability and labour force participation; green jobs, focused on the adequate balance between a sustainable economy and inclusive growth; and fruitful social dialogue. These issues are highly relevant to achieving and sustaining the future we hope for and believe in. From another perspective, the values developed and promoted during the years of the ILO's existence have never had such importance as they do today.

The crisis is affecting youth and older people as two of the most vulnerable groups. Young people are willing to start their working lives, to share knowledge and therefore contribute to society's well-being. However, the current circumstances put many barriers in the way of people's desired life paths. Slovenia is experiencing an increasing youth unemployment rate, especially in the recent months of the prolonged crisis. In addition, for older workers the crisis emphasizes the need for upskilling, lifelong learning, improved working conditions, and safety and health in the workplace to achieve longer working lives. For both groups, we would stress, many measures have been implemented recently in Slovenia to improve the long-term employability of older workers and a faster transition from education to work for youth.

The aforementioned demographic changes are even more challenging in times of population ageing, with a shrinking workforce. It is necessary to understand the impacts of demographic changes and react in a timely and efficient manner. Full participation in the labour market is even more essential. Slovenia is proud to have a high employment rate of women who contribute to higher overall employ-

ment. The reasons for this are the lowest pay gap in the EU and respect for equality, making women's inclusion in the labour market highly attractive.

Another challenge, that of green jobs, represents a potential source of new job creation, while contributing to a more sustainable economy with decent jobs and a less damaging environmental impact. Slovenia is aware of the potential of green jobs, especially in the light of economic restructuring. Efficient energy use and green investment in the construction sector might serve as an important anti-crisis measure to boost demand in the future.

Furthermore, social dialogue is, as always, at the core of the ILO agenda. Slovenia recently adopted major labour market reforms and a pension reform, all by successful tripartite consensus. These achievements prove that only comprehensive social dialogue leads towards established goals, which are agreed by all the social partners and accepted inter-generationally.

The majority of countries are facing this long-lasting crisis with increasing inequality and high levels of unemployment. The topics discussed and the possible solutions we exchange might contribute to another perspective. Reflection leads us to reconsider existing and future paths.

Let us not forget that this is our future, it is about us and, as we have often heard in the recent past, in the end, it is all about people.

Mr MCLEOD (Government, Trinidad and Tobago)

In this period of economic recovery when we must all acknowledge that a "business as usual" approach cannot contribute to sustainable growth, equality, social justice and quality jobs, the simultaneous discussions at this year's session of the Conference concerning social dialogue, social protection in the new demographic context and sustainable development assume added significance. Indeed, these issues could be considered as different dimensions of a policy-coherent approach to the challenges which confront us today. This, without a doubt, sends a strong signal to the global community that the ILO is adopting a more strategic approach to people-centred development.

The ongoing reshaping of the global landscape requires us to become more nimble and to examine more closely the poles and determinants of poverty and prosperity in both developed and developing countries. If we are to deal effectively with reducing poverty everywhere so that there is no threat to prosperity anywhere, our development goals and solutions must be crafted on a common platform that recognizes that in an integrated, fast-paced, technology-driven era, we all have a role to play and labour and labour-related issues are of critical importance for global development. There will be no development without labour and no labour without development. I am optimistic that the ILO reform will contribute to an enhanced role for the Organization in global development.

With a jobs deficit of 200 million, the silver tsunami and millions of young people not in education, employment or training, the time has come for the global community to view labour in its proper perspective, not as a social policy or as a "softer" issue, as is often the case, but as a pillar of economic development. In the ILO and among its constituents, we have all been singing from the same decent work hymn sheet. We know decent work, we understand its value and contribution, and commit to its

promotion. Unfortunately, not many outside our fold, even within the United Nations (UN) system, I dare say, understand it at all, or as we do.

In his opening statement, Director-General Guy Ryder called for the ILO to engage more with enterprises. I want to add to this and say that the ILO needs to engage more with all stakeholders. Too many of those with whom we engage view the work of the ILO and its constituents as related only to labour administration. If decent work is to move beyond the labour rights framework to the development platform, we must start by educating our counterparts. We must build on what has been already done and take decent work beyond the hallowed walls of this international institution to all its sister bodies and into the schools, homes and offices of all countries and all stakeholders. Our task should be to make decent work and the Decent Work Agenda commonplace in every household, school, community and workplace.

In Trinidad and Tobago, we have commenced such efforts at the national level. We have embarked on a labour advocate training programme at the community level. We have enhanced our HIV/AIDS programme for implementation of workplace policies. We are working towards institutionalizing social dialogue in Trinidad and Tobago, and we are promoting enterprise development, particularly through incubators and financing and training.

Trinidad and Tobago and our sister Caribbean States are committed to moving beyond problem identification to searching for solutions. As a Governing Body member, Trinidad and Tobago is therefore pleased to co-host the Eighth ILO Meeting of Caribbean Labour Ministers and to receive the Director-General in Port of Spain in early July. We also look forward to the 41st Meeting of the Technical Committee of ILO CINTERFOR (Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training) also to be held in Port of Spain in July.

In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean for its unstinting support of our decent work initiatives as we celebrate our 50th anniversary of membership of the ILO in 2013. I also wish to reaffirm the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the ILO principles and to working towards development through decent work.

Mr ONDRUŠ (*Government, Slovakia*)

Creating jobs and employment opportunities is a serious economic and social issue in Slovakia, as well as in other countries. The challenge related to this issue is closely linked to the characteristics of the labour force that is available to satisfy the needs of the labour market, and this is among the most important aspects of the Slovak economy that we have to deal with in relation to job creation.

The development of youth unemployment is influenced by a mismatch between education systems and the labour market. The existence of appropriate skills is the most important requirement for employment growth.

For many years, Slovakia has faced discrepancies between the skills of the labour force and the demand for those skills. The selection of a suitable area of study has an important role to play, even though there is an appropriate awareness of the labour market and of the increasing problems relating

to the structure of unemployment. The percentage of graduates who are unable to find work and who sign on as unemployed is relatively high. On average, school-leavers make up 6–8 per cent of all job-seekers each year. The most severe issue is that of school-leavers who become long-term unemployed people, have never worked and have no habit of working. The young people most at risk of unemployment are graduates of secondary vocational education colleges and apprenticeship schemes without a certificate of secondary education, or with only primary and lower secondary education. The proportion of the labour force in Slovakia in the group aged between 15 and 24 has fallen in the last few years from 7 per cent in 2010 to 6.3 per cent in 2012.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, together with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, adopted a joint youth action plan in October last year, setting out seven joint measures aimed primarily at improving the quality and relevance of education, including technical education and training, to reflect demand in the labour market.

Activities under these measures relate mainly to improvements in the use of the European Social Fund to promote the employment of young people.

On 1 May 2013, an amendment to the act on employment services came into force. Its aim is to improve career choices and link them to the requirements of the labour market through the provision, by educational guidance and prevention services, of careers guidance in schools and school facilities, as part of the information and advice services available to pupils.

In addition, the amendment to the act on employment services creates measures to ensure that education and training, designed to improve the employment prospects of jobseekers, are responsive to demand in the labour market.

Our Ministry has developed projects to reduce unemployment among young people. They are intended to support the creation of jobs in the public and private sectors for young unemployed people up to the age of 29 years who have been on the job-seekers' register for more than three months. The projects have been allocated €70 million from the Operational Programme for Employment and Social Inclusion, funded by the European Social Fund.

Employment offices started these projects in November last year. They are expected to create around 12,000 jobs by 2015.

Taking account of the unfavourable situation facing young people in the labour market, the National Reform Programme of the Slovak Republic for 2013 includes the elaboration and adoption of a system of guarantees for young people up to the age of 25 years. The objective of this measure is to ensure that all young people aged up to 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continuing education, technical training or work experience within four months of losing work or completing formal education. In achieving this objective, it will have financial support from EU structural funds in the new programming period.

Combating youth unemployment is one of the most important and urgent challenges that States are facing in every continent of the globe. We are all responsible for carrying out the measures that we have adopted, and for purposefully reinforcing and extending them.

I am grateful for the chance to address this Conference, especially at a time when the ILO is looking to reinvigorate its capacity to deliver on its mandate for social justice.

The ILO has been the reference for the working world for almost a century now. Today, it is grappling with issues of crucial importance, also to us in the EU. Let me start with youth employment, the EU's top priority today. As you know, unemployment in many countries is at a record high, particularly among young people. Over one in five young Europeans are looking for a job but cannot find one, and millions are neither in employment, nor in education or training. Young people are paying far too heavy a price for a situation that is not of their making. It also hangs over society as a whole, and not just in Europe.

Hence, the importance of the call by the International Labour Conference in June last year for immediate, targeted and renewed action to tackle the youth employment crisis.

In the EU, we have stepped up our efforts. Last December, the European Commission adopted a Youth Employment Package covering four main points: a Youth Guarantee; a Quality Framework for Traineeships; a European Alliance for Apprenticeships; and job mobility schemes. Let me pick out two that have a close link with the ILO's agenda.

The first is the Youth Guarantee. It aims to ensure that, within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education, all young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, the chance to continue their education or an apprenticeship or traineeship. We are grateful to the ILO for its input in helping to calculate the cost and promoting the benefits of such youth guarantee schemes.

Second, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, which we will launch on 2 July, aims to improve the quality and increase the number of apprenticeships on offer and to change attitudes to apprenticeship-type learning. I am pleased that the key elements for quality apprenticeships are the subject of a joint social partner initiative of the G20 countries, which is being launched today in the margins of this Conference.

We fully support the ILO's efforts to follow up the 2012 call for action to tackle global youth employment challenges.

I also want to stress the link between youth issues and this year's discussion on demographic change. The year 2012 was, in the EU, the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. It helped give political impetus to efforts to address ageing across the EU. It led to the adoption of guiding principles for action, based on an integrated life-cycle approach to employment and social protection. We need similar orientation at the global level, so I welcome the discussion at this Conference on tackling these momentous demographic changes.

Another crucial topic at this Conference is sustainable development and its environmental, social and economic dimensions. Sustainable development is the subject of lively discussion at global level in the wake of the Rio +20 Conference and in the run-up to a post-2015 development agenda. Making the transition to an inclusive green economy calls for

global action and cooperation between international partners. Given its expertise, the ILO can speak with authority on the social dimensions of sustainable development and on the relationship between the social and the environmental and economic dimensions. The ILO needs to make its voice heard on sustainable development. We are very supportive of all efforts to achieve policy coherence between international organizations acting in this field.

Policy coherence is highly important today. We have to find the right balance between our financial, economic, environmental and social objectives. In the EU, we have stepped up our efforts to achieve greater coherence and establish better governance. This expands to the question of rebuilding the economic and monetary union, in particular by giving the social partners a stronger role in its governance.

Lastly, let me recall, since it is very important for us all, that just a few weeks ago, the Rana Plaza building collapsed in Savar, near Dhaka in Bangladesh. It was a shocking reminder of the need for international labour standards – and for them to be applied – to prevent future tragedies of that sort. It underscores the ILO's importance in today's world. The ILO and the European Commission have a long-standing tradition of working together and, at a time when social dialogue, governance and policy coherence all need bolstering, we need to maintain, expand and strengthen our cooperation.

Ms PABEDINSKIENE (*Minister of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania*)

I would like to thank you all for giving me the honour of addressing the plenary today. I would particularly like to thank the ILO for providing us with the opportunity to exchange our views on the most important challenges in the world of work.

Let me begin by expressing our considerable interest and support for the reform programme begun by the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder. We see the change of the Organization as an important tool for addressing renewed and anticipated challenges facing the ILO in its second century.

The items placed on the Conference agenda this year clearly show the most important issues and their interconnection. Sustainable development can be achieved only through fully functioning social dialogue and, moreover, when the impact of demographic change to employment and social security is taken into account.

There is no doubt that new technologies have a huge impact on jobs, growth and living standards. Technological innovations generate a demand for skills in the labour market. As a result, there is a mismatch between skill supply and demand, and the way to eliminate such disparities is to provide higher levels of education. For this reason, employers and trade unions have to take responsibility for investing in skills, and strengthening education and training systems.

I would also like to stress that the vision of decent work for all could become a reality. It requires a lot of effort, which should be concentrated on the elimination of poverty, promotion of greater participation by women in the labour markets and overcoming the challenges of unemployment among young people. The ILO is definitely playing its fullest role here.

The ILO and its mandate play an important role in overcoming multiple challenges. The ILO's added value lies in tripartism. Social dialogue is a power-

ful mechanism, not only in generating sustainability, but it is also a means of overcoming difficulties. The principle of tripartism should not be undermined by any circumstances. Social dialogue could also be strengthened by various ILO initiatives, which would remind us all of the good practices and results achieved when we base our actions on the main pillars of tripartism.

Original French: Ms CAMPEANU (Minister of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly, Romania)

Allow me firstly, on behalf of the delegation of Romania, to congratulate the Office on its Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. This Report includes a list of activities for the Organization on the eve of its centenary. It is rich in ideas that inspire reflection and new approaches.

As a founding Member of the ILO, Romania has always shared the principles and the values promoted by the ILO. The unprecedented, substantial changes taking place in the world of work require appropriate policy adjustments. Firm commitment is necessary from governments to deepen cooperation at all levels in order to identify and integrate into common policies correlated solutions that favour decent work and employment. The solutions should be based on best practices and measures that have been negotiated and accepted by the social partners.

Economic forecasts for Europe indicate that Romania is distancing itself from the economically turbulent area, but it still faces risks and challenges. The proposals and ideas set forth in the Report could be enhanced by the labour policy that our Government is planning to adopt as part of a government programme to modernize the State, decentralize, promote economic recovery and further economic growth. Against the backdrop of the highly controversial general debate on the best means for recovery – austerity measures versus deficit easing – Romania has met targets to emerge from excessive deficit. Ever mindful of decent work and despite our prudence when spending financial resources, the Government of Romania has nevertheless decided that it is appropriate that the salaries of budgetary officials should return to 2010 levels, having been severely cut under previous governments' austerity measures. Those austerity measures did not induce recovery, but rather recession. Retirees' pensions have been indexed. Following consultations with the social partners, the national minimum wage has been increased for 2013. To support vulnerable consumers, as of 1 July, the minimum guaranteed income that makes low-income families eligible for welfare support will increase in two stages to compensate for energy price increases.

We are currently trying to find a balance between a strategy that creates decent work with sufficient social protection for workers, and financial discipline. We believe that a balanced wage policy could re-establish the link between wages and productivity, which would in turn facilitate recovery and inclusive growth in the medium term, in the context of a reformed labour market. The national process for tripartite social dialogue will continue and will include a new analysis of labour legislation and social dialogue, and realignment with European policies and labour market needs.

The Government is concerned by the unemployment rate, which currently stands at 5.29 per cent, which is below the European average, but youth

unemployment is over 23.5 per cent. The Government of Romania has recently launched a programme to give young entrepreneurs support to create and develop small businesses. The Government has approved two regional pilot projects for young people to facilitate their training and recruitment, financed by the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development. One solution will be to promote dual education, which has been successfully implemented in countries such as Germany and Austria.

The Government of Romania reiterates its willingness to continue its international collaboration with other Members, and with the ILO and other international organizations, in order to implement policies that are consistent with international labour standards and European legislation.

Original Portuguese: Mr PERALTA DA PENA COSTA (Employer, Portugal)

Today, the world is going through profound changes that require adjustment at various levels and in which economic and social factors play a pivotal role.

Against this backdrop, the International Labour Organization has a unique role to play in the work that will have to be done by all member States in order to strengthen labour rights and ensure their fairness, in close coordination with policies of economic growth. This work is of great importance for the wealth of our nations.

The Director-General's Report is extremely timely in the analysis that it undertakes of the factors of change in the world situation, and of the necessary innovation that the ILO will have to embark on in the next few years to prepare to face the new challenges that we are all confronted with and to fulfil its core mandate, namely the promotion of social justice.

The Report also highlights the impact of the economic and financial crisis that was triggered in 2008, particularly the tragedy of unemployment and its effect on many countries, including Portugal, and this is a challenge that still has to be overcome. But the determination of everybody – governments, employers and workers – is key for the mission of the ILO to be deepened and for it to show, without any shadow of doubt, that tripartism is of fundamental importance for global recovery, and economic and social development.

The advantages of tripartite social dialogue at national level are clearly emphasized in this year's Report under discussion at the Conference, in which the role of social dialogue in the context of crisis and inevitable change is made clear. Because we are aware of the importance of social dialogue in Portugal, the employers' and workers' confederations and the Government, in a climate of crisis and requests for financial aid, signed a tripartite agreement covering fundamental areas such as labour legislation, employment policies and the strengthening of business competitiveness.

In the meantime, Portugal is facing many challenges in order to enable the country to return to growth and reduce unemployment. Austerity policies that have been pursued are suffocating many of our businesses, particularly SMEs that are the economic and social basis of our country, and leading to unprecedented levels of unemployment. Hence it is necessary to change the policies in order to ensure greater balance between austerity and growth.

The debate concerning the new demographic context and its effect on employment and social protection is also highly relevant.

In Portugal, the associated policies cannot be separated from the fact that Portugal is up against a double ageing: it is not only that people live longer but there is also a considerable drop in the birth rate. It is therefore essential to ensure coordinated policies that will have an effect on both dimensions of the problem, so that tripartite social dialogue in this area too will play a central role in the discussion of possible solutions. Here it will be necessary to consider innovative visions capable of tackling the emerging challenges.

Against this backdrop, it is also important that we consider the impact of costs on enterprises and that we do everything possible to establish and maintain the fabric of business as a prime creator of employment and a major source of financing for social protection systems.

In a period in which stagnation or even recession are key words in many countries, we have to find new markets and promote appropriate skilling of our labour. All ways of fighting unemployment, based on economic growth, will be welcome and the only way in which we can gradually overcome this scourge.

Original Russian: Mr SHMAKOV (Worker, Russian Federation)

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate all of us on the substantive and bold Report of the Director-General. This Report is dedicated to the centenary of the ILO, but its ideas mobilize us to take practical steps here and now in the name of the triumph of social justice. The ideals which united us in the ranks of this Organization are ideals of which many have still not been achieved in developed countries.

One of the predecessors of Guy Ryder, David Morse, was quite right when he said that the ILO can only be an effective instrument for progress to the extent that its member States and tripartite constituents want it to be. We respond with the following: the workers of Russia will do everything in their power in their country and internationally to increase the effectiveness of the ILO. Specifically, we support the seven initiatives which the Director-General proposed in commemoration of the centenary of the ILO: the governance initiative; the standards initiative; the green initiative; the enterprises initiative; the end to poverty initiative; the women at work initiative; and the future of work initiative.

Speaking specifically of the enterprises initiative, we believe that enterprises include those who work for them and who are represented in the ILO through their unions. We believe that these initiatives will be the fruits of the entire Programme and Budget proposals for 2014–15, which we fully support. They complement the list of the eight most important areas of the programme which include: a transition from an informal to a formal economy; decent work in rural areas; protection of workers from unacceptable forms of labour; and establishing and raising the social protection floor.

The main condition for the realization of all of these aspirations is the preservation of development and the effective application of labour standards of the ILO throughout the world.

In order to maintain dedication to the objectives of social justice, the ILO must pay due attention to the circumstances of those who are most vulnerable:

people who are working. The focus of the mandate of the Organization is to improve working conditions. It is not for nothing that we say that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. After all, is that not what is meant when we see millions of people taking to the streets in Greece, in Italy, in Spain, in the Middle East and in other corners of the world.

Social dialogue and tripartism form the paradigm of social justice, fair labour relations and decent work. This is the essential conclusion of the report of the ILO on the recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social dialogue. In this connection, I will say a few words about two of the main factors of social justice: trust and truth.

At first glance, this might seem to be some sort of non-economic principle; however, how can one speak about social dialogue when one of the tripartite constituents is giving the impression that its only objective is to prosper from the others; when record high profits coincide with record low costs of labour; when the owners of new yachts call upon the dwellers of old *favellas* for frugality; and when the volume of currency operations completed on a blinking screen far surpasses the value of daily transactions in the real economy.

Should we still believe in the wisdom of such policies and trust those who execute them? The irony is that we, for our part, not only support the future but also the very history of tripartism. We must do what was triumphantly declared by our forebears. That is what is more important than any fleeting self-interested whim of any of the groups of the ILO. Our forebears trusted the independent experts of the ILO to apply standards; they had a deep conviction in the right of workers to strike. Today, all of that is being undermined by indifferent neglect of the memory of the founders and their ideals.

The creation of the ILO, in 1919, was a response to the bloody revolution of 1917 in Russia when a caste-like Tsarist government and avaricious Russian businesses ignored the interests and demands of workers and were thus destroyed. The history of my country went in a different direction. The international community proposed an excellent solution – concording everyone's interests through tripartite social dialogue. Do we really need a new socialist revolution to get back to the roots of the Organization? Changing the fundamental principles of the Organization denies us not only our past but also our future. And the future of the ILO is incumbent upon us, now more than ever.

The key to eradicating poverty is providing decent jobs. Wherever work does not provide for income above the poverty level and is not decent, it cannot be a means of fighting destitution. This has been recognized by the international community.

The ILO fought hard to win broad support for its decent work concepts which should be the cornerstone of the entire post-2015 UN development agenda.

The Declaration of Philadelphia requires the ILO to consider all global-scale economic and financial measures for its main objective – to provide “material well-being and [their] spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity”. This places the ILO at the centre of key political discussions, including in the G20, and discussions with international financial institutions. The unions of Russia, along with their colleagues in the ITUC and the Trade

Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), actively support this process.

That being said, we unswervingly underscore that without freedom of association and collective bargaining, social dialogue loses its potency and its contribution to socio-economic development and crisis recovery is nullified. One thing must be achieved: the governments of ILO member States must include freedom of association and collective bargaining in bilateral and regional trade and integration agreements. Together with our colleagues from Brazil, India, China and South Africa, we intend to achieve this within the BRICS countries.

Allow me to wish everyone success in their work on the eve of the centenary of our Organization.

Mr WOGU (*Minister of Labour and Productivity, Nigeria*)

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation I congratulate the President and the Director-General on his maiden Report on the activities and programmes of the ILO since he assumed office one year ago. We note with interest the various thematic issues raised in the Report, in view of their relevance to the core mandate of the ILO in addressing the challenges of social justice, employment creation, social dialogue and tripartism, including the promotion of the fundamental principles and rights at work, as encapsulated in the Decent Work Agenda. In this context, Nigeria agrees with the seven thematic areas identified as regards their impact on the world of work and the challenges which they present for the next century.

These transformational forces in the world of work present us with several diverse challenges which are obstacles to our vision of becoming one of the 20 most technologically advanced countries in the world by the year 2020. Prominent among these challenges, that need to be quickly addressed, are the provision of productive and decent jobs for the teeming youth population, in an environmentally sustainable manner; the provision of adequate minimum social security protection systems for the aged, unemployed, women, children and vulnerable members of society, including the provision of an adequate system of labour protection; the provision of relevant and adequate skills to match global developments in information and communications technology; and the provision of good governance systems ensuring developments in democratic and representative institutions, especially at work and in society at large.

In the last two years, my country has embarked on several policies, projects and programmes in various sectors of the economy in order to address these issues. These approaches are encapsulated in the Transformation Agenda of President Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. The Agenda articulates policies and programmes directed at infrastructural development, especially in the areas of energy, transportation, tourism, agriculture, security of lives and property, revival of the real economic sector, employment creation, social security for the citizenry, transparency in governance and accountability in the use of natural resources, etc. In the labour sector, the Transformation Agenda encompasses key national performance indicators for the various policies, programmes and projects, aimed at: employment generation and wealth creation, improving national productivity and competitiveness; improving the health, safety and welfare of the workforce; enhancing industrial harmony and improving labour

education and skills; the provision of social security protection and mitigating vulnerability at work; enhancing skills development and certification; improving the regulatory environment; and applying international labour standards.

There is no doubt that the Nigerian Government has achieved several milestones in the above areas, as highlighted in the President's midterm evaluation report on 27 May 2013. The programmes and associated achievements provide useful experiences for member States that are desirous of growth and development. We have made progress in the implementation of a national employment roadmap in key sectors, with a marked increase in job creation. We are on the verge of a review of the roadmap in line with current economic development and growth.

With the experience obtained in the implementation of policies, projects and programmes over the years, we have recommendations relevant for the ILO to cope effectively with the challenges of the next century.

Finally, while Nigeria supports the ongoing reforms in the ILO to help reposition the Organization within a strong UN system, we wish to appeal for adequate and equitable regional representation and distribution of all resources, including the recruitment of personnel from developing nations at all levels of the agency.

I thank the ILO for its support to the Nigerian Government and its social partners. You can count on our support to reposition the ILO to meet the challenges of the next century.

Original Spanish: Mr CASTAÑÓN CASTAÑÓN
(*Employer, Mexico*)

It is an honour for me to take the floor as an Employers' delegate of Mexico. My intention is to recognize the efforts of the ILO and its constituents to call for social dialogue and tripartite cooperation based on partnership and mutual reinforcement.

Recognizing the effort that has been made in drafting the Report of the Director-General, I invite you to reflect on how the concepts of sustainable enterprise and decent work are interlinked in a harmonious and indivisible relationship.

In recent months, Mexico has initiated a process of reform to take it towards further development and greater prosperity. The Pact for Mexico, which has brought the country's main political forces together around an agenda for reform, is the result of a long social and civil campaign.

In recognition of the fact that, in Mexico, 60 per cent of workers do not have social benefits, at the end of last year our country discussed and adopted, after 15 years and 500 initiatives in this area, a labour reform which brought new provisions into Mexican legislation to streamline the formal recruitment process.

Vulnerable groups – young people, women and persons with disabilities, who have difficulty getting job opportunities and opportunities for professional development – are always the most affected by rigid labour markets. The Mexican labour reform of 2012 sought to address this very problem. New provisions were introduced, such as those relating to contracts for a trial period and the apprenticeship scheme, to facilitate access to the formal labour market and break the vicious circle that makes it difficult to get work without experience or experience without work. If we want more jobs, we need to see the creation of formal enterprises and we

need their numbers to grow. We must understand that there cannot be decent work without the sustainable growth of enterprises and without the development of infrastructure that facilitates entrepreneurship.

As the Director-General has said at this International Labour Conference, the current circumstances – including the requirements for economic and social development, the urgent need to create opportunities for decent jobs and the many challenges that have been raised by the economic crisis of 2009 – are evidence of the prevailing need to establish agreements between workers, governments and employers. We recognize the role of the ILO in providing an opportunity for tripartite agreement.

Beyond the labour market, there are other factors that require tripartite agreement and a commitment to social dialogue. Like many other countries, Mexico needs to promote equitable economic growth through sustained increases in productivity. The dual training model is a good tool to achieve this, where employers, workers, educational establishments and governments work together to generate knowledge, innovation, qualifications and skills.

Another one of the challenges in achieving growth with equity is regional development. In this regard, our countries need to strengthen economic models that reflect and recognize the productive capacities of each community. We, the Mexican employers, believe that the process of global economic integration should be an opportunity for, and not a threat to, the heterogeneous reality that always exists within countries.

We understand that the present holds a historic opportunity for Mexico, for its transformation. I am convinced that the ideal of a more prosperous and fairer future is within our reach. Our path has been, and must continue to be, labour agreements and tripartite collaboration.

Original French: Mr DE LEEUW (Worker, Belgium)

Contrary to last year, the Committee on the Application of Standards was able to complete its work and we should be thankful for that. However, we will rapidly need to pick up the debate where we left off if we want to reaffirm the ILO's standard-setting role. This includes the right to strike and the protection of the full and comprehensive role of the mandate and competence of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.

This is of particular significance to us because the 2013 report of our International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), once again points to the need to continue our fight for trade union rights throughout the world. The report focuses on seven countries, but rights violations happen everywhere, including in a developed economy like that of my country, Belgium, where the Government did not hesitate to freeze real salaries, thereby hampering collective bargaining. This trend could well intensify, if we are not careful. Let us recall that in November of last year, the Governing Body unanimously asked the Greek Government to respect trade union rights, considering that the austerity measures taken under pressure from financial institutions – in other words the Troika – could in no way justify undermining fundamental workers' rights. Greece was again singled out by the Committee on the Application of Standards this year, but this time it was joined by Spain. Therefore, Europe, and in particular the

Member States of the EU, who have often been the source of inspiration for the fundamental principles of the ILO, are now seeing their social DNA threatened to the point of seeing situations of social insecurity and a risk of explosion in reaction to unacceptable situations.

The European social model is clearly at risk. The most recent step in this aggressive policy against fundamental rights and freedoms is the decision taken by the Greek Government to brutally close down the public radio and television, ERT, and to dismiss its 2,700 employees. This decision is quite simply a threat to pluralism and diversity, access to culture and democratic values, which are the foundation of the EU.

Turning to the lessons of the 1930s: austerity leads to disaster, and we know, from the Great Depression of the 1930s, that this is exactly what not to do. No country in the world has ever been able to reduce its debt by impoverishing itself. No country has ever been able to guarantee social justice by reducing the wages and the protection of workers. Since the beginning of the crisis, major macroeconomic policy errors have been made, which have had a lasting effect on the real economy, employment and social justice. I will not mention the mistakes made by some of the academics that advised the EU and the Troika. In this respect, the Conference Committee on Social Dialogue confirmed the constitutional mandate of the ILO, which should enable it to examine the policies and measures of other institutions in the light of the objective of social justice. I hope that this will, in fact, be followed up by actions.

Moreover, that same Committee, in line with the wishes expressed in the Report of the Director-General, Guy Ryder, suggested that the question of decent labour in global supply chains be included on the agenda of a future session of the International Labour Conference and recommended that a meeting of experts on cross-border social dialogue be held. We should respect these wishes before another tragedy, such as that of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh, reminds us of the urgency and need to do this. In the meantime, we should make full use of all instruments already at our disposal to ensure that another such human disaster does not occur.

Lastly, we should welcome the inclusion of an environmental and social discussion in the work of the ILO. The importance of a fair transition has been highlighted here and we should not lose sight of it from now on, considering the impact that it has, and will have, on the world of work, as the Director-General quite rightly explained in his opening statement.

We therefore need to deal with the present crisis, which has been going on for five years, as quickly as possible, through sustainable recovery measures and a relentless battle against fraud and fiscal evasion. To take but one example from Belgium, reinjecting 50 per cent of the yields of such a fight against fiscal fraud could reduce unemployment by approximately a third.

It is by contributing to rebuilding social cohesion and global and European governance and by integrating these new factors, primarily through its standard-setting activities, that the ILO will remain true to its fundamental principles. Next year, the ILO will celebrate 70 years since its Declaration of

Philadelphia, which reminds us that “labour is not a commodity”.

Mr YTZHAKI (*Government, Israel*)

First, I would like to congratulate the President and all the participants. I also wish success to the Director-General, who was elected at a challenging time.

In Israel, we have witnessed a slowdown in many sectors of the economy and a certain rise in the unemployment rate. Yet no dramatic events have occurred, such as the collapse of big firms. There is no doubt that the economy is affected by the world financial crisis, given that exports are one of the dominant factors in the Israeli market.

The main goal of the new Government’s economic programme is to diminish the budgetary deficit to a manageable rate. In this context, the new Minister of Finance has reached an agreement with the Chairperson of the Histadrut (General Federation of Labour) in order to achieve industrial peace for the near future.

One of last year’s most important developments for labour rights was the enactment of the law to enhance the enforcement of labour standards. The new law creates tools for efficient enforcement and was adopted after fruitful negotiation with the social partners and the Government. It proves that enforcement proceedings are of mutual interest to these parties and not only the sole activity of the Government. This important step should give a proper solution to improve enforcement. This issue, in my opinion, is one of the important principles of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda.

Several years after the extension order for mandatory pensions was issued, one third of the workforce which was lacking this right has joined the pensions system.

Freedom of association has turned into a hot issue in Israel. New workers and others working in sectors which traditionally did not join unions are trying to organize. Recently, cellular companies, fast food enterprises, coffee shops, restaurants, financial and credit firms are moving to exercise freedom of association. A meaningful decision by the National Labour Court stated that employers cannot, and should not, interfere in workers’ primary action of organizing. It goes hand in hand with the basic principles of that matter as detailed in the ILO Conventions that Israel ratified many years ago.

Nowadays, equality in participation in the labour market is an important issue on the public agenda. The Knesset and the Government are introducing new rules in order to encourage the ultra-Orthodox population and others to enter the labour market. These rules could combat poverty and contribute to the economy as well. An additional goal on the public agenda is to achieve better labour conditions for contract workers. The Government and the social partners took action to reach that goal.

Finally, we share the vision of the Director-General, expressed in his Report to the Conference, that the realities of the world of work today are that the global economy has the capacity to consign poverty to history, to provide decent living standards universally and to extend protection from occupational risks to all.

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

It is an honour for me to address you on what is my first visit to the International Labour Conference. The current employment and social crisis affects many countries in the world, including my own, but it is not restricted to Europe. The crisis forces us to find solutions to urgent problems, like the alarmingly high rate of youth unemployment, but it should not detract us from also focusing on longer term issues, such as changing demographics and their possible consequences for employment and social protection.

The Government of the Netherlands is convinced that any solutions should fit within a sound and financially sustainable framework. This is a challenge for many countries but a necessary condition for lasting employment growth and sustainable social protection. In the Netherlands, together with the Dutch social partners, we agreed to a social pact last April. The pact sets out solutions to current labour market problems and agreements on necessary reforms to keep our economy in shape, maintain and create employment and secure social security for future generations. Let me be clear: it was by no means a given that we could agree upon this set of measures, but we did, nevertheless. I think it underlines the importance, strength and potential of social dialogue, an issue that is also on our agenda during this Conference.

In our experience, social dialogue at the national, regional and company levels is essential to stimulate stable socio-economic development. It has proven its value time and time again, not only on an ad hoc basis when the need was highest, but also in a more institutionalized form. Our consultation model, which is – much like in the ILO – based on consensus, forms the foundation for our international economic position. Constructive social dialogue remains a necessity to bend the trend.

But let us turn to the International Labour Organization itself, in which consultation is also crucial. It is, however, like in the Netherlands, not something we can, or should, take for granted. We will need to work on making it work and ensuring that the ILO can fulfil its mandate in a tripartite way.

I would like to touch upon two things. First, with regard to standards, I would like to underline our strong support of the supervisory system of the ILO, which has been created and has evolved over the years. In this system, the social partners play the crucial part. We will need to work together to resolve the controversy which prevented the Committee on the Application of Standards from completing its work last year. We appreciate the active role taken by the Director-General in trying to solve this issue, as well as the constructive work of the social partners themselves. In the Netherlands, we remain committed to a strong, relevant, impartial and coherent standards system in the ILO, including an effective supervisory system. For us, there is no doubt that a relevant system of standards entails a review of the topics we choose for our standards, and also ensures that standards are formulated in such a way that they remain relevant over time.

Second, we feel that the ILO has a wealth of knowledge that should be used by governments, trade unions and employers’ organizations. We also feel that individual companies could benefit much more than is the case now from what the ILO has to

offer. To see whether there is an unfulfilled business demand for services which the ILO could provide, the Government of the Netherlands has initiated a pilot project, which focuses on strengthening the ties between the ILO and business in the Netherlands, and on creating partnerships with the business community. Although we fully recognize the importance of the tripartite constituents in representing the interests of their groups, we also feel that it does not need to prevent us from strengthening the ILO's cooperation with companies. That cooperation has an enormous potential to help improve labour conditions worldwide.

With the effects of the crisis becoming tangible all over the world, there is also a clear demand for the policy advice the ILO can offer, to bolster employment, strengthen social protection and inclusion, and uphold the ILO's standards. In that regard, I would like to reiterate our support for the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), which was adopted last year. In our country, we have experienced that social protection measures tangibly contribute to softening the adverse affects of the crisis.

Recent events, such as a number of disasters in the Bangladeshi garment industry, have once again underlined the relevance of the mandate of the ILO and the key role that the ILO can play in improving decent work. The Netherlands deplores these events and has taken action to assist the Bangladeshi Government and to improve labour conditions in the garment industry, particularly by facilitating the recruitment and training of labour and building inspectors. We call on the ILO to assist partners in Bangladesh in significantly improving working conditions. This is relevant not only for Bangladesh, but for the garment industry in general. The ILO's Better Work programme is essential in that respect and we look forward to continuing to work together with the ILO, in Bangladesh and in many other countries.

With a growing interest in what the ILO has to say and to offer – an interest in the social and employment dimension of the world's economy – it is now up to the ILO to clearly show its added value. Our country has, for a long time, been pushing for reforms in this Organization to be able to better meet the demands of today's world and the ILO's constituents themselves. Increasing the effectiveness, value for money, transparency and accountability of the ILO will prepare the ILO for its centenary and will ensure that it remains relevant and fit to face new challenges in the fast-changing world of work. We recognize, and commend, the Director-General's efforts in this regard and call upon all constituents to make sure that the ILO can help us in building a future with decent work.

Original French: Mr SCHMIT (Minister of Labour, Employment and Immigration, Luxembourg)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on the organization of this 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. He has rightly placed labour once again at the core of both economic and human development.

We are emerging with difficulty from a crisis produced by an insane logic which has sought to discard labour as a source of growth, wealth, creativity and fulfilment. We are fully aware of the dramatic consequences for employment and for the cohesion of our societies. It is for this reason that my Gov-

ernment actively supports all efforts being made to restore the value of human labour and reorient the rapid changes in the world of work towards decent work, compliance with labour regulations and social justice.

Who better than the ILO to help promote this initiative, giving us ambitious objectives with an eye to the ILO centenary in six years' time? This is a major project to create a fairer, more balanced globalization with more solid governance in which our Organization has a role to play. There are many significant challenges.

First, I am bound to refer to the tragic events that have cost the lives of more than 1,000 employees in a textile factory in Bangladesh. These are victims of uncontrolled globalization. Compliance with international standards relating to working conditions, health and safety, and workers' rights must be strengthened. The ILO, involved as it is in Bangladesh and other countries where child labour is still on the increase, needs to have the necessary means and resources, but it is also up to enterprises which relocate production to fully assume their responsibilities. Awareness is starting to grow in this area.

Second, the role of social protection has to be re-established. Our societies are experiencing new manifestations of inequality, and we have to promote the idea of a social protection floor. Europe is floundering in austerity policies resulting in an economic recession which has already lasted for several years in some countries and has caused an explosion of poverty and unemployment. These policies need to be adjusted by relaunching sustainable growth and lessons have to be learned from mistakes made, as even the International Monetary Fund has appeared to suggest. My Government supports all efforts to endow European economic and monetary union with a genuine social component.

Third, at the world level, there is a real employment crisis. It is young people in particular, but also women and older workers, who are the primary victims. Mobilization for employment, especially youth employment, must remain one of the core tasks of our Organization. But let us not be under any illusion: without macroeconomic policies that focus on employment, there will be no rapid progress. The creation of new jobs is not beyond our reach, either in the North or the South. It is a question of directing resources, which are certainly not lacking, towards investment in employment-generating spheres, such as sustainable development (the only way to combat global warming), education, health, the spread of new technologies, and the creation and promotion of small businesses. We must provide the younger generation with good training and decent, non-precarious jobs. In this respect, the Youth Guarantee scheme that the EU countries propose to introduce is a useful tool.

Fourth, our Organization is based on social dialogue, which presupposes respect for freedoms and rights. We support the Director-General's initiatives with regard to enterprises and employers: their experience and support is needed if we wish to give a human face to the changes in the world of work. Corporate social responsibility must not remain an empty concept. It is essential to a revival of growth that better incorporates the social and environmental dimensions.

Our Conference has a rich and ambitious agenda. In this framework of dialogue which brings gov-

ernments and social partners together, it is up to us to move forward together.

Ms SHULER (*Worker, United States*)

I am honoured to address you today on behalf of the workers of the United States and also my organization, the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO), and our more than 12 million members.

It is a privilege to speak with you at the first of these Conferences since the election of Guy Ryder as Director-General. I want to congratulate the Director-General for the ambitious Report that he presented here, that reflects his long-term vision for strengthening the ILO at a time of tremendous challenges. The Director-General has the full support of the AFL–CIO and its members as he works to implement a much-needed plan focused on jobs, and greater social and economic justice.

Over the past several years here in Geneva, as the US Workers' delegate to the Conference, I have spoken about the need to address the current jobs crisis and the detrimental policies of austerity. These policies have resulted in a historic and growing gap between the world's wealthiest people and the rest of us. Joblessness plagues countries in every region around the globe and is actually rising worldwide. Even as we see modest improvements in the United States, in some countries the policies of austerity have been accompanied by an attack on fundamental workers' rights.

When workers are unemployed, we all lose. Think of the hundreds of millions of people who could be creating wealth and building our economies. Think of the millions of young people whose dreams of opportunity fade. Those young people live in households where older adults are losing key retirement benefits and good paying jobs. I am particularly worried about them – the young people, the young people who are out of work. They search for jobs but find few options and when they do find a job, it is often precarious work with low wages, few benefits and no security. Globally, some 73 million young people are estimated to be unemployed.

In developed countries more than 18 per cent of young people were unemployed last year. It is now more than 16 per cent in the United States, 24 per cent in the EU, and in Greece and Spain unemployment afflicts more than half of economically active young people. These are not just numbers; these are lives. These are not just temporary indicators of hardship for young people; they leave lasting scars, limiting incomes, opportunities and contributions for a lifetime. Yet, in too many countries, governments ignore the harsh realities facing young people and continue on the austerity path despite widespread evidence of its failure. When will it stop?

We are calling for our governments to stop the hand-wringing: stop the rhetorical nods to youth unemployment and take concrete, committed actions to address it; to ensure quality employment or training once a young person's formal education is complete; to invest in vocational education and training; to establish national commitments on apprenticeships and quality internships; and provide a guarantee of workplace training. In this regard, we applaud the Business 20 and Labour 20 Joint Understanding on Quality Apprenticeships and call on the G20 to implement these key principles.

Trade unions are showing every day that there are practical alternatives to abandoning a generation of young people, and unions worldwide are at the forefront of addressing these issues. In the United States, for example, we have developed a foundation of training, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programmes based on national solutions to the youth unemployment crisis.

Our building trade unions alone invest nearly US\$1 billion a year – 1 billion, with a “b” – in preparing the next generation of tradesmen and women. Who are some of these young people? Military veterans who found new careers in the building and construction trades through its Helmets to Hardhats Program, and are now rebuilding the World Trade Center in New York City; a single mother in Chicago, training to become a heavy equipment operator, who now has access to a high-paying career with retirement security; and a culinary worker in Las Vegas who is part of a training partnership with employers in the hospitality industry that has trained 35,000 students in all aspects of their trade. We need programmes like these around the world. We call for a global New Deal that emphasizes investment in jobs and programmes targeting youth unemployment.

The AFL–CIO looks forward to working with the ILO and with our partners here to ensure that those investments are made.

Original Portuguese: Mr ALVES CARLOS (Worker, Portugal)

On behalf of the Portuguese workers, I would like to congratulate the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference and especially the Director-General on his Report. The key topics of the Conference are employment and social protection, sustainable development and decent work, and also the role of social dialogue, which stand in contrast to the retrograde nature of labour relations in Portugal.

To say that Portugal is mired in an economic crisis and that austerity policies rule the day are platitudes that fail to describe the situation we are living in. The principles and progress of humankind, which appeared to be well-established as a result of social consensus reached after the Second World War, on the basis of the idea that only social justice can prevent wars, are now being called into question or even discarded.

The economic and social situation requires us not just to talk about numbers but to consider people who are being denied fundamental rights, such as the right to employment, to wages and to protection from unemployment.

We need to break away from the policy of hypocrisy and cynicism which perpetuates tax havens, and policies based on speculation which promote the dominance of financial markets and the worsening of social inequalities, and which increasingly transfer wealth from labour to capital.

This is a policy based on a neoliberal ideology which undermines the foundations of democracy by attacking the right to the public and universal services of education, health and social security, and which transforms into a business, for a few, the public services that are essential for meeting the basic needs of the people.

This is a policy which, thanks to the agreement with the Troika, adversely affects the workers and the people of Portugal as a whole, humiliates the country, stifles the economy and restricts national

sovereignty, with galloping public debt and deficit held ransom to an unending spiral of recession.

Instead of sustainable development, what we are seeing is an unprecedented deregulation of labour legislation, ever-increasing unemployment and general impoverishment.

In Portugal, after a decade of successive flexibilization of working hours in order to reduce wage costs, there are now calls to increase the working week in the public service from 35 to 40 hours on the spurious grounds of establishing equality with the private sector. Just as serious is the attack on the principle of equality of progress, which underlies ILO standards and is also established in the European Social Charter.

On the other hand, social dialogue is also under threat from increasing interference in freedom of association, with unprecedented attacks on collective bargaining, with legislation that quashes the provisions of collective labour agreements which have been freely negotiated and agreed upon between representatives of workers' and employers' associations, and with restrictions on the publication of extension orders rendering labour rights universal.

The situation today cannot be explained in terms of the debt crisis. In Portugal, the logic is to take advantage of the crisis in order to create a new economic and social order, in order to strip the social State of its importance and downgrade the importance of work in society. The trade union movement rejects this retrograde process which is being imposed by the Troika and the Government, where the Troika acts as if we were not a sovereign country but merely a protectorate.

Contrary to what they want us to believe, we are not faced with something inevitable. It is possible to break away from this policy, opting for economic growth, the creation of more and better jobs, and increases in wages, particularly the national minimum wage. These are inextricably linked to upholding the value of work, giving dignity to workers and boosting the economy.

Instead of merely talking, we have got to act in order to fight against tax havens and levy tax on financial transactions, on dividends distributed to major shareholders and on profits transferred to speculative spheres that never reach the real economy.

The economy has to give priority to meeting the needs and concerns of the workers and the people, and cannot continue to be subordinated to the strategies of the financial sector and of speculative markets. Here I would like to recall the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which states that "the violation of fundamental principles and rights at work cannot be invoked or otherwise used as a legitimate comparative advantage".

We have a difficult task ahead, at a time of increasing complexities, which still requires action by the workers to ensure respect for labour rights and rights relating to the civilized world. In 2009, the International Labour Conference approved the Global Jobs Pact and championed the principle of decent work in order to overcome the economic crisis. But little has been done and much remains to be done! For our part, in Portugal on 27 June, we are going to hold a general strike for employment, for wages, and for the future of new generations and of Portugal. This general strike also seeks to ensure

decent work and make it not only an objective but also a reality for all workers in Portugal and throughout the world.

Original French: Mr DUMITRIU (Representative, Council of Europe)

As you already know, the Council of Europe is the guardian of social rights enshrined in the European Social Charter. As an international treaty on human rights, like the European Convention on Human Rights, the Charter's approach is based on human rights. The Social Charter is the flagship treaty in the area of social rights, social democracy and the social state, which are the three pillars of the social framework of the Council of Europe. The European Committee of Social Rights is the body that was created to supervise national compliance with the Social Charter.

The institutions and the standards exist, but they have to be put into practice. The legal perspective is complementary to a political or social approach. The effective implementation of the Social Charter does not depend on the European Committee of Social Rights or the Department of the European Social Charter, but on synergy with the other institutions and bodies of the Council of Europe and other regional or international organizations, such as the EU and the ILO.

The implementation of the guarantees enshrined in the Charter depends on joint efforts and shared responsibilities, including through the collective complaints system mobilized by the social partners. An additional protocol to the Charter allows workers and employers' organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to refer complaints relating to violations of the Charter to the Committee. In this regard, we have to focus efforts and responsibilities on deepening the recognition of the Social Charter and ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, established in its first article.

It goes without saying that mass unemployment, including youth unemployment, touches on a fundamental right established in the revised Social Charter in Article 30, relating to the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion. Moreover, jurisprudence of the European Committee of Social Rights indicates that social cohesion and safeguarding acquired European social rights, particularly in times of crisis, require supplementary actions to guarantee the rights of elderly persons to social protection, in accordance with Article 23 of the Charter.

In general, the guarantee of social rights presents the same advantages and difficulties as other categories of human rights. Classification as a human right or as a fundamental right is not necessarily linked to the principle of immediate justiciability. Neither can civil and political rights be subject to immediate protection by national jurisdictions if the material and structural conditions are not provided in national legislation.

It is in this light that the Council of Europe wants to reaffirm its commitment to support, within its means and competences, the policies proposed by the ILO, as well as the initiatives outlined in the Report of the Director-General, Guy Ryder. After all, the Council of Europe, with its 47 members, brings together more than a quarter of all the ILO's member States.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform this august assembly that the Council of Europe has already begun work on drafting two non-mandatory instruments respectively relating to the protection of the rights of elderly persons and corporate responsibility in the area of human rights. We are thus already on the same wavelength as some of the initiatives set out by the Director-General.

Mr MAVRIKOS (*Representative, World Federation of Trade Unions*)

The living and working conditions of workers today are more difficult than they were at the time of the last session of the ILO Conference. Extremely high unemployment, reductions in salaries, privatizations, criminal policies on the part of employers resulting in a lack of safety in workplaces, state violence and imperialist aggressiveness are prevailing.

It is characteristic that, while the wealth produced is increasing and the markets are full of products of all sorts, while the profits of the multinationals and the majority of employers remain extremely high, the rights of workers are being eliminated. These are the characteristics of the deep crisis of the capitalist system. The situation for the working class in all continents is getting worse.

In Bangladesh, for example, the criminal policies of multinationals and local employers continue to kill workers. In Turkey, state violence and anti-worker attacks are escalating. In Costa Rica, strikes in the public sector are prohibited. In Panama, the workers of the Panama Canal are prohibited from striking. Chile is emblematic of many countries, as it has been violating basic ratified Conventions for 14 years now. In Kazakhstan, in the Gulf States and in Guatemala, there is almost no freedom of association. In Colombia, metalworkers and miners are attacked constantly. The workers of the multinational Glencore were on strike for 98 days and the multinational treated the workers like criminals. Michelin has closed down factories in Cali and Chusacá. Yet, regardless of that, the ILO has excluded Colombia from the list. In Paraguay, *campesinos* are persecuted, including members of the Agrarian Movement of Paraguay, MOAPA (Movimiento Agrario del Paraguay), and others. The European working class is being pushed into poverty by policies that favour employers, implemented by the EU and governments. The workers and people of Africa are living in extremely bad conditions, while their natural resources are stolen daily by multinationals.

The right to eight hours' stable and secure work, the right to sectoral and national collective bargaining, the right to strike, the right to social security and a pension, the right to public education and health care, are at the epicentre of the attack launched by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the EU and the governments that support them.

As the World Federation of Trade Unions, we will not stop defending these rights. We will continue organizing international activities and action days. We will continue to denounce these policies globally. We will continue to organize on the ground to block them. We will continue to call on our members and friends on the front line of the struggle for the rights of working people.

Unfortunately, the ILO and its regional offices are not assisting in this direction. On the contrary, the regional offices of the ILO in various continents, for example, in Central America and the Middle East, follow a policy of discrimination against some workers. We are asking that the discrimination against the members and friends of the World Federation of Trade Unions stop. We are asking for proportional representation.

As the World Federation of Trade Unions, we will continue to call on the international trade union movement in joint struggles against exploitation and capitalist barbarism. At the same time, we call upon all militant trade unions with an international spirit and solidarity to stand on the side of the Palestinian people in their struggle for their own independent homeland; to defend the rights of the people of Libya, Iraq, Syria, Mali, Venezuela, Honduras, Paraguay, etc.; to demand an end to the blockade by the United States and their allies against the Cuban people.

To finish from this podium, taking the floor here at the ILO, it is our duty to express, once more, the respect and appreciation of the World Federation of Trade Unions for the working class of Greece. With important class struggles, it resists, shows its disobedience and combats barbaric, anti-people policies. We condemn the Government of Greece that, out of the blue and overnight, fired 2,600 workers of Greek public radio and television and with a dictatorial decision closed down the Greek public television and the Greek public radio. The workers and the 2 million unemployed in Greece should know that they are not alone. As a class-orientated trade union movement, we are on their side.

(The Conference adjourned at 1 p.m.)

Fourteenth sitting

Tuesday, 18 June 2013, 2.40 p.m.

President: Mr Katamine

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

Mr KOVACIC (*Government, Australia*)

The Australian Government values its close engagement with the ILO and appreciates the opportunity to address the International Labour Conference plenary. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the ILO's Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, since assuming his role last year.

The Australian Government is very supportive of the Director-General's reform agenda and has been pleased to note the progress achieved under this agenda today. In particular, the organizational reforms which have taken place within the ILO's headquarters and the ensuing improved efficiency which has enabled the Office to make the best use of its resources are important developments. The Australian Government considers these reforms to be critical in ensuring the ILO's continued relevance as the leading international authority on the world of work and a centre of excellence for research and policy development, particularly in the lead-up to the ILO centenary in 2019.

In considering the forward agenda of the ILO, the Australian Government emphasizes the importance of a continued global commitment to sustainable economic growth and job creation. The Australian Government acknowledges the critical role that the ILO can play in leading the pursuit of these goals at the international level and the importance of the ILO having a seat at the table and working with other multilateral organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to support sustainable growth and job creation.

I have read with interest the Director-General's first Report to the International Labour Conference, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, which outlines his vision of how the ILO must equip itself for the future. The ILO centenary in 2019 is clearly an opportunity to define the role of the Organization in the twenty-first century and to launch new initiatives which reflect the significant changes occurring in the world of work. These new initiatives should be ambitious and forward-thinking and should enable the ILO to further leverage its tripartite structure to full effect. In particular, the Australian Government welcomes the focus on identifying initiatives which

support innovation and productivity underpinned by minimum standards as drivers of sustainable growth and job creation beyond the ILO's centenary year.

The Australian Government is committed to delivering safer, fairer and more productive workplaces for employees and employers. While labour laws have an important role to play in that regard, it should not be overlooked that what happens in workplaces is also instrumental in delivering safer, fairer and more productive workplaces. Against that background, the Australian Government has a strong interest in improving the way in which work is organized and performed.

The Australian Government believes that embedding in workplaces a culture where employers, employees and unions cooperate each and every day to build safer, fairer and more productive workplaces is essential in supporting sustainable growth and job creation. However, the Australian Government acknowledges that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for such a culture to take root in the absence of a suitable safety net of minimum standards and protection of workers.

The Australian Government's view is supported by a growing body of evidence showing that a variety of factors beyond labour laws are correlated with improved productivity and a range of other positive workplace outcomes, such as higher profitability, increased innovation, lower absenteeism and staff turnover, and high levels of job satisfaction. In short, the evidence shows that engaged employees are more productive employees.

In Australia, factors associated with these outcomes are generally referred to as high-performing work practices or work systems and include management practice and leadership, firm-level collaboration and flexible workplace practices, developing and utilizing the skills of the workforce, and innovative businesses and technology uptake.

In recognition of the importance of high-calibre leadership and management, the Australian Government has provided funding for the establishment of a Centre for Workplace Leadership. The Centre will promote good leadership focusing on links between high-performing workplaces, modern management and quality jobs. It will train leaders in a "hands-on way" at workplaces and commission practical research about excellence in leadership and management practices in Australian workplaces. The Centre will have a strong focus on the way employees are treated, the quality of their jobs and the workplaces in which they work. It will also

highlight how leadership helps build safe, fair and productive workplaces.

In conclusion, as ILO Members we are together approaching a historical milestone. This comes at a critical but opportune moment for the Organization as it reflects on its future direction. The Australian Government hopes that we can all draw on our experience, while continuing to learn from others, in order to meaningfully contribute to ensuring sustainable growth and job creation in an ever changing world of work.

Ms BYER-SUCKOO (*Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, Barbados*)

Today, as we seek to further develop and adhere to both national and international environmental standards, I am encouraged to note that the area of green jobs is receiving the attention of the ILO, given its relevance to the attainment of the seventh goal of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals.

It is a sobering reality that our member States are increasingly being confronted with a myriad of challenges, including environmental challenges such as the availability of fossil fuels, climate change, the pollution of our oceans and the degradation of our forests. These are issues that have an impact on us all and now, more than ever, we must seek to identify and implement modern solutions to these long-standing problems.

One of the more practical solutions that we can pursue would be the creation of green jobs to engage the workforce in the attainment of environmental sustainability. While acknowledging the turbulence of the economic environment in which we reside, I believe that we must be willing to make a substantial investment in developing relevant skill sets if any commitment to the development of a green economy is to go beyond lofty pledges and promises.

Naturally, persons equipped with such skill sets can contribute to the further development of a variety of green sectors which, in turn, can help to foster a climate of sustainable economic development. I refer to green sectors such as solar, wind and wave energy generation, green building construction, ecotourism and coastal conservation.

Promoting green jobs and nurturing and sustaining this sector will be no simple short-term task. Indeed, detailed planning would be required first and foremost. For instance, the economic and developmental planners in our respective countries would be expected to liaise with green employers and other environmental experts, not only to formulate relevant policies at the national level but to determine which green sectors have the potential to generate the highest returns on investment. Once these sectors have been identified, an assessment would be made as to the skill sets that would be necessary to assist in their further development. Then, our planners would be encouraged to dialogue with our tertiary educational institutions to ascertain whether they have the capacity to train sufficient persons with the requisite skills. Where training gaps are identified, adequate resources would have to be appropriated to fill those gaps.

If such detailed activities can be implemented, I am confident that several benefits can be accrued from our investing in structured long-term environmental programmes. These benefits include the facilitation of new areas of economic activity and

jobs, financial savings from the purchase of less fossil fuels, and the protection of our natural resources. This is the reality for Barbados, a small island developing State with a small vulnerable economy, hard hit by the prolonged global recession, especially since our gross domestic product (GDP) and jobs primarily come from tourism. Though we have tried to control our unemployment rate over the last five years through a strong tripartite dialogue process, we have seen a steady rise in joblessness, now at unacceptably high levels. So we have embarked on our Human Resource Development Strategy and developed our National Employment Policy focusing on education and training in both traditional and green projects to provide jobs, develop our economy and protect our vulnerable environment.

In April 1994, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was held in Barbados to consider how small island States could address their special challenges. That Conference determined that sustainable development was the logical answer and adopted the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to help bring it about.

Now, 20 years later, the point must be emphasized. The creation of a green economy and green jobs must be seen and treated as crucial to sustainable development, especially for SIDS. Education and training in green sectors must be given priority within our national development plans and adequate funds allocated within our budgets to ensure that the green economy makes the maximum contribution possible to the development of our countries.

Original Portuguese: Mr DIAS (Government, Brazil)

As Minister for Labour and Employment in Brazil, it is an honour to congratulate the new ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, whose appointment is emblematic, particularly for workers and the world of work.

In the current economic and financial crisis, the developing nations are the mainsprings of global economic growth as they ensure employment and particularly the creation of new jobs, new employment and new sources of income. In this connection, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) member countries are seeking to make progress on the productive and social inclusion of their workers and to guarantee and expand their social and labour rights.

The leading role of Brazil in the implementation of public policies for the transfer of income and for reducing hunger and poverty encompasses 36 million Brazilians who have emerged from extreme poverty, 40 million Brazilians who moved into the middle class, and the creation of 4 million new formal jobs under the administration of Dilma Rousseff, and represents the redemption of unpaid historical social debts that had been contracted towards all Brazilian workers, particularly low-income families at risk economically and socially.

Through the joint efforts of our Government, the Ministry of Labour and other ministries, the National Congress, the trade union federations and representatives from their respective categories, together with organized civil society, Constitutional Amendment 72 was adopted, which extends to domestic workers the same rights that are afforded to other workers under the consolidated labour laws of

our country. This is now in the final phase of enactment.

In Brazil, the promotion of collective bargaining has enabled 95 per cent of the categories of private sector workers that participated in the negotiations to obtain real wage increases. At the same time, the recent enactment of a decree transposing the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), has occurred alongside the establishment of bargaining committees for the public sector.

Within the G20 framework, we are moving towards agreement on specific measures to promote an international economic environment which is fair, stable and geared to stimulating growth and creating decent jobs. But more still needs to be done. This involves launching our national policy for employment and decent jobs as a state policy forming part of the national Decent Work Agenda. Allow me to point out that our agenda is very much in tune with the three main topics of debate at this session of the Conference, namely the new demographic context, green jobs and social dialogue.

The 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games that Brazil will have the honour of hosting represent a unique challenge with regard to the promotion of decent work. Cooperation with the ILO is essential in terms of mutual partnerships and good practices.

At this juncture, we welcome the initiative by the Russian Federation to call the first Joint G20 Finance and Labour Ministers Meeting in Moscow next July. We reiterate our invitation to all Governments, Employers and Workers represented here to take part in the Third World Conference on Child Labour, due to be held in Brasilia from 8 to 10 October this year. Another source of great pride to us is the South-South and Triangular Cooperation agreements that benefit Brazil and the countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Finally, we would like to reaffirm our commitment to the setting up of new paradigms for decent work, green jobs and social dialogue, in compliance with regulatory frameworks and strategic guiding principles for sustainable development, as advocated by the ILO, in this relationship of partnership and reciprocity. We know that these are the prerequisites for preserving the future of our planet and improving the quality of life of its inhabitants, particularly those workers who historically have been disenfranchised and excluded.

Mr FARRUGIA (*Employer, Malta*)

I congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Guy Ryder, on his wide-ranging Report, which describes the salient forces currently transforming the world of work, against the backdrop of almost a century of global economic history in which the ILO has been a major protagonist and an agent of positive change. The Report rightly points to the phenomenon of the three-speed global recovery, in which many countries within the European Union (EU) are struggling with unprecedented levels of unemployment, youth unemployment in particular, and with economic stagnation compared to substantial growth in emerging and developing economies. I find that it is no coincidence that job recovery is weakest in those countries where creating jobs is much more difficult and complex than destroying them, due to over-regulated labour markets. While one can sympathize with the Director-General's statement that, when it comes to employment, the

“supposedly ‘atypical’ has become typical; and the ‘standard’ has become the exception”, it is also true that many enterprises find it problematic to operate in tightly regulated markets and that, regrettably, flexible and atypical work contracts are being confused with substandard employment. Recently, there has been mounting pressure by some unions in Malta to address what has been labelled as precarious employment. While employers have no issue with using the mechanisms in our social dialogue framework to curb any type of employee exploitation, we should all stop chasing ghosts and identify concrete and constructive actions which each party should take to arrive at a holistic solution. The Government has to allocate sufficient resources to enforce existing legislation. Introducing new laws, when there is already a solid legal framework to address the allegations made by unions, is counter-productive. In addition, the Government also carries the responsibility of setting a decent minimum hourly rate for the public procurement of labour-intensive services. The competitive downward spiral which has affected the working conditions of many employees in Malta, particularly in outsourced services, is a direct result of public procurement practices making cost the overriding criterion in the selection of service providers, to the exclusion of other relevant criteria.

On their part, unions are expected to respect the principles of freedom of association, which includes the right of employees to choose not to be represented, or to be represented by the union of their choice. Employers strongly oppose the notion of awarding government contracts only to unionized companies, as this is discriminatory against both companies and workers. Employers are being proactive on this issue, and they have proposed setting up a services charter, which can be governed by a tripartite committee, as a self-regulating instrument to ensure a level playing field between operators in these sectors, and to require them to conduct their business subject to defined ethical guidelines. This is a better option than imposing further market rigidities that impair the job-creating potential of the economy.

I appeal to the Government and the unions to use this as a test case whereby we can build mutual trust and work collectively to put into practice fundamental ILO concepts of social dialogue and sustainable enterprises. In spite of the resilience of the Maltese economy, with relatively low unemployment, a strong financial services sector and real GDP growth of 1.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2013 compared with a contraction of 1.1 per cent in the eurozone countries, we still face major challenges that are very much in line with the items on the agenda of this year's ILO Conference. The changing demographic context has both immediate and longer term implications in a nation with a low birth rate and an ageing population. The social partners have to design strategies that generate investment and higher value-added jobs, encouraging increased labour participation through active labour market policies, and safeguarding the sustainability of our welfare and pension systems. Some progress has been registered over recent years, as both the female participation rate and the number of retired persons in employment have been on the increase.

Sustainable development is a critical issue in a densely populated country which lacks natural resources. An orientation towards an environmentally

sound economy presents challenges which can, however, also help in transforming the economy by exploiting the prospects available in growing markets for environmental goods and services, and creating higher value-added green jobs. There has also been substantial investment in vocational education, which has been instrumental in matching skills generation to the requirements of industry.

The discussion on social dialogue in this year's Conference is also relevant to Malta, and our appeal to the newly-elected Government is to continue to support the social dialogue framework for a more wide-ranging involvement of the social partners in national issues, such as attaining sustainable public finances and reducing the rate of early school-leaving. None of us, governments, unions, not even employers, can afford to operate in isolation in the current volatile and unpredictable international economic and social environment. The reference to realities, renewal and tripartite commitment in the title of the Director-General's Report fits in very well with the Maltese context.

In conclusion, I find that the Oslo Declaration lays out the role of the social partners quite eloquently in stating that: "Fiscal consolidation, structural reform and competitiveness, on the one hand, and stimulus packages, investment in the real economy, quality jobs, increased credit for enterprises, on the other, should not be competing paradigms." Sceptics might argue that it is easier to express these principles on paper than to implement them, but there is no question that the best path to harmonizing the seemingly conflicting forces of fiscal consolidation and economic stimulus is that of commitment and consensus between the social partners.

*Original Spanish: Mr DIAZ ARRIVILLAGA
(Government, Honduras)*

The delegation of Honduras would like to congratulate the President on his election. We take this opportunity to thank the ILO for all the support and cooperation it has been providing to our country to help boost our national capacity to prevent and solve labour disputes, to comply with labour legislation, to strengthen our labour inspectorate and to ensure that our Ministry of Labour and Social Security becomes an effective forum for dialogue, mediation and conciliation.

Honduras fully agrees with the ideas expressed by the Director-General, to the effect that the mandate of the Organization and other instruments clearly and emphatically defines the Organization's commitment to continuing its fight for social justice as it faces the challenges of the new millennium.

We agree that the new demographic context in the world, technological change, developments in the world's economy, globalization, the effects of value chains in production and the outsourcing of production systems, as well as education and training, migration, social protection, poverty and growing inequalities, all have a very considerable impact on labour relations and the creation of decent jobs.

In these changing circumstances, social dialogue and tripartism – the ILO's model of governance – represent, as this Conference has made clear, the best ways of achieving the strategic goals of the ILO in the most effective and relevant way.

The economy and social structure of Honduras are going through major changes as we try to achieve inclusive and sustainable human development.

Achieving this objective is largely dependent on building a robust, competitive and job-creating economy, a process driven by social dialogue inspired by respecting and promoting human and employment rights, consolidating democracy, security for citizens and social cohesion, among other things.

Our Government has promoted a national "grand accord" which is based upon a social compact for the short, medium and long term between enterprise leaders, workers and farmers, in a context of growth with equity and aiming at sustainable development. Another important achievement has been the signing of two recent agreements on the minimum wage for a period of two years for workers in general, and for three years in the case of our *maquila* (export processing zone) industry. This has helped to bring about a stable situation in which wages can increase.

We agree with the Workers that collective bargaining is a crucial part of social dialogue, as indeed are respect for the freedom to organize and freedom of association. A rights-based approach to development is a *sine qua non* for inclusive sustainable development, and for decent work and social justice. As the Employers have quite rightly said, to have effective social dialogue it is necessary to recognize differences of opinion and differences in circumstances and in traditions, the nature of the social partners and the specific situations of enterprises. It is also necessary to respect the independence and autonomy of our social partners if they are to be able to discuss issues and act freely, without fear of interference or central direction. All this prompts us to recognize the key importance of constructive dialogue and that cooperation between the social partners, full recognition of the rights and duties of the parties, and appropriate supervision and monitoring, are all fundamental in achieving the best working standards and practices.

Compliance with the standards and principles of the ILO will be central in any process of self-regulation, and in codes of conduct and corporate social responsibility.

In line with these intentions, the Government of Honduras, through its Ministry of Labour, has clearly defined its vision and its institutional mission for the coming years, seeking to promote a culture of dialogue and prevention as the basis for developing labour relations.

We will continue to comply faithfully with our commitments under the mandate of the ILO and under its supervisory procedures. We welcome any initiative by the ILO that strengthens our national capacities, according to the principle that our own efforts should be complementary to external assistance. We shall, as stipulated in our Constitution and other laws, always guarantee freedom of association, the right to join trade unions, freedom of entrepreneurship and full respect for human rights and labour rights in Honduras. Those are the prerequisites for building a democracy in our society with the involvement of all citizens.

We also support the ongoing reform process in the ILO. As pointed out by Director-General Guy Ryder, quoting former Director-General David Morse: "The ILO can only be as effective an instrument for progress as its member States and its other constituents want it to be." This applies as much to the ILO as to the whole multilateral system.

Last, but not least, I would like to reiterate that our country needs the support of the ILO in order to strengthen its national institutions for social dialogue. Its support is also needed for our social partners, who are essential in bringing about just and humane labour relations, decent work, more growth and productivity, but, above all, a more equitable society and one with greater opportunities, especially for our young people.

Original Portuguese: Mr PATAH (Worker, Brazil)

I would like to convey my special greetings to the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, whom I had the honour of supporting together with the Brazilian workers for this important position at the ILO.

On behalf of the Brazilian workers, we wish to reiterate that the International Labour Conference is the appropriate forum for the promotion of essential social dialogue between all the parties concerned – governments, employers and workers. It is a question of working our way towards solutions in the face of the current economic and financial crisis. What is needed are policies and multilateral actions in order to assert the value of production and work over financial speculation and to ensure the proper functioning of the social protection network which was constructed through the immense efforts of everyone.

The crisis does not affect us all in the same manner. We know that the primary victims are the workers and the productive sectors. We will not accept any retrograde steps with regard to these hard-won achievements. We will not agree to the current crisis being used as an excuse to undermine workers' rights in order to solve the problems of those who created the crisis.

The present time calls for alternatives which enhance the value of production, decent work, the social protection network, quality of life and the transition towards a sustainable economy with green and decent jobs.

Governments and multilateral institutions must therefore jettison the “one-size-fits-all” approach that they have been using to manage the current crisis, with austerity measures that impact the general public and the real economy. The result of this approach has been a deepening recession, increasing unemployment, falling income, less consumption, less production, less investment and growing social despair.

The creators of the crisis, particularly in the financial sector, are theoretically devastated but in political terms they are completely unfazed, mercilessly raiding the public coffers to rescue their finances. The result of this rapacious action is a “minimum State” for the majority of people and a “maximum State” for a privileged minority. This explains why vast quantities of money placed in the major financial institutions do not revive crisis-stricken economies or become credit for producers and consumers, and why economies and employment remain stagnated with some 27 million unemployed in the EU and 19 million in the eurozone alone.

Finding a way out of the crisis calls for a set of measures that will stimulate investment in infrastructure and financing for production and strategic social spheres, such as education, vocational training, health, basic sanitation and income distribution.

We would therefore like to make a number of proposals.

First, regarding a global conference for production and employment, we propose setting up, under the aegis of the UN, a global conference for production and employment aimed at harmonizing international monetary and financial flows with the production and employment needs of all countries. It would be a sort of Bretton Woods Agreement for production and employment.

Second, regarding the regulation of financial capital and the creation of the Tobin tax, workers, governments, productive business sectors and the global banking system should promote the regulation of international financial capital by channelling public and private savings towards productive investment. We are in favour of the Tobin tax, an international tax levied on financial transactions to ensure international monetary stability.

Third, regarding programmes to support decent work and global sustainable development, States that receive financial support from multilateral institutions should be obliged to adopt a national Decent Work Agenda on the basis of ILO principles to eliminate distortions in international economic exchanges.

It has not escaped our attention that there have been blatant attempts in certain quarters to undermine the historic tripartite system of the ILO, by seeking gaps in the text of documents adopted by the Organization and the interpretation thereof with a view to undermining the representative strength of the sole legitimate representatives of the workers regarding labour issues. We reject the label of “social partners” when it is a matter of dealing with labour issues. We are trade union organizations and it is our prerogative to represent millions of workers globally, both here and in national forums for the negotiation of labour policy.

In conclusion, I reiterate our view that we will not escape from the trap in which the world is ensnared by sacrificing the working class.

Mr BRIDGES (Minister of Labour, New Zealand)

Tēnā koutou! Tēnā koutou katoa! Greetings to you, greetings to you all. I am very pleased to address this plenary session on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

Sustainable development, employment, social protection and social dialogue are all central to this Conference's objective of “Building a future with decent work”. New Zealand shares this objective. Building a brighter future by growing a productive economy that delivers sustainable growth and employment is a key priority for our Government.

We are doing so in part by making measured adjustments to our employment relations system aimed at giving employers and employees more certainty, fairness and flexibility. This is important for increasing productivity and encouraging businesses to grow and create jobs.

We have steadily increased the adult minimum wage to ensure a robust wage floor that balances employee welfare against the need to protect jobs. We have also introduced a starting-out wage designed to promote the employment of young, inexperienced workers.

Proposed amendments to our employment relations framework are outlined in the Employment Relations Amendment Bill that is currently before our Parliament. Under the Bill, the right to seek flexible working arrangements will be extended to all employees.

The changes proposed in this Bill also seek to make improvements so as to increase choice, flexibility and effectiveness in collective bargaining. These include removing barriers to costly and protracted negotiations where agreement is clearly never going to be reached, while retaining the obligation for parties to bargain in good faith.

We also propose a better balance in cases of strikes or lockouts by requiring advance notice and allowing partial pay reductions in cases of partial strike action. The Bill also proposes changes so that employers in specific industries have greater certainty in restructuring situations involving the transfer of employees. Our employment dispute resolution system will be improved under this proposed legislation so that decisions are delivered more speedily.

The legislation is at the early stages, and I have made it clear that I will carefully listen to, and consider submissions from, the public and stakeholders.

Decent work also hinges on safe workplaces. People have the right to know that when they leave for work in the morning, they will be coming home safe and well in the evening. This is why we are in the process of making substantial changes to improve our culture, practice and enforcement of workplace health and safety. This is a high priority for my Government and a major focus for me personally as New Zealand's Minister of Labour.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry and an Independent Task Force were established in the wake of the 2010 Pike River Coalmine tragedy which killed 29 workers on the west coast of New Zealand.

The Royal Commission identified issues and areas for reform in the mining sector, which we have committed ourselves to implement by the end of this year. Among its recommendations, a new stand-alone health and safety agency will be in place in December, with a dedicated focus on delivering better health and safety outcomes. It will ensure that front-line health and safety services are delivered quickly, actively, consistently and effectively.

In addition, the government-appointed Independent Task Force carried out the first major review of New Zealand's workplace health and safety system in 20 years. It recommended a package of measures to meet our goal of reducing fatalities and serious injuries by at least 25 per cent by 2020. I am currently considering these important recommendations and will make public announcements on the way forward later this year.

All these initiatives are being carried out in difficult and challenging times, but we have not made change for change's sake; rather we have implemented measures that support fairness and flexibility, promoting the conditions for business and growth and decent work to flourish.

Kia ora. E noho rā! Thank you. Goodbye!

Mr ZARB (*Worker, Malta*)

The theme of this year's session of the Conference speaks loudly of building a future with decent work. This subject has never been as central as now, when we are seeing decent work being replaced by employment of a precarious nature. I therefore want to congratulate the Director-General not only for his good work in directing this unique International Labour Organization, but also for putting in our minds the challenge to make decent work our main concern in the years to come.

At a time when we are witnesses to the widening of social and economic disparities, building a future with decent work is not too easy to achieve, especially since the negative effects of the global, economic and financial crisis that caught the world by surprise in late 2008 are still being felt in many countries with different economic and social structures.

These last few years, various national governments have had to accept the imposition of harsh economic measures as a reaction to the crisis, hoping that they will recover from their economic ills, and also to balance the impact that the global crisis has had on their economic and financial systems. However, such measures of authority have not improved the situation but, on the contrary, have been the key elements in creating more difficulties for the working population and for society as a whole, making poverty even more widespread.

In my country, Malta, we fortunately have a very strong banking system and therefore we did not experience any sort of austerity measures imposed on us from outside.

However, we have seen a sharp decline in working conditions, not least workplace exploitation, so much so that today much of the employment on offer – mostly in the cleaning, caring and security sectors – is of a precarious nature. Workers in these sectors have little chance to join a union or to bargain collectively. This is as unjust as it is immoral.

The rise of indecent work has presented the General Workers' Union with a major test, with the result that our union was encouraged not to shy away but rather to be the first organization to warn about the dangers of precarious employment. As such, the General Workers' Union embarked upon a campaign to name and shame employers that are offering indecent work. This campaign proved to be successful as workers are putting away their fears and are now coming forward to report cases of indecent working conditions.

Being trade unionists, we are never going to stop directly confronting all forms of indecent employment. We have made it our mission to continue in this struggle until workers' exploitation becomes a thing of the past.

It is our responsibility to act against indecent employment. Furthermore, it is our duty to continue campaigning until all jobs are decent and worth having.

In this frame of mind we welcome the theme of this year's International Labour Conference, "Building a future with decent work" – and we pledge our full support to the ILO in its global struggle for decent work worldwide. It is with the same feeling that we urge our newly elected Labour Government in Malta to continue being a protagonist in the fight against indecent employment.

The General Workers' Union is hopeful that the future will be a better one for the world of work, and we feel equally convinced that through the hard labour of the ILO the core labour standards will continue to gather wider respect throughout the world. It will only be then that we will truly be able to say that work gives dignity to the workers and that work really provides a decent living for all.

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 at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference the greetings of the ISSA and its membership of 336 government departments and social security institutions from 158 countries.

This session of the International Labour Conference is an important turning point in the history of the ILO. Based on the in-depth and comprehensive analysis contained in his Report to the Conference, the ILO Director-General has outlined an ambitious reform agenda.

The ISSA welcomes this reform initiative and congratulates the Director-General on his plans and on the steps already taken. Change and renewal are no doubt important as the world is undergoing deep transformations. Demographic change, growing inequalities, the evolving character of work and employment and many other challenges require an adequate response. At the same time, rapid development in some countries of the world creates new dynamics, resources and opportunities.

In this context, a strong ILO is needed that provides responses and guides governments, the social partners and societies worldwide, based on a coherent and evidence-based policy framework.

As it approaches its second century, and while approaches and structures evolve, the mandate of the ILO and its commitment to social justice, to improving conditions for the most vulnerable, to ensuring decent work, social cohesion and prosperity, not only remain indispensable but are perhaps more relevant than ever. The Director-General has defined a number of critical priority areas to implement this commitment in practice in the coming years.

The worldwide ISSA membership is particularly pleased by the importance that the ILO leadership hereby attaches to social security, as the creation and extension of social protection floors constitutes one of these critical priority areas. Significantly, by adopting the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), at its last gathering in 2012, the Conference has put in place the necessary policy framework. The task before the ISSA now is to promote the implementation of this Recommendation and to work towards the practical dimensions of better protecting populations.

Political will is essential; however, effectively extending protection requires well-governed and high-performing institutions that efficiently administer the various benefit schemes in often challenging environments. Building the capacity of these institutions has been the mandate of the ISSA since its creation under the auspices of the ILO in 1927.

Accompanying the renewed focus of the ILO on social protection, I am pleased to report that we are substantially upgrading our support for member institutions through an innovative Centre for Excellence in social security administration, which promotes capacity in key areas of administration, ranging from good governance to information and communications technology and service quality.

The Centre will strengthen the ISSA's abilities to successfully implement the historic Memorandum of Understanding between the ISSA and the ILO concluded in 2012, which will considerably improve the impact and benefits of the ISSA's and the ILO's activities for our respective constituents.

In this regard, let me express our gratitude and satisfaction as regards the strong commitment of the Director-General to the implementation of this

Memorandum of Understanding, expressed through the explicit inclusion of the call for strengthened collaboration with the ISSA as part of the programme and budget proposals of the ILO.

We will soon have an important opportunity to prepare our strategy and discuss the next steps in the long-standing ILO and ISSA collaboration at the ISSA World Social Security Forum that will take place from 10 to 15 November 2013 in Doha, Qatar.

This most important global event for social security policy-makers and administrators, which brings together more than 1,000 participants, will be a milestone allowing us to define concrete actions to implement our common objectives.

The ISSA is at the side of the ILO and its leadership to support the reform agenda and to help ensure that the ILO fully exploits its great potential to make this world, which is undergoing major transformations and becoming ever more complex, a more just and peaceful place.

Original Spanish: Mr NAVARRO (Worker, Cuba)

When we consider the goals which have brought us together here in this Conference to discuss important issues in the world of work, a world in which we as workers are trying to build a better future with social justice, we see that unfortunately, for millions of workers and their families worldwide, this aspiration is becoming an increasingly distant dream and the nightmares increasingly frequent.

So the problems facing the ILO, especially the trade union movement, are vast and increasing. You only have to look at the international social and labour indicators for the past decade to understand that the model which has been propagated by the world's superpowers is in deep crisis, a multifaceted crisis which is global in scale. Even now, they are reaching for neoliberal formulas to help us get out of it, the same formulas that in the past led to poverty and the destruction of the social fabric in much of the world, resulting in the gradual abandonment of the so-called welfare state and of the political principles that used to be taken for granted. Even now, we see constant attacks on social protection; a steady increase in unemployment, particularly among young people; rising levels of poverty, destitution, discrimination against women; harmful climate change; and very worrying levels of inequality among social classes. All this is indicative of deepening contradictions between capital and labour.

We need to be realistic. If, in this House, we admit that in the present international situation there are questions that even the ILO cannot adequately deal with, then obvious changes are required, and it is enough to take a look, with sufficient political will, at what is happening in Latin America. In Latin America, although there are still socio-economic and labour-related problems, we are also making progress in a new era of change and economic growth, with a better distribution of wealth, considerable social progress, the recovery of our sovereignty and, thereby, the dignity of our peoples. This is a time of political change, with a political alternative of an anti-capitalist kind, grass-roots initiatives and experiments in state integration which defend, above all, the sovereignty of our peoples against the voracious greed of the superpowers. Our focus must therefore be on advancing in building alternatives which will bring us self-sufficiency in food, energy and finance, protect the environment

from climate change, and give primacy to peace instead of militarization and state terrorism.

These are the central parts of our struggle. This means that the trade union movement has a great responsibility. It has to face the challenge and the duty of extending the mobilization and awareness of the working masses to fight shoulder to shoulder with other progressive forces for two interlinked objectives: defeating the neoliberal reaction and driving transformative action. By concentrating its energies in this sense, the trade union movement will be able to overcome its difficulties, regain strength, expand its capacity for mobilization and make a decisive contribution to affirming the values of labour, while elevating the role of the working class in the political destiny of the Latin American nations.

This is not just an institutional challenge, it is a challenge for the trade union movement as well, because the working class, which has to fight the offensives of capitalism, is fragmented, divided and vulnerable to siege from capitalist enterprises by various means, most of the time working hand in hand with the forces which promote cooperation and conciliation between classes. This is a serious difficulty which the trade union movement has to confront, and the only means of turning the situation around is through the unity of all who have the will to fight for our peoples.

In Cuba, in spite of being subjected to a blockade for over half a century, added to the natural disasters which affect us and the impact of the worldwide crisis, workers nonetheless enjoy political, employment, cultural and social rights which, in an unstable world like today's, are a real privilege. They have the full enjoyment and protection of universal social security, which covers all workers in the state and non-state sectors without distinction. We therefore have no informal economy, but we do have universal and free health and education provision. We have collective bargaining enshrined in law, by prior discussion and agreement among all the workers, so there is ongoing social dialogue in which workers play the main role, because they are the real owners of the means of production. One example is the present Social Security Law, which was discussed with the workers, and also the new Labour Code, soon to be submitted for consultation to all Cuban workers before it is brought before our Parliament. That is another example of the participatory democracy which is a feature of our society.

Mr USAMATE (*Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Fiji*)

The multiple and complex global crisis facing us makes decent work for all most challenging. Despite our collective efforts, increasing social inequalities exist everywhere, with serious difficulties in many advanced economies.

The Fijian Government welcomes the Director-General's initiative in his Report to reform the way the ILO delivers its services. We look forward to a clear, transparent and inclusive social dialogue in this vital exercise. We anticipate quality initiatives, actioned soon to effectively address the challenges raised by constituent members.

The ILO and the tripartite constituents need innovative ways of addressing the increasing social inequalities. These challenges demand shifts in our values and attitudes to create a new good-faith social order, where the new economy is characterized

by peace building and significant employment growth, with a much better distribution of wealth and power globally, regionally and within nations. The ILO must reform and reposition itself regionally to re-engineer these shifts in basic paradigms. The developed nations and their multinational enterprises can play very significant roles here, as they control trade and markets across borders.

These challenges demand effective responses, and the Fijian Government is looking forward to the recommendations for addressing some of these realities that are expected from the three committees on the new demographic context, social development and social dialogue.

The Pacific Island States collectively have a very small land mass and population, but from the viewpoint of the environment and sustainable development, the Pacific comprises one third of the globe, owing to its vast oceans and marine resources. However, when it comes to the allocation of ILO resources, the Pacific Islands are among the most neglected Members in terms of funding, technical services and quality of services rendered.

The Fijian Government believes that the ILO needs to urgently reform its governance system in terms of its policies, standards, structures, institutional networking, core services and standard operating procedures. For example, the ILO needs to cost-effectively devolve its core services from its Geneva headquarters to strengthen its regional and subregional field offices. This would enable the ILO to quickly respond to, and effectively address, constituents' needs.

The current impasse on the Committee of Experts' role must be quickly resolved to restore confidence in the ILO oversight system. The Fijian Government calls for good governance in the workings of the ILO supervisory mechanism. The system should have very clear, objective criteria for the determination of a final list of countries to be examined annually, which must be devoid of distorted political machinations by any constituent.

Further, the ILO reform should include fair representation for non-unionized workers in its tripartite constituents. In Fiji, workers who are unionized comprise only 20 per cent of those in paid employment. This minority representation for unionized workers is similar to other countries around the world. Therefore, for the ILO to remain relevant, it should hear the majority voices of non-unionized workers who are not represented here in this world parliament of labour.

A large number of ILO Conventions are outdated and need urgent reform. New technical Conventions dealing with enterprise co-regulation or self-regulation, productivity, leadership and the quality management of work need to be promulgated in order to help transform workplaces and translate workers' rights into productive rights under a progressive governance framework. These new Conventions, if innovatively designed, can help rebalance and transform workplace cultures to effectively address the widening social inequalities.

The Fijian Government is actively addressing these global challenges in Fiji by undertaking a comprehensive labour market reform, through the total overhaul and modernizing of all our labour market policies, laws, institutions, values and standard operating procedures, as well as skills training for workers in the areas of employment relations, wages, employment, occupational health and safety,

productivity and workers' compensation. The tripartite social dialogue on these reforms, under the Ministry of Labour, has been very successful and, to date, the Fijian Government has successfully completed labour reforms covering five of the six components, namely occupational health and safety, employment relations, productivity, wages and employment.

We are now finalizing our national survey to determine Fiji's first national minimum wage, and we are also reforming our workers' compensation scheme to provide better social security benefits with speedier payments. Our draft law for this new social insurance no-fault scheme is completed and will be discussed by the tripartite partners later this year. Since last year, we have continued our social dialogue, discussing amendments to our overarching modern law on employment relations, enacted in 2008, to make it more effective and to address the concerns raised by the Committee of Experts. This exercise will be completed this year.

Our modern Constitution will, for the first time, guarantee universally-acceptable principles of a secular State: common and equal citizenship, with one person one vote, an independent judiciary, the removal of all forms of discrimination, and the eradication of systemic corruption.

The social protection provisions under Fiji's labour reforms are designed to be compatible with the ILO Recommendation No. 202, adopted by the Conference last year. As a result, Fiji is considering ratifying an additional ten ILO Conventions on social protection in the next 12 months.

Fiji has significantly invested in social protection for its workers, retirees, unemployed youth, women, vulnerable children and families, under its budget provisions over the last four years, in response to the global financial and economic crisis. For the unemployed, the Government has successfully established a National Employment Centre as a one-stop public employment agency since 2009.

Fiji remains firmly committed to promoting and safeguarding the rights of all workers and employers in Fiji. In this regard, the Fijian Prime Minister, last month, conveyed to the ILO Director-General the message that in light of the anticipated promulgation of the new Constitution, the need for further harmonization of our numerous laws following the promulgation and the fact that the country is in transition pending elections to the Parliament, the Fijian Government would welcome a visit by an ILO direct contacts mission in December 2013.

Ms DEL RIO (Worker, Italy)

I speak on behalf of the three Italian confederations: the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), the Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions (CISL) and the Italian Labour Union (UIL).

I thank the Director-General for his concise Report, which indicates a set of concrete initiatives to work on in the next months. I will address here just some of the issues that are of crucial importance for us.

Coming from an industrialized country, I do not share the opinion of many that the ILO has to work primarily for developing countries in order to improve working and living standards. Of course the priority role of the ILO is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable in the world of work, but we strongly believe that the ILO should be regarded by all member countries as the body to stabilize stan-

dards with equal and fair competitive conditions which can foster democratic stability too.

The Director-General asks in his Report which are the components of permanent structural change in the global economy. The social pillars and fundamental elements of a fair and sustainable growth are strong social dialogue structures, strong collective bargaining, dynamic labour markets and comprehensive public policies to support them. What we see instead, because of the crisis, is a growing shift towards privatization of welfare systems, of education and health services, and a stronger push towards deregulation of the labour market with less security and stability for workers.

Well-structured and comprehensive collective bargaining is essential to ensure that new economic and employment policies have a positive impact. It is the best tool to fight growing income inequalities and the weakening of the social fabric in many countries.

The Director-General's Report rightly underlines which are the red lines around the efforts to improve competitiveness. The discussion on Greece and Spain in the Committee on the Application of Standards, for example, clearly addressed these red lines.

The ILO has a fundamental role to gain and play in a coherent approach with international institutions, but the ILO is a unique tripartite organization and should also defend its autonomy. The Decent Work Agenda has to be part of the measures for recovery, and the ILO should be recognized as the sole organization to evaluate the impact of trade, economic and financial policies and reforms on employment. We agree that there is a need to address the relationship between wages and productivity, which is a mix of policies that cannot be limited to wage dynamics and wage-setting mechanisms.

The Director-General's Report refers to the need for the ILO to be more active in the area of corporate social responsibility. The Italian trade unions consider the experience of the Global Compact weak and misleading, because it lacks a real, concrete supervisory mechanism.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights constitute a new and more comprehensive instrument, which, however, if not fully and duly implemented, risks in some countries being in conflict with other instruments such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

The ILO has its own instrument, the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration). The recent agreement on the promotion of the MNE Declaration should not be an alternative to other instruments, but should be seen as a complementary tool which needs to be strengthened. It is an avenue for enterprises that want to put ILO principles into practice. The ILO has to support this process. The tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza building shows that the ILO initiative is crucial to prevent such events from happening at all, not just after they have happened. There is a need to put in place mechanisms to control the supply chain and to ensure respect for fundamental labour rights and health and safety at work.

We need to address different problems regarding the supply chain, juridical responsibilities, the implementation of the due diligence principle, social audit measures and workplace certification. In short,

we in the ILO need to discuss guidance and regulations.

We agree that the ILO has to work better with those enterprises that are willing to engage, but we are particularly concerned when multinationals directly address the ILO without first respecting the need to involve the national representative workers' and employers' organizations. The Italian unions make a strong appeal to the various ILO bodies at the regional and national levels also to consult and involve national organizations before setting up any kind of initiative with national enterprises.

Let me make a final comment, among many others. The Director-General in his Report does not make any strong reference to the need to strengthen the capacity building of constituents. The Turin Centre has a key mandate to this end. It brings together social partners and governments in this tripartite effort, but the training activity of the Centre has to find a cross-cutting place in the ILO's programmes. We cannot expect capacity-building programmes to be financed by the market: they are not market driven; they have to be supported by a new fund-raising strategy of the Centre, together with the ILO. We hope that the new role of the Centre, as part of the Global Management Team, together with its stronger link with the Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV) and the regions, is a positive step towards the recognition of the fundamental role of training in the policy-making of this Organization.

The Director-General has presented an ambitious programme and we are ready to work on it in the coming months with a positive and constructive commitment.

Original German: Ms DEMBSHER (Government, Austria)

Austria thanks the Director-General for his appeal to strengthen the tireless efforts of the ILO for greater social justice. We also thank him for his proposals to give the Organization the tools to fulfil its tasks effectively, in a world of work which is changing evermore quickly. We also value the frankness with which the Report addresses conflicts within the Organization that have to be solved unless we want our Organization to be sidelined.

Tripartite social dialogue can be a difficult path. Even if it is sometimes unpleasant, we have to face up to the realities and talk about them. The will to find a common path is important, and we must not give this up. The assertion in paragraph 146 of the Report is correct, that if the ILO is to remain faithful to its objectives of social justice, it must give priority to the situation of those who are most disadvantaged in the world of work. The core of the ILO's mandate is to improve working and living conditions in order not to endanger global peace.

Austria welcomes the ILO's timely focus on its centenary. However, from an Austrian point of view the proposed centenary initiatives have a rather different time frame. Some of them, such as the governance initiative and the standards initiative, should be more or less complete by the time of the jubilee. The standards system is a central pillar of the ILO, and Austria supports measures to strengthen it. Concerning the standards review mechanism mentioned in the Report, this is a matter of reviewing the ILO's collection of standards, which raises some hotly disputed questions: What goal are we aiming for? Which standards should be tackled, and how? In this regard, it is important to

have a clear, transparent and consensual process, but one which does not call into question the core Conventions or their achievements. The same applies to the governance or priority Conventions. Priority should be given to completing the work of the Cartier Working Party.

Concerning the enterprises initiative, Austria's hope is that a platform for direct cooperation between the ILO and enterprises will be established very soon. The ILO should be able to address multinational companies directly and, in general, to advise enterprises, at their request, on the application of ILO standards. This could be a job for the newly created Enterprises Department.

Concerning the green initiative, we must be aware that green jobs are not automatically clean and decent jobs. It is the task of the ILO to ensure that they are. The end to poverty initiative is an essential concern, and Austria welcomes the commitment of the Director-General to this. In 1995, the World Summit for Social Development called for a living wage. This demand is more important today than ever before, and this is why, in collective wage bargaining, the autonomy of the bipartite social partners must be respected.

The contribution of the ILO to the post-2015 development agenda is crucial. The position of women in employment has become a strong focus of attention. The emphasis should be on proactively promoting women's employment and supporting women.

Finally, Austria supports the setting up of an advisory panel on the future of work. Here the focus should be on the current precarization of work and how it can be resisted. The future of work and how we can join forces to make it decent work is an outstanding topic for 2019.

Austria wishes the Director-General and the ILO every success on the way to this centenary. An ILO which stays up to date and offers solutions to protect workers in the increasingly complicated world of work is, and remains, indispensable.

Ms PAVANELLI (Representative, Public Services International)

It is my honour to address the assembly on behalf of Public Services International (PSI), the Global Union federation representing 20 million public sector workers in 150 countries.

PSI welcomes the ILO reform that was initiated several months ago, which we hope will contribute to a stronger and more dynamic ILO. However, within the ILO, governments are rarely considered as employers. Our major employers, including both local government and national entities, are largely absent from the ILO's structures.

We therefore welcome the discussion of collective bargaining in the public sector for the first time in more than 30 years. We wish to see the challenges identified in the ILO's General Survey on collective bargaining in public services at the forefront of the ILO's activities in coming years. The Director-General's Report listed the challenges facing the ILO, but it should also have addressed the role of public services.

The Director-General's Report states that the world has been transformed. Indeed it has. In 2013, public services in many countries are the target of austerity policies. As a result, 50 per cent of public sector workers are now in precarious employment and public service cuts are swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

Anti-union tactics are being used to impose a new model of reduced workers' rights, which threatens an independent public service that underpins inclusive, transparent and democratic societies. This situation is compounded by a de facto privatization of public services which leads to higher prices, less investment in infrastructure and poorer working conditions. It is on the basis of our extensive experience that we affirm that it is now time to abandon the myth that private services are more efficient than public services.

The challenges of climate change and the need for a green economy cannot be met without investment in public goods, including strong public utilities and public-public partnerships. We need governments bold enough to lead the change. We need a strong Plan B and we need it now.

We need and demand serious social protection. We applaud the ILO initiative on the social protection floor, and we would emphasize that public services are essential for achieving the social protection floor agenda. Only public services can ensure that social protection floors are implemented on the basis of principles of universality, accessibility, affordability and quality.

It is not by reducing workers' rights that we will overcome the current crisis. We strongly refute the suggestion that limitations to collective bargaining are acceptable in any circumstances.

We recognize the need to regulate essential services to protect users and communities, but we reaffirm the right to strike as a fundamental collective right and a matter of democracy for all public and private workers.

The role of public services in monitoring labour conditions in all sectors of the economy is pivotal. Tax departments and finance control bodies are crucial to fight corruption and unfair competition and to ensure tax justice. This is why we demand that the ILO address the protection, autonomy and independence of public finance control workers through the creation of an ILO standard on the subject.

We request an ILO global action programme to strengthen freedom of association in the public sector and to promote the ratification and effective implementation of Convention No. 151 and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154).

PSI has been contributing to social justice for the last 106 years. This is why we would like to contribute to the ILO centenary initiatives by submitting an eighth idea underscoring the important role of quality public services for economic recovery, youth employment, gender equity and social justice.

Mr COTTON (*Representative, International Transport Workers' Federation*)

It is my real pleasure to be before you this afternoon to speak at the ILO, and I would like to congratulate the President, on behalf of all the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) members, on his successful election. We would also like to welcome the thought-provoking Report of the Director-General.

We have three core issues we would like to address today. First, ILO successes in assisting maritime workers; second, work in progress that continues to require considerable support; and third, the global supply chain.

First, ILO successes in assisting maritime workers. Regarding shipping, on 20 August this year, a new Convention, the Maritime Labour Convention,

2006 (MLC, 2006), will come into force after years of hard work by governments, employers and unions. This Convention is recognized as the fourth pillar of the global maritime regulatory regime. In particular, the pioneering work that the ILO has done to ensure that the MLC, 2006, will come into force is a significant achievement.

In addition, we have the Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Recommendation, 1996 (No. 185), which aids seafarers in securing shore leave, a vital lifeline to keep in touch with their loved ones at home while spending months at sea. This instrument was adopted in a single reading, proving that the ILO can respond expeditiously to the needs of the international community when the partners are determined to succeed.

Regarding fisheries, we come to the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), another significant ILO Convention which seeks to bring protection and minimum standards to fishery workers. We in the ITF would like to see more governments investing in the ratification of this Convention, as we believe that – similarly to the MLC, 2006, which will provide protection for 1.2 million seafarers – Convention No. 188 could help over 40 million workers in this sector.

It is significant that these three instruments cover groups of workers who face unique challenges owing to the nature of their profession.

Second, work in progress that continues to need support. In particular, the civil aviation industry is now facing the same issue of deregulation and flagging out as the maritime industry has over the last 60 years. We should look at how we can find decent solutions to protect workers. For example, we must ensure that governments do not take steps to ban industrial action. In Turkey, we have 305 aviation workers sacked for their trade union activities – this is unacceptable and we need a global response to this issue.

Container safety is another area which brings together shipping, ports, rail and road, and we need a wider participation by the global employers in this sector.

My third and final point is the global supply chain. When we talk about the global supply chain it is straightforward for people to understand the concept of workers in factories in developing nations making clothes for international corporations to sell to consumers in the developed world at inflated prices. We should do all that we can to protect those workers who are not protected by national laws and collective bargaining agreements.

However, we should not forget the transport workers who form a vital part of this supply chain – the truck drivers and train workers who transport the clothes to the docks; the dockers who load and unload the clothes; and then the seafarers who move them across the oceans from continent to continent.

We are here to advocate transport workers' full participation in protecting all workers in every element of the supply chain. The ITF is ready with its partners from the other Global Union federations and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to work together to use all of our collective leverage to build strong social protection and decent work and living conditions across the supply chain.

It is time for the fight against the neoliberal agenda to step up a gear. As we review the recent events in Greece, Spain, Turkey and Brazil, this tells us in the trade union movement that the work-

ers need unions both politically and industrially, and we have a big responsibility.

The next few years are vital for all ILO constituents. We have to adapt to meet the needs of people, of workers around the changing world, and we in the ITF are ready to accept that challenge.

Original Spanish: Mr URRUTIKOETXEA (Representative, Trade Union International of Metal-Mining)

On behalf of the more than 60 organizations that are affiliated to the Trade Union International of Metal-Mining (TUI-M), I would like to say something about the situation in our sector today.

Because of the worldwide capitalist crisis, there has for some years now been a large number of dismissals in the metal-mining sector, particularly in Europe and North America. Across the world, it is estimated that more than 1.8 million workers have lost their jobs in the metal industry and 1.2 million in mining.

It is we, the workers, who are expected to bear the brunt of the capitalist crisis, and organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in connivance with many governments and with practically all the transnational companies, are imposing wage cuts and an insufferable pace of work.

In the last three years in the EU, for example, we have seen a 15 per cent drop in wages in the metal industry, while people are working about 1.3 hours more a week than before. Transnational enterprises have used subcontracting and outsourcing to cut back wages, which has led to the closure of plants in continents such as Europe and their transfer to countries where labour is much cheaper. This is happening not just with companies that are making a loss or going through a bad patch but with companies that are making a profit.

What goes by the name of social dialogue is often a dead letter because of all the attacks on workers' rights. Every day we see the conditions laid down in collective agreements being violated, not just in other continents such as in Africa and Asia but in continents like Europe where it never used to happen in the past.

The time has come to blow the whistle on occupational safety, too. Every year there are around 1.5 million accidents in our sector, some of them light, others serious, some of them even fatalities. Every year about 2,000 workers are killed in the mining sector, with similar casualty rates in the metal industry, amounting to an average of about three workers a day. In a nutshell, we are being made to pay for the capitalist crisis.

We also have to denounce the health situation. A lot of occupational diseases are not recognized, and we want the ILO to do everything it can to have the diseases suffered by coalminers recognized as such, and covered by legislation in every country (such as Bolivia, Chile and Peru) where occupational diseases need to be controlled.

In these times of crisis, when the situation is so fraught, I believe we have to fight. There are many examples of workers fighting courageously in Brazil, Greece, Portugal, South Africa, and in my own homeland, the Basque country, where this very week the metal-industry workers were on strike to defend our collective agreements because the Spanish Government wants to get rid of provincial sectoral agreements in metal mining, a legislative reform that would make our working conditions worse than ever. They want to terminate those agreements as of 7 July and that is why we are on strike this week and why we have been on strike in previous weeks too.

The situation is such that we have to act quickly, and for that we need the political will to do so. And we are only going to get that political will if there is a change of society. This list of demands of ours should go hand in hand with the mobilization of workers throughout the world, which is why the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) is asking the class trade union movement to mobilize on 3 October, which will be a great day for all metal-mining workers.

On behalf of the TUI-M, which is affiliated to the WFTU, we call on the ILO not to marginalize any trade union organization and to treat the WFTU in the same way as it treats other international trade union organizations, out of respect for the ILO's own fundamental principles.

To conclude, we denounce the criminalization of trade unionism as an important and coherent movement. We have two examples in Colombia, which – believe it or not – will once again escape being condemned this year, despite the kind of repression that we see in other countries too (Paraguay, Guatemala, Asian countries, even European countries) along with the imprisonment of workers for taking part in picket lines and the imprisonment of union members such as the former Secretary-General of the Patriotic Workers' Council (LAB), Rafa Diez. We want to end by paying tribute to these fighters. If we do not fight, the situation for workers will become even worse, and we believe that it is in forums such as this that the struggles of workers have to be recognized.

(The Conference adjourned at 4.55 p.m.)

Fifteenth sitting

Wednesday, 19 June, 11.05 a.m.

Presidents: Mr Katamine and Mr Rahman

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

Mr KELLIER (*Minister of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica*)

On behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, I wish to congratulate His Excellency Nidal Katamine of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on his election as President of the International Labour Conference and on his distinguished career. I feel particularly proud of him as a fellow Minister of Labour, a post which both he and I assumed in 2012. The President of this session of the International Labour Conference, along with his Officers, the Employers' and Workers' groups, have set a path in keeping with the Conference theme "Building a future with decent work". Allow me also to congratulate the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, on his first Conference since being elected to the position.

The agenda items, both recurrent and new, all support this year's theme of building a future with decent work. We are sure that with the current leadership, this Conference will continue to be a successful one. We know that tripartism, which is at the heart of the ILO and the Decent Work Agenda, resonates with the culture of Jamaica. Our well-defined industrial relations system, cemented by ubiquitous labour laws, is affected by the natural rhythm of Jamaican workers, employers and the Government. Indeed, the avenue of social dialogue was an antecedent to Jamaica's recent agreement with the International Monetary Fund. We, in Jamaica, recognize that our population has been ageing for the past 20 years. Jamaica is, in fact, at an intermediate stage of demographic transition and is classified as having a moderately ageing population. The dependent elderly age group is the fastest growing segment of the population and our median age has increased from 24 to 27 over a ten-year period. This poses serious demographic and socio-economic challenges for Jamaica. We have embraced the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and we are currently in the process of developing a comprehensive social protection strategy. This move will lend greater cohesion as we seek to address the needs of the Jamaican people. Labour market reform, which we will embark on shortly, is a reflection of our commitment, as labour productivity, gender-sensitive frameworks, an intergenerational workforce and child labour are areas of concern. We are also mindful of

the high-level of unemployment among our youth. Consequently, we are currently designing, with the assistance of the ILO, a youth employment strategy focusing on rural infrastructure development. As a Small Island Developing State, addressing the issues of sustainable development, climate change and green jobs is important in building a future with decent work. To this end, Jamaica has placed particular emphasis on climate change through the assignment of ministerial portfolio responsibility. We believe that our task is to create the framework for sustainable development and remove barriers for growth while leaving enterprises and business to seek out, and act as a vehicle for, wealth and job creation through entrepreneurship and innovation.

We note with interest and congratulate the Director-General on his first Report. We are confident that the process of reform of the ILO will establish the Office as a centre of excellence in research and policy analysis and provide the best value for money in its centenary. We look forward to the activities on governance, standards, engagement with enterprises and green initiatives, and we lend our voice to the recognition of the indisputable value of tripartism and social dialogue in the quest for solidarity.

Jamaica recognizes the intrinsic role that women play in society. We have, for decades, promulgated legislation that guarantees fundamental rights to all people and removed barriers that would inhibit the freedom of our women. Indeed, we as a people are pleased to be able to say that the Prime Minister of Jamaica is a woman. Nonetheless, we consider it important to closely examine the place and working conditions of women in our workplaces.

We look forward to the post-2015 development agenda and are keenly interested in not only the activities surrounding the poverty and future of work initiatives, but the role that we, as a nation, will play in the advancement of our people.

I take this opportunity to thank the ILO for its continued support to my country, and reiterate that we recognize that tripartism needs to be interwoven into the design of any fabric that seeks, not only to be fashionable, but to be of real and lasting value to all our people.

Original Finnish: Mr IHALAINEN (Minister of Labour, Finland)

First of all, I would like to thank Director-General, Guy Ryder, for his Report and congratulate him for his ambitious work in reforming the ILO. Both short- and long-term planning and the development of ILO activities are very welcome,

with a view to improving the effectiveness of the Office's activities.

The 100th anniversary, which will be celebrated in 2019, offers an excellent opportunity to reconsider the challenges facing us and the ILO's long-term role. In Finland's opinion, the centenary initiatives proposed by the Director-General provide a good basis for future work. I would, however, like to express some ideas on the proposals.

I warmly support the proposed governance initiative. It remains, however, important that this initiative does not result in postponing the ongoing administrative reforms until 2019. Instead, the ILO should build on the promising start made in the development of its activities and continue enhancing the efficiency of the working methods of the Conference and the Governing Body. Efficient allocation of resources is also necessary.

My second comment is about the standards initiative, which is also an important topic. It is essential to achieve mutual consensus and trust between ILO constituents with regard to the standards review mechanism. In Finland's view, the preparation, support for implementation and supervision of global labour standards remain the ILO's key tasks. However, we should not wait until 2019 to review standards. We should continuously seek to amend and complement them. It is also important for member States to ratify the Conventions. Finland has ratified two ILO Conventions in 2013 and is currently preparing further ratifications still. At present, Finland's ratification rate stands at exactly 100 ratifications.

The liberalization of world trade increases the need for global labour standards to prevent social dumping and the violation of fundamental rights at work. Without global standards, there is a risk of certain regional and national labour standards being interpreted as "structural rigidities". For example, in connection with the flexicurity discussion, the so-called permanent employment relationships and job security are sometimes considered as structural rigidities. On the other hand, many new employment contracts are short-term, part-time or even the so-called "zero-hour" contracts, in which the amount of work offered, or the working hours, are not at all defined. In Finland, we have attempted to improve the position of employees performing this kind of work. It is important for us to guarantee the right balance between the needed flexibility and security in connection with industrial restructuring.

As for the Director-General's enterprises initiative, I think it vital that the ILO should also offer assistance and services to employers. In addition, the ILO should reconsider its role in promoting corporate social responsibility, as ILO standards already play a prominent role as indicators in that field. Enterprises also seem to turn towards the ILO in situations where poor working conditions result in actual human catastrophe, such as the tragic collapse of a textile factory causing the death of many workers in Bangladesh. Furthermore, consumers and investors are increasingly interested in knowing whether products are made in decent working conditions, in which workers can exercise their freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, and whether the work is performed voluntarily without using forced labour or child labour. Last November, the Finnish Government adopted a government resolution on corporate social responsibility setting

targets for both Finnish enterprises and the administration.

Protecting employees from abuse in the global market is one of the ILO's key tasks. For this reason, Finland considers that the topic of decent work in global supply chains should be placed on the agenda of a future ILO Conference.

Mr BRUTON (*Minister at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ireland*)

As many of you will know, Ireland was one of those countries which suffered a very severe disruption in the recent economic crisis. It impacted employment in the country, with the loss of 15 per cent of jobs, particularly through the collapse of the construction sector. It also had an enormous impact on our fiscal position with the huge gap of 50 per cent between spending and taxation, and our banking system had to be massively bailed out.

So, as you can understand, we have faced a huge challenge of transition, and this is a transition from that economy that became too dependent on property and debt, to one that is founded on rebuilding enterprises, adapting new technologies and developing export markets, and we have to do that while still holding steadfast to core values and goals, such as the opportunity for decent work and for social progress for all our people. Among the many challenges that we face in making this transition, I will mention just three.

First, the challenge of job-friendly fiscal correction: I think that there was excessive reliance by the previous Government on taxes on income as a way of filling the gap in our fiscal deficit, but that has left people who are on less than average earnings – less than average industrial wage – paying tax rates of 50 per cent. That is simply too high, and such a tax wage will jeopardize job recovery, and it is an early priority to address that in the coming years.

A second issue, which I think is really important, is securing and guaranteeing the flexibility necessary to seize export opportunities. Many of our enterprises are having to adapt their working methods very dramatically to be competitive in a global environment. There are emerging disruptive technologies that have to be adapted, which are changing business models and the sort of business models that are likely to succeed. We are seeing the emergence of new sectors and new areas of opportunity, some of which have been discussed here this week, and this requires quite a dramatic change in the way enterprises work, in the way they adapt technology, in the way they introduce new skills; and in the smarter working demands that they place on their workers, and that has required a huge shift, and we continue to develop new methods and new models of reskilling people, and of active labour market methods to help people shift from the sectors that have been damaged to the new opportunities.

The third area that presents significant challenges is the adaptation of previous social dialogue models. The various established structures were severely impaired by the economic crisis and we are now seeking to develop new approaches that can involve our employers and trade unions in the sort of changes that are occurring. This has been very evident in our adaptation of public finances, where social dialogue with unions representing workers in the public service has been very important in helping us to implement reforms in public services, as well as bringing down the cost of the public pay

bill. We also need to develop sustainable social protection models to address the sort of risks that workers face in a more fragile and a changing economy.

During the last six months, we have been privileged to hold the presidency of the European Union (EU), and I have been very privileged to help build closer links between the ILO and the EU. We unashamedly set the theme of our presidency around jobs and growth because that, I think, is the key “X factor” that we need within the EU to successfully drive the accommodation of our goals and values with the types of adaptation that are occurring in our economy.

I believe that the ILO is in a particularly strong position to help member States, using evidence-based models of what has worked successfully in other countries, to facilitate the exchange of experience and to adapt standards as we face a new environment.

So, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and I wish you really well in your deliberations. I know that a lot of work has gone on this week and a lot of very valuable insights have been shared and exchanged. So, thank you for the opportunity to address you.

Original Spanish: Mr BRENTA (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Uruguay)

It is our intention to take up the challenge placed before us by the Director-General in his Report to the International Labour Conference with regard to the need for the Organization to adopt a broader and more forward-looking approach to the transformation of the world of work in the twenty-first century.

This approach should be pursued in the light of the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia, the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

In reaffirming our commitment to the Declaration of Philadelphia, we would like to highlight one of the principles it espouses: that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity.

Still today, despite the reduction in poverty since 1990, 20.6 per cent of the world's population (in other words 1,215 million people) are still living in conditions of extreme poverty on less than US\$1.25 a day.

To our mind, this is the principal challenge contained in the Report of the Director-General. It will be very difficult to continue improving the living conditions of workers and developing productive enterprises so long as society is disintegrating, people are deprived of their rights and access is denied to basic services, especially education, which is the driving force behind development and social change.

That is why we wholeheartedly endorse the Social Protection Floor Initiative and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); the domestic workers' sector being one of the least protected in our societies, composed essentially of women, often migrants, who are subjected to long working days and enjoy none of the workers' basic rights.

We are proud to see that most of the countries that have ratified that Convention are from Latin America.

In our country, Uruguay, poverty has declined from almost 40 per cent in 2003 to 12.5 per cent in 2012 – a major achievement even though the ulti-

mate objective is to reduce the figure to a single digit by 2015 and to eliminate poverty altogether. I would note that poverty in Uruguay refers to people with a per capita income of less than around US\$10 a day.

This sharp decline in poverty is the outcome of a virtuous cycle of economic growth and distribution of wealth made possible by a whole set of social policies, notably the boosting of wages by 42 per cent in real terms since 2004.

At the same time, major headway has been made in terms of workers' rights following the adoption of 40 labour standards over the same period. Notable among these is the Collective Bargaining Act, which has given rise to tripartite agreements in over 90 per cent of all branches of activity. In addition to the real increase in wages I just mentioned, agreements have been reached on occupational safety and health, vocational training, improved conditions of access to the labour market for women and young people, etc.

Aside from all this social progress, Uruguay has a fully democratic regime in which workers' basic rights and the fundamental principles of work – especially freedom of association and collective bargaining – are widely recognized.

We have also promoted broad social dialogue on such labour issues as employment and social security.

We are currently celebrating the 249th anniversary of the birth of our forefather, José Artigas, one of the liberators of South America from colonial rule.

Here I would like to quote one of the phrases that best sums up his philosophy, which is very much in keeping with the objectives of the ILO: “May the most unfortunate become the most privileged!”

In a world where injustice still prevails, let us commit ourselves to achieving that goal.

Mr KHALIQ (Government, Pakistan)

It is my great pleasure to be here in Geneva to address the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his new role as Director-General of the ILO. His election bears testimony to the trust we all have in his abilities and leadership. We are sure he will guide us through the difficulties that the world of work is passing through these days. I also congratulate the President of the Conference on his election and for chairing the proceedings in a highly professional and effective manner.

I wish to reaffirm the Pakistan Government's commitment to the ILO and its guiding principles. We believe in the well-being and the dignity of labour and will always remain at the forefront of all those efforts that have been, or will be, taken to address their problems. We firmly believe in the value of social dialogue, decent work and youth employment which, we think, are strongly anchored in the future design and framework of sustainable development.

My Government views with keen interest the efforts that the ILO is making to readjust its footprint and establish the ILO as a centre of excellence and a pioneering institution in the field of work and employment. Given the rising levels in unemployment and demographic trends, we are convinced that the ILO can help us to deal with these challenges in a

more effective way. We therefore strongly support the reform efforts undertaken by the Director-General and express our full support to him in this regard.

The Government of Pakistan appreciates the ILO's contribution to sustainable development in the world, particularly the developing and least developed countries. The ILO has a long-standing involvement with this, and particularly with environmental issues related to the world of work. Pakistan, basically, is an agricultural economy.

Agriculture is the largest employer in the country, and about 60 per cent of the workforce is engaged in this sector, including a large number of rural workers and subsistence farmers, especially women. We believe that only strong investment in skills, rural infrastructure and human resource will enable smallholding farmers to adopt greener and more productive farming practices, and thus contribute to meeting food security needs, fighting the cycle of poverty and preventing fast-moving rural-urban migration.

I wish to inform you that in Pakistan, after the adoption of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, the subject of labour has been devolved in the four provinces. To deal with issues arising from that, we have undertaken significant reforms and adopted new legislation to avoid any gaps and hiccups. I assure you of our commitment to work in consultation with our social partners to ensure that all our obligations are met in an appropriate manner.

Pakistan is facing considerable challenges with regard to job creation and combating youth unemployment. About 50 per cent of our population range between 15 to 29 years, and we are concerned for their decent employability. Female participation and the literacy rate are quite low by the standards of the developed world. Labour safety standards also require improvement. As in many other countries, a substantial portion of the workforce is predominantly employed in the informal sector. Pakistan is committed to overcoming these challenges, but we do need the ILO's assistance. We urge the ILO to provide support to help these people and facilitate their transition from the informal to the formal sector. This will certainly promote fundamental principles and rights at work, besides meeting the needs of social protection and of the excluded segments of the workforce. We also need the ILO's help and assistance to meet safety and welfare requirements under various Conventions.

Before I conclude, I would like to place on record our appreciation of the dedicated efforts of the ILO Country Office for Pakistan, especially its Director, Mr Francesco D'Ovidio, for helping us in various initiatives. I also thank the ILO Regional Director of the ILO, Mr Yoshiteru Uramoto, for his support and guidance for Pakistan.

I congratulate the organizers and participants on the success of this session of the Conference.

Mr ANTHONY (*Worker, Fiji*)

Let me first thank the Director-General for his Report. This Report focuses on the role of the ILO in delivering on its mandate for social justice and in strengthening its standards mechanism in order to do so.

In the Fiji context, this is particularly pertinent. After the military coups of 2006, and the current onslaught on workers and unions in Fiji by the mili-

tary regime, the ILO has a pivotal role to play in our struggle to maintain fundamental rights, including human rights.

This week the Committee on the Application of Standards heard the Fiji case, and concern was raised by the tripartite partners about the absence of any progress since the last report on Fiji was issued. In fact, the situation had actually worsened when it came to the issue of freedom of association.

Today, the regime continues to deny workers in the civil service and those in government-owned entities and other selected industries in the private sector their right to collective bargaining or redress for grievances and disputes, and it has imposed individual contracts, among other repressive measures. This practice has become prevalent in companies where the current restrictions do not apply.

One such industry is the sugar industry. As a direct result of this restriction, we have witnessed a decrease in the real wages of workers in these sectors by more than 40 per cent over the last six years. This is a direct result of the denial of the right to collective bargaining. More and more workers now live below the poverty line, and blue-collar workers live well below the poverty line – closer to extreme poverty.

The Committee on the Application of Standards has urged the Government to address the issue of the right to collective bargaining. While we have received numerous assurances from the regime that it would respect all core labour standards, it is now moving in the opposite direction, to include more workers within the scope of the Essential National Industries (Employment) Decree, which denies workers the right to collective bargaining.

At the same time, the regime has imposed decrees that totally deny trade unionists and any employee of a trade union the right to any political activity, including support for a political party or membership of a party – again, a denial of freedom of association. The right of people to choose a government that can be the true representative of the people is fundamental.

Fiji has been promised democratic elections in 2014. However, the process is seriously flawed and the fear that the elections may not be free and fair is well-founded. While some preparations for the elections are in progress, we still do not have an independent election commission that would oversee all aspects of an election. The regime's Attorney-General remains the Minister for Elections, apart from the seven other portfolios he holds.

The report of the Constitution Review Commission, which was produced after receiving more than 7,000 submissions from the people and from various groups, was totally rejected by the regime, which instead has produced its own draft report.

The draft clearly does not encapsulate the views of the people, and is seriously flawed in dealing with rights issues. While fundamental rights are included in the draft, the many exceptions to these rights empower the regime, and future governments, to trample on those rights and deny people the exercise of those rights, wholly or partially. The exceptions include workers' rights, and these exceptions would allow the regime to ensure that the current repressive decrees remain in force after the promulgation of the Constitution.

The denial of the right of trade unionists and union employees to engage in political activities, which is included in the Constitution, the absolute

immunity conferred on all those responsible for the coups and the atrocities that have been committed, including intimidation, assaults and deaths from the date of the coups, are also included in the draft. Any amendment to this Constitution would require the consent of 75 per cent of the population in a referendum. This is impossible, and it now appears that the Constitution will be set in stone.

The Director-General's Report is timely and relevant to the growing inequality around the globe and, more particularly, in rogue States such as Fiji, which wants to be on the global stage but does not want to play by the basic rules. It is time for the world community to tell Fiji, unequivocally, that fundamental workers' rights and human rights are an absolute necessity in order to be part of the world community. The ILO is in a good place to make that statement, and I urge all members to stand up and uphold these fundamental standards for a decent world.

Original Russian: Mr MIROSHNYCHENKO
(Employer, Ukraine)

It is a great honour for me to bring greetings to such an august assembly on behalf of the Ukrainian Employers. We fully approve the main ideas enshrined in the Director-General's Report, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, which, in our view, reflect the fundamental principles of decent work and the aims of sustainable development. We also welcome the efforts by the ILO to fulfil its mandate of guaranteeing social justice. We do, however, share the concern that has been expressed over what is going on in the world's economy and financial system, and its impact on employment and social protection.

In our view, this Conference should express, in a clearer and more unambiguous way, its support for those countries that are seeking, through long-term and systemic reforms, to find a way out of the situation. The motto of this 102nd Session of the Conference is "Building a future with decent work". We should reflect on how topical and relevant this approach is for us all.

In June of last year, here in Geneva, the Decent Work Country Programme for Ukraine for 2012–15 was signed with the ILO by a tripartite Ukrainian delegation. The main purpose of this programme is to promote decent work as a factor of productivity and a key factor for development in both society and the world of work in Ukraine. In this programme we set realistic goals for employment, social protection and safe working conditions. We are convinced that these goals can only be achieved on the basis of social dialogue.

A particular feature of the current situation in Ukraine is the process of consolidation which is under way in the world of business. This is first of all predicated upon the logic of our domestic political development and the need to develop dialogue with the State – dialogue in which it is supremely important for business to speak with one voice and express a shared position. This is not only, or not merely, about defending corporate interests. For the employers of Ukraine, the aim of consolidation is to be able to take as effective and constructive a part as possible in tackling the problems facing the country, problems that have been brought into sharp focus during this period of crisis.

Certainly, one of the priorities for modern business in Ukraine is the creation of decent jobs, taking

account of the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable path of development. And I would like to stress that one of the most significant areas of activity for Ukrainian employers is to create stable jobs. We consider that employers should play an active part in establishing the demand for specialist training. Through this, we will be able to lower unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, and those who have completed their studies will not go looking for work if their education and training match up to the requirements of modern employers.

For this purpose, we intend to continue playing an active part in the development of vocational standards and in updating the curriculum, stressing the importance of career guidance, especially at school, and promoting the principles of a system of parallel training for workers and specialists, especially in engineering and technical trades. All this is closely bound up with the implementation of another of the ILO's programmes, the Global Jobs Pact, and its Ukrainian equivalent, the National Tripartite Agreement on Employment and Jobs. According to this, we have not only to create jobs, but also to take part in training skilled workers to fill them.

The Ukrainian employers are not, however, stopping at that. We are systematically introducing programmes to support youth employment; to create safe working conditions in enterprises; to offer extra training for the workforce; to improve workers' qualifications; and to tackle the problems of towns that are totally dependent upon one single enterprise.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that, in September this year, Ukraine will be hosting a meeting for the European members of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), to which we are also inviting our partner organizations from the Central Asian countries. For us, the Ukrainian employers, it is a great honour to host such a distinguished and representative forum, and an excellent opportunity to discuss the most pressing issues of socio-economic development in our countries and in our continent as a whole.

And, finally, may I thank Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, and Mr Brent Wilton, Secretary-General of the IOE, for the systematic and timely help and support their organizations always give to Ukraine.

(Mr Rahman takes the Chair.)

Mr ROLEK (Employer, Hungary)

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Hungarian Employers here. During the following few minutes, I would like to talk about a topic, namely youth policy, that is high on the ILO agenda, and brief you on the Hungarian situation as well.

The global world is facing a worsening youth employment crisis. Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, and over 75 million of them worldwide are looking for work. Young workers are facing a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work in developed countries, as well as persistently high worker poverty in the developing world. This situation requires effective and affordable policy action by all stakeholders to ensure productive and rewarding jobs for all groups. Flexibility, quality education and the encouragement of entrepreneur-

ship will enhance employability, productivity and the transition into new jobs.

Growth and competitiveness increasingly depend on the capacity of countries to anticipate the evolution of demand for labour, and to ensure skills promotion and equity of access to learning, and also that the right mix of skills is being taught and learned.

Youth employment is of high priority for employers as well as for young workers. Unfortunately, work and education have been artificially separated in recent decades. The learning life cycle of young people has been extended to their mid-20s, so they are neither skilled nor culturally prepared for productive work. Therefore, high-quality apprenticeships and on-the-job training are critical at this time.

Apprenticeship systems that combine workplace-based, as well as on-the-job training, have proved successful in promoting learning and skill formation, as well as in facilitating employment by building bridges between the world of education and the world of work.

Apprenticeships also facilitate the emergence and growth of new industries based on technological and organizational innovations. Moreover, they also provide an opportunity to strengthen the skills required for a transition towards an innovative economy.

There must be a shared responsibility between all constituents. It should be ensured that the curricula of apprenticeship systems are based on both business needs and the interests of the apprentice, so that the smooth and step-by-step transition from training to work is guaranteed. Facilitating the acquisition of key skills and competences by apprentices should be a key component in avoiding skill shortages and mismatches on the labour market.

In Hungary, employers carried out a multi-year research project which aimed to define the various labour market needs by region, based upon thousands of responses to questionnaires completed by companies and education institutions.

As a result, the Hungarian Government established regional committees for the development of vocational education and training, changed the vocational training school structure and curriculum, and significantly shifted the focus to practice and on-the-job training. Investment in skills, education and training is an important element of comprehensive employment policy, including lifelong learning to improve the quality of skills and ensure access for all, with the effective engagement of employers. The constant updating of skills in today's knowledge economy, with particular focus on lifelong learning, is essential.

Training in entrepreneur skills also adds to innovation and provides new comparative advantages for growth. Hopefully this will contribute to enhanced economic growth, and to securing job creation, alleviating poverty, stimulating innovation and creating sustainable jobs.

The Hungarian employers are convinced that the ILO has a definite role and an active commitment, with its tripartite constituency, to the values and goals of the world of work and the principle on which the Organization was built.

I also take the opportunity of being here to thank the ILO Multidisciplinary Team for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest for their continuous, generous assistance and their cooperation in many

relevant projects and programmes for the region's social partners.

Mr GAVRILOVS (*Employer, Latvia*)

I would like to express my deepest appreciation of being able to attend the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference. It is of great importance for all of us that social dialogue is one of the four strategic objectives of the ILO and one of the major topics of this session.

This year, the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, together with our social partners, Government and trade unions, is celebrating 20 years since its foundation and since the institution of social dialogue in Latvia.

In December 1993, the Government adopted the principle of tripartite partnership with the creation of Latvia's consultative body of employers, Government and trade unions. For the employers, the role of business and entrepreneurship in society and the free market economy needed to be explained.

The following year, 1994, our Parliament ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), since when the social dialogue machinery and the issues covered have rapidly evolved. We would like to share with you something of what we have learned.

The financial and economic crisis is still being felt in a number of EU countries and around the world, though Latvia is continuing its recovery from the deep recession of 2008. Latvia's total consolidation measures between 2008 and 2011 used up almost 17 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP). It was a very hard time for all of us, and social dialogue played an important role in responding to the crisis.

The social partners involved themselves actively in the public debate and in the work of various working groups at the national level in order to stabilize the economic and financial situation. We called upon the Government to reduce the budget deficit by adopting fiscal stability legislation, to implement structural reforms, to provide incentives for economic activity, to maintain a coordinated and stable social system, and to ensure public support for the reforms.

A partnership was formed at the national level that brought together the coalition party, the social partners and other cooperation partners, to reduce the budget deficit in 2009 by more than €700 million.

As a result, we can proudly say that Latvia is one of the few countries that have managed to go through the sharp austerity measures without massive strikes and social unrest. Latvia has managed to preserve social peace, to put structural reforms in place and to restore economic growth. Today, our GDP figures show that Latvia is still the fastest growing economy in the EU.

These results confirm once more the importance of effective partnership at the national level. The National Tripartite Cooperation Council is co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Latvia, the President of the Employers' Confederation and the Chairman of the Free Trade Union Confederation.

That said, a number of challenges remain for our country to tackle by means of a joint effort of social dialogue, on such issues as social inequality and poverty, unemployment especially among young people, the growing shortage of labour, the mismatch of skills and available jobs and, of course, the

need to ensure inclusive, sustainable and balanced growth as part of the European economy.

The social partners strongly support Latvia's objective of entering the eurozone in 2014 and of becoming a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the near future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep conviction that a well-structured and stable system of social dialogue is crucial for creating a favourable environment for the economy, for employment and for social policy. Results-oriented social dialogue can offer positive outcomes for society in general.

We are aware of the ILO's Governing Body decision to set a seven-year cycle for a recurrent discussion of the fourth strategic objective of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. Our proposal is that the seven-year cycle be changed in the near future to a five-year cycle, so that we can react more quickly to the challenges of our societies and economies.

In September this year, Latvia will celebrate the 20th anniversary of social dialogue. We have already invited Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO, to take part in the social dialogue celebrations in Riga.

So let us celebrate! Let us preserve together the high value of social dialogue!

Mr GURNEY (*Worker, United Kingdom*)

It is my honour to be speaking on behalf of the British Trades Union Congress and British workers.

There is much that I would like to say in response to this year's Report by the Director-General and I will see how much I can fit into five minutes without the interpreters attacking me afterwards.

The subtitle of the Report, *Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, neatly encapsulates the challenge before us: how to equip ourselves and this Organization to face the massive and, in many countries, including my own, with our governments deeply misguided agenda of cuts and austerity, the growing challenge to deliver social justice and decent work for all.

The Report is welcome in its honesty in setting out some of the problems we face in regard to the institutional challenges ahead. In Chapter 2, the Director-General sets out four areas in need of urgent work: first, tripartism and representative legitimacy; second, standards; third, coherence; and fourth, the ILO and enterprises. And we agree very much with the analysis that these are the areas which need to be looked at.

The grim reality of what happens when we fail to meet these challenges was shown in the most tragic terms with the Rana Plaza factory collapse in April. We began the first Workers' group meeting of this session of the Conference with a minute's silence to remember the dead and their families, and I hope that they are still in our thoughts now.

Now, this was not some terrible natural disaster, this was a totally preventable catastrophe which was caused by a combination of deliberate actions, negligence and systemic failures. For years, workers' organizations on the ground, the Global Union federations and other campaigners have been trying to secure genuine rights to freedom of association and legal safeguards in Bangladesh. A version of the agreement which has now become the Bangladesh Safety Accord was on the table long before the

1,100 workers died. With a few very honourable exceptions, there was little support for it from some of the largest brand names in the world, including many companies based in my own country. Most obfuscated, raised objections and pointed to the problems of dealing with their counterparts and the authorities in Bangladesh.

The reaction in the aftermath was very different although some, like Arcadia, Gap and Walmart, are still seeking ways to avoid actually agreeing to binding agreements involving workers. Many others have now chosen to join in a tripartite approach, with the ILO taking the central part in ensuring it works in reality. But the question we all have to ask ourselves is: why did it take the death of over 1,000 people before we could make this progress? Why, even now, are some employers saying they are being "forced" into taking steps that they should have taken as a matter of course? And why is the Government proposing legal reforms that will still not bring them into full compliance with ILO standards?

In finding solutions to the points raised by the Director-General in Chapter 2 of his Report, we must always keep in the centre of our thinking how the work of a renewed ILO can help to prevent such disasters occurring again, and it is why a supply chain discussion is so important at a future session of the Conference.

It is not my intention to single out Bangladesh; sadly it is far from unique, as we have heard in the Committee on the Application of Standards this year. We have had a focus on many other countries with massive decent work deficits. Once again we have seen countries like Guatemala, Swaziland and Fiji having to account for lack of real progress in supporting the most basic rights to freedom of association.

At home in Britain, the situation faced by workers there is deteriorating fast. Our unions are at the forefront of a campaign for an alternative agenda, quite literally for "a future that works". We have a campaign with five interlinked areas focusing on: (i) jobs, growth and building a new economy that delivers for people; (ii) fair pay and a living wage for all workers; (iii) building good services and decent welfare; (iv) respect and a voice at work, and we have the discussion on social dialogue at this session of the Conference; and (v) strong unions, building our organization in the workplace and the community.

And when I consider these and I read across the Director-General's Report, when we look at the seven centenary initiatives proposed in Chapter 3 and review the eight areas of critical importance laid out in the programme and budget, together with the progress we have already made on ILO reform and the commitment by the ILO to ensure that decent work is at the heart of the global post-2015 development goals, I think we are right to have some hope – but if, and only if, we work together and if, and only if, we commit to genuine tripartism and working for standards that are fit for all. When we leave here tomorrow, I hope that we will go out with renewed enthusiasm for this goal.

Original Arabic: Mr HIJAZI (Minister of Labour, Syrian Arab Republic)

I would have liked so much to start my speech by thanking the countries of the world, especially the major States, for supporting the right of the Syrian

people to live in dignity and for supporting our economy and society on its development path. Unfortunately, however, I am obliged to denounce the horrible conspiracy and the unjust war launched against us. This is a barbaric war, to say the least, and blind prejudice, led by the forces of evil in the world. These evil forces provide all types of support to armed gangs, which have no mission whatsoever, other than destruction, killing and perpetrating acts of cannibalism against anyone who is not accusing others of infidelity.

Syria is the nation which offered the world its first alphabet, and Damascus is the oldest inhabited capital in history.

It is my own country that has given birth to intellectuals, peace activists and persons who call for freedom, peace and love.

Syria was able to resist thanks to the sacrifice of its people, its passion for its country and its defence of its dignity. The people of Syria have achieved victory over its enemies both inside and outside the country. Today, we have come here to participate with the entire world in order to build human civilizations. Unfortunately, Syria is suffering from the partiality of the United Nations and other organizations, which support armed terrorist groups, and illegitimate assemblies. It is equally suffering from the economic sanctions imposed on it, and from the economic blockade policy which is affecting all economic sectors in Syria. This has had repercussions on agricultural, commercial and industrial undertakings, as well as on services, including the oil sector. It has prevented my country from importing raw materials and from exporting its products, harming the Syrian people as a result of such sanctions.

It is in the name of freedom claimed by such terrorist groups, which are being supported by certain countries which have an influence on the decisions of the United Nations and the Security Council, that industrial enterprises have been destroyed, and parts of such enterprises have been stolen, transferred to Turkey and sold at a cheap price, entailing losses in the hundreds of billions.

Economic sanctions have also contributed to the closure of more than 500 enterprises and the dismissal of more than 100,000 workers, increasing the number of the unemployed.

It is also in the name of so-called freedom that the working class in the different sectors was targeted, with over 1,200 workers killed.

We have read with great interest the Report of the Director-General, indicating the challenges facing the International Labour Organization and labour markets in the context of the repercussions of the new global economic order, and its impact on poverty rates and layoffs, as well as the lack of decent working conditions in the informal sector.

We agree with the analysis and conclusions set out in the Report. We support the proposals of the Director-General with respect to the solutions offered to resolve such challenges through the adoption of tripartism and social dialogue as the two key pillars for achieving decent work, in accordance with ILO principles and standards.

We would like to express our appreciation of the efforts of the ILO in highlighting the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities as set out in paragraphs 128–135. However, we regret the following: (1) the Report uses the sentence “Tensions in the occupied Syrian Golan”. We are of the view that

one should use the precise term, by indicating clearly the situation of workers and employers in the occupied Syrian Golan, instead of this sentence; and (2) the information contained in the paragraphs we referred to was not confirmed at source by the fact-finding mission to the occupied Syrian Golan which was set up by virtue of a decision of the ILO. The mission did not visit Syria this year, nor were the views of workers and employers surveyed in the occupied Syrian Golan. We therefore call into question the source of the information, and its accuracy in reflecting the reality on the ground.

I am sorry to say that I am unable here to refer to a specific programme, event or even activity that has been undertaken in our country in order to develop the labour system, consolidate workers' rights, develop the work environment or provide incentives to employers, for reasons well known to all.

Allow me to thank all the employees of the ILO, and in particular its Director-General. I hope that next year, the Report of the Director-General will reflect the situation and suffering of workers and employers in the occupied Syrian Golan and in the occupied Arab territories, and that it will propose solutions and measures so as to oblige the Zionist entity to apply the standards laid down in international Conventions so that we can have fair international standards.

Before concluding, I must emphasize that Syria, through its people, Government, and leadership, is convinced that truth will prevail, and that its people shall be reunited; Syrians who are impassioned with their Arab identity, peace and security.

Original Spanish: Mr SANTALLA TÓRREZ (Government, Plurinational State of Bolivia)

Allow me to begin by thanking the Director-General for his Report to this session of the International Labour Conference.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia believes profoundly that poverty reduction and improved living conditions for the people, including jobs, are the pillars on which our work should be based.

Since 2006, under the leadership of President Evo Morales Ayma, my country has been undergoing a period of extensive political, social, economic and labour-related change. This process has been characterized by a move away from neoliberalism and by the restoration of Bolivia's sovereignty over its natural resources under the leadership of the State. The new economic model has garnered some remarkable achievements. In the seven years of our Government's administration, public investment has increased by 252 per cent, the average increase in GDP has been 4.8 per cent per annum, per capita income has risen from US\$1,100 to US\$2,238, the incidence of extreme poverty has been reduced from 38 per cent to 20 per cent and, 1 million people out of a population of 10 million have emerged from poverty and are earning an average wage.

The process of change in my country has been characterized by an alternative model of development to the dominant individualistic model. The new model is described in the new Constitution as promising a “decent life”, in which the social economy comes first and the people have access to education, health and housing. Thus, everyone is entitled to decent and stable employment and fair remuneration without discrimination, unjustified dismissal, and all forms of harassment, exploitation or

forced labour are prohibited, and freedom of association is promoted and guaranteed.

In this way, our Government is pursuing an ambitious policy of decent work and restoration of workers' rights, the impact of which can be judged by the fact that unemployment has dropped from 8.15 per cent prior to the current Government's access to power in 2005 to 3.84 per cent in 2011 and that the minimum wage went up by 173 per cent during the same period.

In 2012, the Plurinational State of Bolivia promulgated Law No. 309 ratifying Convention No. 189, which came before Parliament on 15 April 2013, making Bolivia the fifth country in the world and the second in Latin America to ratify the Convention.

I would like to stress that our Government's social policies seek to redistribute wealth. For instance, during the neoliberal period the education and health budget was below 8 per cent of GDP, compared to 13 per cent today.

Since we regained control over our natural resources, we have been able to provide non-contributive social protection for the most vulnerable members of society. Although 70 per cent of Bolivian workers are not formally employed, the new social security law has introduced a benefits system financed by a solidarity fund whereby those who earn the most contribute to improving the earnings of those who earn the least.

However, some segments of our society have still not understood the scope of the changes that have been wrought in Bolivia. Last May, for instance, the Bolivian Workers' Confederation (COB) was involved in a labour dispute over the amendment of the Pensions Act. It made no sense, because the law had already been discussed and negotiated by the Government and the COB for three years. The Government's aim was to raise the income of the poorest members of society, not to favour certain high-income sectors as the COB intended.

Our Government encourages and gives priority to social dialogue at all times. We espouse a culture of dialogue as a means of resolving disputes and meeting demands, unlike certain union leaders who believe that the only way for workers to pursue their demands is by violent confrontation.

We welcome the report on sustainable development and decent work and would like you to know that, for Bolivia, the biggest challenge ahead is how to strike the right balance between work and Mother Earth, while duly respecting the principle of shared but separate responsibilities. Allow me to quote President Evo Morales Ayma who, in a letter on the subject, wrote: "Capitalism is the source of asymmetries and imbalances in the world. It spawns luxury, ostentation and excess for a few while elsewhere in the world millions die of hunger. Under capitalism everything becomes a piece of merchandise: water, land, the human genome, ancestral cultures, justice, ethics, death, even life itself. Under capitalism everything, every single thing, can be bought and sold."

The many different facets of the crisis are derived from the most aggressive and globalized manifestation of the capitalist system, financial capital. The eternal hands-off paradigm of *laissez-faire*, *laissez-passer* that advocates capitalism and the prevailing ideology in certain minority quarters that are motivated solely by self-interest serve only to exacerbate inequalities, unemployment and poverty.

In addition to fuelling unemployment, wage cuts and social benefit cutbacks, the seriousness of the global crisis – which is greater in some parts of the world than in others – is encouraging the dangerous revival of a philosophy that flies in the face of social justice and decent work advocated by the ILO, and is contrary to the interests of migrant populations.

In Bolivia, we are building an alternative development model which revolves around human beings living in harmony with nature and the new paradigm of a "decent life" in which wealth is redistributed among those who, for so many years, have been marginalized and vulnerable.

Mr MAJOR (*Government, Hungary*)

Let me start by offering my warmest congratulations on behalf of the Hungarian Government to all Officers of this year's Conference, and especially to our President, Professor Nidal Katamine, Minister of Labour of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on their election and their excellent job in running this session of the International Labour Conference.

This year's Conference, and also the coming ones in the next five years, deserve special attention as we are moving towards the 100th anniversary of this Organization. We share the view of the Director-General that the success and the future of the Organization depend on its capacity to deliver, credibly and effectively, on its mandate for social justice. We agree that there is a need for change in the structure of the ILO, and also in its operation, in order to better serve its constituents and ensure a real impact. In Hungary, we consider that the ILO should become a centre of excellence in all matters to do with the world of work. The strengthening and upgrading of the ILO's analysis and research capacities are extremely important in enabling the Organization to assist its constituents in their own endeavours to develop adequate responses on a national level.

We welcome the Director-General's firm commitment to carrying out the proposed reform package for equipping the ILO to face the challenges of the rapidly changing environment. We trust that this reform will bring early and tangible results.

Promoting sustainable development is a shared goal of the international community. We are convinced that the four pillars of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda – namely, employment, social dialogue, social protection and rights at work – are indispensable building blocks of sustainable development. The ILO has to play a cardinal role, within its mandate, in setting and achieving system-wide objectives, especially in the context of the ongoing negotiation regarding the post-2015 UN development agenda. We would like to emphasize that a better understanding and measurement of decent work are also important preconditions for putting employment and social issues at the centre of the future development agenda.

Social dialogue is one of the strategic objectives of the Organization, and a key for implementing its main goals. The guidance provided this year to the ILO by its constituents regarding the implementation of this strategic objective is considered to be a valuable basis for the future work of the Organization in promoting effective social dialogue. International labour standards are at the core of our Organization. We would like to emphasize, however, that standards are only efficient and able to bring

about change if there is a tripartite commitment behind them and if they are based on evidence and needs. We are of the view that a standards review mechanism, managed adequately and built on trust among the three parties, will contribute to the improvement and effective operation of the ILO standards system.

Finally, let me stress that the employment situation of young people is still a major concern worldwide. It is common ground among all of us that we have to find the ways and means to manage this

challenge. The Hungarian Government's own responses to this challenge are focusing, in particular, on better reconciling the skills of young people with the needs of the labour market, and on providing them with the necessary labour market experience. We think that adequate implementation and follow-up of the ILO call for action for youth, adopted last year by the Conference, will enable our Organization to assist its constituents to better deliver at the national level in addressing this vital issue.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.20 p.m.)

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