



Third sitting

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Presidents: Mr Funes de Rioja and Mr Alexandris

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

Original Spanish: Mr FERRER DUFOL (Employer, Spain)

It is a great honour for me to take the floor at the plenary of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations. Before addressing the first point, I should like to congratulate the Director-General on the content and objectives of his Report. This document reflects the positive approach adopted by the Office last year with a view to ensuring that such reports encourage discussions concerning new challenges that will determine the future agenda of the ILO, such as migration.

Migration, both permanent and temporary, is fundamental in terms of the economic growth and development of both countries of origin and of destination. Demographic reality and globalization mean that there must be greater freedom of movement of persons. In many countries, a large part of the workforce of the future will be made up of migrants. Nevertheless, we must avoid the temptation to oversimplify and generalize here, while accepting that the reasons for the existence of this phenomenon and the way in which it is perceived vary from case to case and are dependent on a wide variety of factors. Migration must be viewed from a whole range of different perspectives and any solutions need to take into account the different realities here. There is no single, universal answer concerning this issue.

As to the substance of the Report, we agree that migration must be regulated and action must be taken to discourage and prevent the irregular movement of undocumented workers. The lack of jobs referred to in the Report cannot simply be tackled by exporting excess labour abroad. Decent work programmes must curb this problem, as well as improving job opportunities in the countries of origin. We also agree that there is a need to guarantee equal treatment for migrant workers. Finally, we believe that the authors of the Report must do more to highlight the benefits of migration.

Given that the issue of migration is going to be a working priority in terms of ILO policy and strategy, we would like to share a few ideas with the Office, including the following.

The ILO needs to cooperate with other organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as to ensure that there is no

duplication of effort or contradiction in terms of its work. Analysis must be carried out based on data for legislators and Members. We must involve those employers who are prepared to collaborate to find practical solutions.

The ILO should work hand in hand with governments, employers and workers to develop labour migration policies and practices designed to meet labour requirements. We must promote mutual recognition of skills and experience among countries. Finally, in addition to ensuring the protection of migrants' rights, an issue highlighted in the Report and one that we also feel is important, there is a need to emphasize the benefits of migration.

Moving on to other issues, although we already mentioned the need for reforms concerning the ILO's supervisory system in previous statements, we should like to refer to this key point again. This issue must be resolved by the Office as soon as possible if it is to tackle the crisis currently affecting the ILO's standards supervisory system. While we do not seek to question the significant and valuable contribution of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, or its independence and reputation, we must, as a matter of priority, clearly determine the objective and real functions of a Committee whose reports must serve as a non-binding guide for the constituents. The fact that the ILO has not sent out a clear message in this regard means that, at the international level, the reports of the Committee of Experts are viewed as being the final decision and official frame of reference concerning the technical application of ILO Conventions. This situation generates confusion among legislative bodies, jurisdictional courts and businesses operating across national borders. We ask that a simple clarification concerning the true legal nature of the opinions and reports of the Commission of Experts be inserted, as is the case with other ILO documents. Such an approach would clear up any misunderstandings.

Moving beyond its standard-setting and supervisory function, when considering its objectives and functions, the ILO should focus less on the analysis and evaluation of national macroeconomic policies and more on the analysis and identification of concrete solutions that will allow countries to tackle issues arising in the social and labour field more effectively. I should also like to focus on the key role of enterprises in creating employment and wealth. We cannot have jobs without sustainable enterprises. Therefore, the ILO must make enterprises a priority in terms of analysis, policies and

projects. Employment creation and sustainability in terms of our social protection system depend on the following key elements: the design of a macroeconomic policy aimed at boosting the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises; the establishment of a stable and consistent institutional framework; the existence of a flexible framework that will allow enterprises to adapt to a playing field subject to rapid, technology-driven changes and a globalized economy; the design of an education system and vocational training programme adapted to the needs of enterprises; and, the impetus provided by science and innovation.

We are currently implementing these policies in Spain and they are of great help as we emerge from an extremely grave crisis. At the same time, the ILO must empower and involve the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) in all those initiatives related to enterprises from the very outset. The ILO must avoid creating parallel structures which could complicate decision-making processes and delay the implementation of initiatives and projects. The partnership formed by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and ACT/EMP must remain the main channel for any initiatives and projects with an enterprise component.

Original Arabic: Ms AL-SUBAIIH (Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Minister of State for Planning and Development, Kuwait)

The Governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council – namely, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Yemen – welcome the choice of topic by the Director-General for his Report to this session of the Conference, that of fair migration. This is a vital issue of pivotal concern to the international community, which is the focus of efforts by international organizations and regional and international cooperation by member States. The need for international cooperation in this domain and for corresponding international governance is manifested by the universal agreement that migration is a driving force for international development in all its forms and that the issue should be included in the United Nations (UN) sustainable development programmes. There is also need for a redefinition of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the period 2015–30, following the discussions on migration and development in the framework of the General Assembly in October 2013, at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held in Sweden in May 2014, and at all the preparatory events and regional conferences for those two major gatherings. All this demonstrates how high the issue of migration stands on the international agenda.

The Director-General has referred to the evolution of the phenomenon of transboundary migration over recent decades and to the emergence of new forms of temporary migration whereby people leave their countries and sign fixed-term labour contracts in other countries in response to market needs in those countries. The Report states that fixed-term labour contracts of this kind should not in any way infringe workers' rights.

On the basis of this Report and bearing in mind that the formulation of policies and drafting of legislation to regulate the entry and exit of foreigners are the sovereign prerogative of every State, we

would like to point out that the Governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council take every available step to ensure proper legal protection for workers resident in their countries and working under temporary employment contracts. They are fully cognizant of their responsibility to ensure that migrants can derive full advantage from residing and working in their countries and to safeguard their rights. Our countries are constantly endeavouring to upgrade their legal systems and to improve their monitoring and inspection services in order to surmount any impediments in this area.

In this context, we would like to stress that an objective appraisal of the employment contracts of these workers demonstrates that the great majority of them attain the objectives which they have set for their period of residence in our countries. This is evident from a range of studies and research, carried out on an independent and neutral basis, and it is so despite the presence of millions of foreign workers from many different countries.

I would like to recall here the affirmation in the Declaration of Philadelphia that labour is not a commodity. Labour cannot be treated as just another element in the production process, ignoring its human dimension. When assessing the benefits of temporary migration, therefore, account should be taken not just of the economic advancement in the countries of origin, but also the most equitable distribution of those benefits to ensure human and social development.

There are many indicators that clearly demonstrate that the beneficial use, in terms of development, of this temporary labour by the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council incorporates significant elements of human and social development, including widening the reach of social services in the receiving countries, in particular in the areas of health and education.

The Report also demonstrates that we must develop our knowledge and capacity to measure the development-related effects of labour migration in order to be able to devise policies and programmes designed to enhance these effects on the basis of cooperation between the sending and receiving countries. Support for this regional cooperation is also needed from international organizations.

We should mention in this context that the countries of Asia have embarked on a truly innovative programme, with the launch of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which will be holding its next meeting in Kuwait in November 2014. A number of initiatives have been mounted under the Dialogue, with the support of the ILO and of other international organizations.

In his Report the Director-General also referred to the role played by recruitment agencies and we all agree with the views expressed in the Report concerning some practices applied to migrant workers and the need to put an end to those practices. To do so, the countries of origin and countries of destination must work together to craft an appropriate strategy.

We also share the view expressed in the Report on the need to ensure – and to strengthen – international governance in this context. The conclusions of the recent GFMD should also be taken into consideration. The voluntary nature of these conclusions has been conducive to productive dialogue between the States Members of the United Nations and representatives of civil society and private sector enti-

ties and has helped promote development. The voluntary nature of this Forum is one of the main reasons for its success. We urge the International Labour Office to maintain its support for the Forum and for its efforts to promote concerted action on migration within the Gulf Cooperation Council with a view to reaching consensus on governance in this vital area.

Particular attention must be accorded to those areas of the world which are hardest hit by this problem. We must not forget the wide-scale economic destruction wrought in the occupied Arab territories, the repercussions of the occupation policies on levels of unemployment and economic growth and the exposure of thousands of workers in the occupied territories to forced labour. The Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, demonstrates that – and I quote: “There is a growing risk of exploitation of Palestinian workers by brokers and unscrupulous employers.” These workers have only very limited protection and are subject to arbitrary employment practices; unemployment is very high, rising by 5.6 per cent over the last year to reach more than 40 per cent among young people. Every possible step must be taken to support the occupied Arab territories and to limit the extent of economic destruction.

*Original Spanish: Ms CÁCERES PIZARRO
(Government, Peru)*

It is my great honour today to bring greetings from the President of the Republic of Peru, Mr Ollanta Humala Tasso, as well as from the tripartite delegation that is attending this Conference with the aim of contributing ideas and proposals that will allow our regions to continue in their efforts towards development and progress.

In line with the concerns and initiatives of the ILO constituents and also in collaboration with this Organization, the Government of Peru has been working on a labour formalization strategy involving very specific deadlines and commitments. The strategy aims to: define macro-policies; promote the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and guarantee compliance with labour legislation. This initiative is obviously designed to support the growing efforts on the part of the Government of Peru to encourage private investment and to continue to consolidate the fundamental labour rights: collective labour relations, the right to equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the workplace and, in particular, the eradication of forced labour and child labour.

The Government of Peru is currently implementing the National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour 2012–21, the National Plan to Combat Forced Labour 2013–17 and the National Occupational Safety and Health Policy. More recently, the Government approved an action plan on compliance with the rights of domestic workers, as well as a national social security plan. All of these actions focus on intersectoral coordination and are the result of institutionalized tripartite dialogue. Another important element is the establishment of the National Supervisory Authority for Labour Inspection. This body will allow us to widen the scope of labour inspection at the national level through the work of a body of highly trained inspectors specializing in fundamental rights.

Along similar lines, the Government of Peru is also promoting employment, employability and entrepreneurship, in coordination with the regional governments and the private sector. Employment Promotion Offices are an important instrument in this regard, furthering equal opportunities and respect for the environment. These policies are being developed as a part of a process of greater social inclusion that focuses in particular on vulnerable Peruvians. Working closely with the private sector, we are also making specific efforts to reduce the gap between labour supply and demand through labour market and training sector information systems. At the international level, we wish to highlight the establishment of a regional group called the Pacific Alliance. This is a mechanism for economic integration and cooperation that brings together Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. The aim of the Alliance is to promote, inter alia, the growth, development and competitiveness of the participating economies through efforts to establish free movement, covering not only businesspeople but also wage-paid activities, between the different countries. One important step is to promote decent work in the region of origin, while amending bilateral and regional agreements in response to the dynamics of workforce mobility, guaranteeing the social and economic protection of migrants, and recognizing the value of social dialogue with the representatives of employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Finally, I would like to remind you that, in October, Peru will host the ILO’s 18th American Regional Meeting in Lima. The agenda will be closely based on the Report of the Director-General of the ILO, dealing with sustainable development with decent work, as well as labour formalization. We invite you all, on behalf of the people and the Government of Peru, and can promise you a welcome that will be typically Peruvian in its warmth.

The Government of Peru has been working relentlessly to try to improve the living conditions of our citizens. Employment creation, the promotion of decent work, the fight against forced labour and child labour, and social dialogue are the main instruments being employed as a part of these efforts and we are certain that they will allow us to reduce poverty and inequality in our country. I would like to reaffirm our commitment to continue working with the ILO to achieve these aims.

*Original Arabic: Mr OULD MOHAMED KHOUNA
(Minister of the Civil Service, Labour and
Administrative Reform, Mauritania)*

On behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I congratulate the President on his election to the Chair of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I am sure that under his leadership it will be successful. It is a pleasure for me to participate in this session of the Conference at which we are talking about building a future through decent work, as well as other subjects.

This Conference will be considering and discussing the reports submitted to it and while I have the floor I would like to thank Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General, and the Committee of Experts for the quality of the Reports submitted to the Conference this year, in particular, the report *Strengthening action to end forced labour* which calls for the need to adopt appropriate policies to deal with

forced labour, which is contrary to the principles of human rights and freedom of choice. I would also like to highlight the quality of the report *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy*, which gives an overview of the informal economy and the impact it has on decent work, and also the Report *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, which states that: “The ILO’s commitment to the building of a sovereign Palestinian state with an effective social dimension remains as strong as ever.”

My country is continuing to establish a State fully based on the rule of law by guaranteeing all fundamental civil freedoms. The President of Mauritania, Mr Mohammed Ould Abdel Aziz, has established a multifaceted programme to enhance democracy, social justice and human rights, as reflected in my Government’s plans and programmes. My Government’s commitment to ILO Conventions and Recommendations has recently been manifested by its ratification of the privileges embodied in the system of labour inspectors and supervisors, in accordance with the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81). In cooperation with the ILO and in consultation with the social partners, the Government has adopted a national programme on decent work. It has expanded coverage of labour inspections which contribute to the provision of administrative services for citizens, and strengthened the structural and administrative capacities and resources for work. The Government is working continuously to establish a labour administration framework, together with the social partners in the different related social fields.

We have amended some of the provisions of the Labour Code relating to piecework. The salaries of public servants have been increased and taxes on low-income jobs have been abolished, and others reduced. Private sector workers have benefited from these two features. We have expanded the coverage of our national social security fund. The National Office of Occupational Medicine has prepared and implemented its five-year strategy to promote occupational health in Mauritania. We are resolved to establish a national social protection floor that guarantees the right to social security because we consider that to be a human right, in accordance with the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and also with the circular issued by the Director-General on 24 March 2014.

All this will undoubtedly contribute to expanding social security and providing comprehensive health coverage, as well as curbing poverty and eliminating social inequalities. This is one of the most important priorities of the multifaceted programme of our President, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who has made training and employment for young people and women the most important aspect of his development programmes. He stated this in his speech to mark the 51st anniversary of the African Union (AU), in his capacity as Chairperson of that body. We believe that what we do here will strengthen the plethora of international instruments relating to the world of work as a guarantee of better protection and to preserve social peace throughout the world.

In conclusion, I must thank all wholeheartedly, those fellow countries that put forward my country as a candidate for membership of the Governing Body of the ILO, and those which voted for it. I really would like to commend the ILO for its enormous efforts in the cause of promoting and develop-

ing various aspects of social policies in order to achieve social peace and harmony.

(Mr Alexandris takes the Chair.)

Mr ATWOLI (*Worker, Kenya*)

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents for their well-deserved elections and to say that the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) has total confidence in their ability effectively to guide the affairs of this Conference.

We also congratulate the Director-General for submitting a well-focused Report of such indisputable relevance and appropriateness.

The Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, is for us as workers a continuation of the ILO campaign to reorient the focus of globalization to ensure that it maintains a human face by helping to put in place mechanisms that facilitate a fair share of its gains. This is what the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization calls for and this Report aptly responds to this core challenge.

The Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) agrees with the Report’s position that, despite the existence of various international, regional and national frameworks regulating migration, irregular and undocumented migration still persists and is affecting virtually all countries, including those of origin, transit and destination in almost equal measure.

As such the problem can only be sustainably tackled through a concerted and holistic approach involving all actors. For this to happen countries need to respect and uphold the Decent Work Agenda and, in particular, the fundamental rights at work.

Addressing such concerns across countries and regions would be a sure way of curtailing the free flow of capital, which has long been known to cause low production costs, a phenomenon that triggers the movement of labour in the same direction, thus exacerbating the migration dilemma.

The Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) feels, however, that addressing the deficit of decent work in countries of origin, which is a significant contributor to migration, cannot be achieved without the transparent and objective involvement of social partners in such policy initiatives, while respecting their independence and the right of representation of their members as enshrined in the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation.

This, however, does not seem to be the case in many countries. This is exemplified in Kenya, where the Government, through the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, has embarked on a scheme to weaken our federation by sponsoring the formation of a rival centre – and one that is very weak – the Federation of Public Sector Trade Unions of Kenya (PUSETU), which groups three trade unions under the Government as the employer. This is a matter of great regret.

This action was taken after the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) had blown the whistle on the theft of workers’ money at the National Social Security Fund, which is 100 per cent owned by workers.

In addition, the Cabinet Secretary has, to date, refused to gazette our nominee to the workers’ pension fund – the National Social Security Fund

(NSSF) – insisting instead on determining without consent who will represent our interests, contrary to the provisions of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

The Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) similarly deplores the order by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, to the police to harass the organization's officials regarding issues of administration at the organization's headquarters. This is unacceptable, since the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) is a free and independent labour movement.

At the same time, the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) calls on this august house to support social partners' independence as enshrined in the Constitution and reiterates the urgent need for the ILO to promote and urge member States to respect fundamental principles and rights at work as one way of addressing the decent work deficits and, hence, the challenges of migration.

In conclusion, the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) endorses the future directions proposed in the Report as a way of responding to the challenges of migration, as indicated in paragraphs 112–115 of the Report, and hopes that the Governing Body will facilitate the ILO's efforts to make these proposals a reality and visible within the post-2015 development framework.

Original French: Mr ZÜRCHER (Secretary of State, Federal Economy, Training and Research Department (DEFR), State Secretariat for the Economy (SECO), Head of the Labour Directorate (DA), Switzerland)

This year, the Swiss political agenda and that of the ILO are very similar. In May and February 2014, the Swiss people voted in two referendums. Firstly, the introduction of a legal minimum wage in Switzerland and, secondly, curbs on immigration to Switzerland.

The result of the recent popular vote on the introduction of a legal minimum wage of 4,000 Swiss francs (CHF) per month was clear. More than three-quarters of the Swiss people rejected the idea. Following the Government's position, the Swiss people confirmed the importance they attach to social partnership; in Switzerland, social partners are responsible for establishing wage arrangements among themselves. We should not, however, underestimate the impact of the political debate surrounding this vote. The initiative gave new momentum to wage development in certain sectors.

With respect to this session of the Conference, the ILO has published a global analysis of the setting of minimum wages that recognizes the advantages of a minimum wage.

In Switzerland, the State sets out general conditions to ensure that our economy works properly. Even when legislation lays down binding rules, considerable leeway is given to social partners to set working conditions. By negotiating collective agreements, the social partnership is able to set wage levels and development, taking into account various aspects, such as level of education, experience and seniority. It also balances the distribution of wages and adapts minimum conditions to the situation in each sector. It allows a faster and more flexible response when conditions in a sector deteriorate, particularly during temporary shocks. This was the case with the rapid appreciation of the Swiss franc, which had a direct impact on export

sectors. It makes it possible to find more credible long-term solutions when a sector is exposed to underlying trends, notably technological progress.

Social partnership is essential to economic freedom in Switzerland and to promoting dialogue and social harmony. It helps to take the pulse of the economy and guarantees that our policies offer everyone – young people, adults and older workers – productive jobs in the formal sector.

The Director-General's Report gives us an excellent overview of the discussions relating to migration. It also refers to the role that the ILO may play in this context.

In February, the Swiss people decided to limit immigration to Switzerland and to reintroduce immigration quotas. This popular vote took place following more than a decade of free movement of persons between Switzerland and the countries of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). This was a particularly emotional debate. The discussions that accompanied the vote were very lively. Virtually all the arguments put forward in this context can also be found in the Director-General's Report, in particular, the pressure on wages, increased competition in the labour market, the stress on transport infrastructures and also access to housing.

The Swiss people have reacted to the very high level of European immigration over the last decade. Twenty-three per cent of the Swiss population are foreign nationals; more than 15 per cent are citizens of the EU or EFTA Member States. The population has increased by more than 1 per cent per annum, on average, due to immigration. Moreover, it has been widely recognized that migration, especially from our European partners, is positive for Switzerland, both economically and culturally.

Migration is on the agenda at the multilateral level and in my country. Switzerland supports the ILO's involvement in these debates. The ILO must draw on the expertise and instruments at its disposal.

As the ILO study shows, the promotion of fundamental labour standards and decent work for all, dialogue and the tripartite structure are the main governance issues in promoting, in Switzerland and around the world, a migration policy that respects social justice.

Original Arabic: Mr AL HOQUBANI (Government, Saudi Arabia)

I would like to congratulate the President and the two Vice-Presidents on their election and to wish them every success in their work. I would also like to express my thanks to the Director-General for the efforts that he has been making through this Organization to achieve social justice in all its forms. I would also like to commend him on the excellent Report that he has submitted to us at this session of the Conference, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*.

The agenda for this session is replete with matters of great importance, including measures to sustain and promote the campaign to eliminate forced labour, and also the efforts made by the ILO to ensure the transition from the informal to the formal economy. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes all efforts that aim to eliminate forced labour. We also support all measures to ensure the transition from the informal to the formal economy in a way that would generate opportunities for decent work.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also thanks the Director-General for bringing the issue of fair migration forward for discussion by this Conference. This is a very important topic and we would like to stress that the concepts and characteristics of migration may differ, depending on whether the migration is temporary or permanent. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosts more than 10 million migrant workers. They are all furnished with temporary work permits and are accompanied by some 3 million family members, hailing from all corners of the world. All these workers are involved in the development of our country, and also the development of their home countries through their remittances, which are estimated at more than US\$40 billion per year.

The Government of Saudi Arabia has been working on the formulation of a new vision for the attainment of its national goals through the adoption of policies that are in line with the Recommendations of the ILO pertaining to decent work and the provision of an appropriate social protection floor.

The policies that have been adopted by my country to address the situation of migrant workers in breach of labour and residency regulations have always respected the human values that stem from Islam and that are also enshrined in the international labour standards pertaining to the protection and upholding of the rights of these workers. We have given those illegal workers an opportunity to remedy their illegal situation within a period of seven months and by granting them the necessary facilities for that purpose, in addition to certain exoneration from fees and from fines that have been imposed on them in this regard.

With regard to the situation of domestic workers in Saudi Arabia, in July 2013 we adopted regulations on domestic workers and persons treated as such, designed to regularize relations between employers and domestic workers in a way that would determine the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Pursuant to these regulations and through their application we have set up committees in the various labour offices in the country responsible for resolving labour disputes.

In the same vein, the Minister of Labour has signed bilateral agreements with a number of countries of origin in order to safeguard the interests of all these countries and to ensure respect for the rights of both workers and employers.

I am pleased to announce, from this platform, that we have made considerable strides in promoting the indigenization of employment in the private sector. We have launched a programme on work sectors earmarked for the employment of Saudis and, through this programme, we have managed to secure employment for more than 750,000 Saudi citizens. The number of women employed in the private sector is now estimated at 450,000, up from 55,000 prior to the launch of the programme.

In the area of social protection, the Council of Ministers has adopted and established an unemployment insurance scheme in order to increase job security for those working in the private sector. We have also launched a programme to assist people struggling to find employment, complementing the jobseekers' programme launched two years earlier.

Where awareness of the rights of workers is concerned, the Ministry has launched an online programme to raise workers' awareness of their rights and obligations. We have also set up a liaison office that provides services in seven different languages.

Lastly, I would like to commend the Director-General on the endeavours outlined in his Report *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, in which he calls for concerted efforts to support the Arab workers in the occupied Arab territories.

Original Spanish: Mr GUILLERMO (Government, Paraguay)

For the Republic of Paraguay, our participation in this session of the Conference is a milestone, because it is the first time that a Minister of Labour of Paraguay has attended this event.

In November 2013, the National Congress of Paraguay approved Act No. 5115 creating the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. Prior to that, the administration of labour matters fell under the mandate of what was the Ministry of Justice and Labour.

The new Ministry began to operate on 2 January of this year and, despite the inevitable obstacles associated with the organization of a new institution, especially one responsible for such sensitive issues for society, I can proudly say that we have made some significant advances in the short five-month period in which we have been functioning.

The new Ministry is entrusted by law with the task of designing public policies relating to labour, employment and social security. There is no need for me to elaborate on how important this work is because, after all, this is the forum par excellence in which employment can be analysed in an appropriate setting as the necessary stimulus for the proper development of labour-related issues.

Paraguay, which is immersed in a programme of sweeping economic reforms, has resolutely decided to develop coherent public policies on employment matters, strategically underpinned by vocational training programmes, programmes to attract investment and labour intermediation services. This is indeed a real sea change in the way in which labour matters are dealt with from an administrative point of view.

The act establishing the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security sets out in an explicit and not merely declaratory way the responsibility of this institution with regard to employment, and from the start this objective has formed part of our activities, as reflected in various undertakings that are duly supported by the two training bodies that provide a genuine vocational training system: the National Vocational Education and Training System (SINAFOCAL) and the National Service for Professional Advancement (SNPP). These two institutions fall under the coordination of the Ministry in both conceptual and budgetary terms.

But, as we all know, often the urgent does not wait for the important. This is why, in March 2014, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, barely two months after it had started to operate, had to deal with a national strike convened by a number of trade union confederations, the main leaders of which are now part of the official delegation of the Republic of Paraguay at this Conference.

The Ministry, at all times, showed respect for both the constitutional right to strike and the claims made by those striking. Under these circumstances, traditionally considered to be a conflict situation, we tried to find an opportunity to achieve a better understanding and a more fluid dialogue between the different social partners. And it was in this spirit that the Government, as a way of resolving the

strike, launched a process of social dialogue led by the Vice-President of the Republic in order to establish platforms for social dialogue.

These platforms, some of which are already up and running, address a wide range of different topics that are not all strictly labour-related, including those relating to education, health, rural development, housing and so on. I am pleased to report that the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security developed the platforms to deal specifically with labour issues in a context of full respect for tripartism, the principle that represents the very essence of the Organization that has brought us together today.

We are aware of the immense task ahead of us, as our country still has to step up its efforts in crucial areas of social and labour policy such as labour inspection, the prevention of forced labour and the eradication of child labour. Tripartite talks continue to be held on the issue of forced labour and on the eradication of child labour. With regard to the former, seminars have been held on the development of a national plan for the eradication of forced labour in Paraguay, with the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples. We hope to conclude the process before the end of the year. With regard to the campaign against child labour, the ILO, through the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), has initiated a dialogue with the General Directorate of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses of Paraguay with a view to developing the first national survey on child labour in rural areas. This experience will serve as a model for other countries in the region.

Within this context, we have no doubt that we can ask for international cooperation, particularly from the ILO, to strengthen our new Ministry, particularly in areas such as social dialogue, inspection procedures and the capacity building of staff members involved in those processes.

The new Ministry certainly intends to support these areas in the coming years, subject to the availability of appropriate resources.

Original French: Mr MAHARANTE (Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Legislation, Madagascar)

It is a great honour for me, as the Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Legislation of the Republic of Madagascar, to be here, for this, the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President on his outstanding election to the Presidency of this session of the Conference and I also commend the way in which he is conducting our work.

Furthermore, on behalf of my Government, and also speaking personally, I wish to thank the Director-General of the ILO and all of his team for the wonderful job they have done of organizing this session of the Conference.

My country recently underwent quite a lengthy period of socio-political crisis. However, we are now moving towards the gradual re-establishment of the rule of law and respect for the constitutional system. This socio-political crisis has had a very negative effect on our economy, leaving it in a fragile state. Despite this, my Government is working to implement a policy designed to promote respect for human dignity. Madagascar has ratified all the fundamental ILO Conventions, including the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), in order to

guarantee the basic standard needed to promote decent work. We are working hand in hand with the international community and have taken steps to implement the provisions of the forced labour Convention. For instance, on 15 January 2006, Madagascar adopted a new legal text, Decree 2006-015, on the general organization of the penitentiary system, which revised a previous Decree, No. 59-121, of 27 October 1959. The new Decree introduces changes concerning labour carried out by detainees. The main provisions of this new piece of legislation are: firstly, an end to forced labour in prisons, with work now being voluntary and any work for the benefit or personal convenience of individuals being prohibited; and secondly, any person being held in pre-trial detention and wishing to work must obtain permission from the judge in charge of the case concerned. Levels of remuneration are close to those set out in the Labour Code.

Madagascar, like all the ILO member States, is determined to eliminate forced labour and human trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation. The new political context in Madagascar and our national commitment mean that we must react rapidly to the new context that arises as we emerge from the crisis. My Government's priorities include poverty alleviation, stable economic growth, sustainable development, and decent and humane working conditions.

The spread of the informal economy only serves to worsen an already precarious situation and is closely linked to a slowdown in economic activities that has had a negative effect on employment creation. Young people are the first to suffer in this situation. We are drafting policies that aim to combat poverty and to lay solid foundations for equitable and sustainable growth. The climate in which we live is a worrying one but I would like to emphasize that we are taking action, in particular with the social partners and civil society. We organize employment days, on average, two or three times per year. The purpose of these days is to give young people an opportunity to find various sources of employment, to exchange information among themselves and to discuss issues with advisers. Working with local partners, we plan to hold a national employment platform at some point in the next few months. The aim of this event is to bring together all the stakeholders in the employment-creation sector.

Right now, Madagascar is launching an economic recovery plan that is based on the development of decent work in all sectors. The Government of Madagascar is endeavouring to implement measures that will guarantee the best possible working conditions for maritime workers by revising the Maritime Code. A relevant bill is now before Madagascar's Governing Council.

I think that, from what I have said, you now have an overview of the labour situation in Madagascar. The establishment of social justice through the promotion of decent work in our country can only be effectively achieved with the close cooperation of all the partners working in the field, more specifically within the framework of technical cooperation with the International Labour Office. Once again, I wish to reaffirm Madagascar's commitment to participating actively in the achievement of the ILO's goals.

First and foremost, I should like to congratulate the President of the Conference on his election. I wish him all possible success in his stewardship of this session of the Conference. I should also like to pay tribute to Mr Ryder, the Director-General, and commend his distinguished efforts in leading the Organization and in improving its working mechanisms. I should like to extend the greetings of my country, the Kingdom of Bahrain, on behalf of its leadership, Government and people. On behalf of Bahrain, I should like to express appreciation to the ILO for the important and exceptional support it offers to member States in developing their legislation and improving the situation in the employment sector.

The Director-General's Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, refers to a subject which is related not only to the labour market but to human rights. Therefore, it is of key importance, taking into account the increase in the phenomenon of labour migration resulting from the deterioration in the economic situation in certain countries and the growing need for manpower in others. For this reason, we acknowledge the ILO's role in promoting the social dimension of globalization and, as far as possible, reducing the negative repercussions. We also agree with the Director-General that the protection of migrant workers and of their fair rights must begin in the countries of origin so that people leave their countries on a voluntary basis and are not forced to do so.

The Report refers to a number of issues which we should like to go into in further detail. I do not have much time, so I shall just deal with a few aspects of the Report which Bahrain considers to be of key importance and which it continually seeks to promote.

Since our Sovereign launched a reform programme which aims at long-term progress, measures have accelerated to establish the principles of freedom of association, promote social dialogue, enshrine the principle of tripartism and extend social protection to all workers without exception, including unemployment insurance. Migrant workers may now change employer. Legal protection has also been provided for domestic workers under the Labour Code in the private sector. Training and employment programmes have been reintroduced for our national workforce, thereby keeping unemployment rates at reasonable levels, as stated by a former Director-General of the ILO.

Bahrain is proud to be a Member of this Organization, as we share its noble objectives which it aims to achieve for all peoples on earth. Bahrain was also proud to be one of the eight countries chosen by the Organization to launch the pioneering Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), back in 2002, following which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in March 2010 for its implementation.

Political leaders in the Kingdom of Bahrain not only support workers and are trying to remove all obstacles to the exercise of their trade unions rights, in particular the freedom to establish trade unions and trade union confederations, but also emphasize the importance of ensuring prosperity for the private sector by providing greater facilities for employers as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain a balance

between the interests of the tripartite constituents, so as to guarantee economic prosperity.

The Kingdom of Bahrain seeks to produce and publish on a regular and transparent basis labour market indices so as to facilitate the task of decision-makers in adapting new graduates to the needs of the labour market. In this important international forum, I would like to say that Bahrain is proud to be one of the members of the Governing Body for the period 2014–17. I hope that all the efforts of our Organization are mobilized to achieve social peace and to develop mechanisms designed to strike a balance between the interests of the tripartite constituents in the member States. You will agree that social stability and trust among the tripartite constituents will help accelerate production, develop the economy, create jobs, and promote prosperity and social protection.

In conclusion, I thank the Director-General for his constant support to Bahrain.

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

Allow me to congratulate the President of this 103rd Session of the Conference on his election and on the quality of our work.

Forced labour, the dominance of the informal economy and unemployment in countries like Cameroon are features that do not encourage social cohesion and the promotion of social justice in the workplace. My country therefore strongly supports the strengthening of Convention No. 29 in order to better protect the working masses and the means of production. Regarding the informal economy, the President of my country, Mr Paul Biya, established a Ministry for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts in 2004. Its main objective is to promote SMEs and restructure the informal sector in order to facilitate a fair transition to a structured and efficient formal sector.

According to the National Statistical Institute of my country, the informal sector employs 80 per cent of the workforce and contributes 45 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). It has been calculated that around 4 million people are working in the informal sector and face problems linked to a lack of competitiveness, marketing opportunities, raw materials, financing and social protection. In order to resolve this, a law regulating handicrafts was adopted in 2007. This law and its statutes set out the procedure for moving from the informal sector into the organized and modern handicrafts sector. The statutes allow the identification of all handicraft workers and the mapping of trades by district.

In 2013, we participated in the launch of the VCT@WORK initiative for voluntary and free HIV testing for workers and members of their families. At the national level, we submitted a programme to implement the initiative and held the celebrations of International Labour Day in Cameroon under the slogan "Workers of Cameroon together against HIV/AIDS". This is how the VCT@WORK initiative was rolled out across the country. The initial results of more than 10,000 people undergoing testing are encouraging.

Cameroon has ratified the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). Their implementation is reflected in the signing of a decree setting out the conditions that have to be met by foreign workers to

work in our country. The National Employment Fund manages labour migration flows. We emphasize that projects on labour migration are implemented in cooperation with the ILO and the IOM. We wholeheartedly support the ILO agenda for fair migration.

Furthermore, President Biya has made youth and graduate employment a national priority. A law on promoting SMEs has been adopted, responding to the need to improve the social climate. In under two years 220,000 jobs have been created. A partnership is being established between the State, the private sector and the trade unions to introduce a programme for the systematic recruitment of young graduates in order that they can be given that necessary first professional experience, without which no business will consider their application. Regarding social protection, we are working to ensure systematic social protection for all workers through declarations and denunciations, thanks to the new information and communications technology (ICT) put in place by our social security agency, CNPS. Through all these actions we intend to support the policy adopted by the ILO and the Director-General.

Original Arabic: Mr SEDDIKI (Minister of Employment and Social Affairs, Morocco)

It gives me great pleasure at this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, on my behalf and on that of the Moroccan delegation, to offer my sincere congratulations to the President on the confidence that has been vested in him through his election to the presidency, and to wish him every success in the performance of his tasks.

I also take this occasion to thank the Director-General of the ILO and his team for the work that has been done to ensure the success of this Conference.

The agenda for the 103rd Session deals with issues of crucial importance to the world of work, including the campaign against all forms of forced labour, the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and the issue of employment as one of the essential components of decent work.

I would also like to commend the Director-General on his excellent Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, which deals with an issue of great importance and the source of complex problems.

In this context, I should recall that Morocco's policy on migration has always been in full compliance with international standards and instruments and that the policy launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI took a holistic approach to the issue, underpinned by respect for human rights.

In 2013, democratic reforms were introduced in Morocco to strengthen the rule of law, good governance and protection of the dignity, rights, freedoms and safety of citizens, to ensure that their needs were met, to foster conditions conducive to development, to promote investment, to create jobs and to provide conditions for a decent life for all.

Within this framework, government action over the coming three years will focus on the following areas: first, promoting development through investment, building the competitiveness of the country's economic system and devising appropriate sectoral and structural strategies and policies; second, these efforts will be accompanied by major reforms, including in respect of tax and pensions;

third, social policies will be harmonized, in particular those relating to the social economy, SMEs, control of the informal economy, the strengthening of employment arrangements and efforts to avoid marginalization and precarious jobs; and fourth, the promotion of employment and efforts to reduce joblessness will be accorded priority by the Government, by fast-tracking the legislative and institutional process to implement the provisions of the Constitution of 1 July 2011.

The principal measures to promote employment comprise efforts to: improve governance in the labour market and the services provided by the National Skills and Job Promotion Agency; the preparation and implementation of new strategies to promote employment; the better management of migration flows, with a view to regularizing the situation of immigrants; and, with a view to enhancing long-term employment prospects, the preparation of a national employment strategy underpinned by a realistic analysis of the job situation.

Where social protection is concerned, a number of different measures have been adopted, including: a project for the provision of job-loss compensation; extending medical cover; reviewing the conditions for the granting of old-age pensions; and widening the scope of guaranteed care services.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that Morocco is deeply concerned by the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation. From this platform, I call on the ILO to spare no effort in providing support and assistance to help alleviate the hardship of this long-suffering people.

Ms JUNG (Vice-Minister of Employment and Labour, Republic of Korea)

According to the Report of the Director-General, migrants represent about 3 per cent of the global population and this number is expected to grow. Taking into account the continuing trends of Asian populations and the changes in the proportion of the economically active population, we are fully aware of the evolving complexity and multifaceted nature of migration issues. Accordingly, I believe that it makes very good sense for fair migration to be on the agenda of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference and for us to discuss the tasks incumbent upon us.

In Korea, the number of foreign residents has been continuously increasing since 2000, reaching approximately 1.6 million or 3 per cent of the total population today. In response, in 2007, the Korean Government promulgated its Treatment of Foreigners in Korea Act. In the following year, 2008, we established and began enforcing the first five-year plan for migration policy. Following the establishment of the second basic plan for migration policy in 2012, in line with the vision of a vibrant Korea growing together with its international population, the Korean Government is carrying out various policies designed to ensure openness, social integration, human rights protection and safety, and to promote international cooperation.

In line with this social integration policy, we are providing migrants with genuine support, tailored to their needs, throughout the various stages of migration so that they can successfully settle down and become self-sufficient in Korean society. In addition, Korea is providing multicultural education to improve communication between migrants and Ko-

reans and to open up opportunities for people to embrace cultural diversity.

With a view to preventing discrimination against foreign workers through labour inspection, we are also making our best efforts to protect the rights of foreigners through such measures as the Refugee Act, which took effect in 2013.

As mentioned in the Report of the Director-General, having a well-regulated labour migration system is one of the most effective ways of ensuring fair migration. With the introduction of the employment permit system in 2004, Korea has been operating the whole procedure, from the migrants' entry into Korea, their search for a job and their return to their country of origin, in a manner that is transparent and clear. Not only that, the Government is protecting the rights of the workers by according them treatment equal to that accorded to Koreans under the Labour Standards Act, the Minimum Wage Act, and other instruments. In doing so, Korea is seeking to set an example of migration management.

In September 2010, Korea's employment permit system was praised by the ILO as a pioneering approach to migration management in Asia and the system was a first prize winner in the 2011 UN Public Service Awards Programme. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the implementation of the employment permit system, in 2014, Korea will continue to refine and promote the system and will spare no effort in protecting the rights of migrant workers.

At the same time, the Korean Government has been contributing to the support of human resources in developing countries through various official development assistance programmes. It is our hope that our assistance will facilitate the sustainable development of the countries concerned. In order to support job creation in countries of origin, Korea is providing support both for the construction of job-training centres and the establishment of job-training policies, with a view to ensuring that the countries can operate and manage these systems in a self-sustaining manner. Through the ILO-Korea partnership programme, Korea has been contributing to efforts to build capacity and improve policy relating to migration in the Asian developing countries.

It is my hope that, through tripartite discussion in the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, we can share the best practices in migration and respond properly to the trends of global migration. It is our belief that the ILO will play a significant role in pursuit of these goals, in particular in attaining the goal of fair migration.

Original Russian: Mr KOZIK (Worker, Belarus)

I am speaking on behalf of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus. I should like to convey my greetings to all the participants at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of our 4 million trade unionists. Of course, many global initiatives that came into being in this Organization continue to be spread all over the world. I am referring to the long-term initiatives in the fields of employment, OSH and the introduction of the concept of decent work. I am also referring to the activities of many other organizations in addressing issues. The agenda of the 103rd Session contains issues such as forced labour, the informal economy and employment. Undoubtedly, these are

matters of great significance for workers worldwide.

One of the key challenges in the world of work today, in my view, is labour migration, considered in the 2014 Report of the Director-General, and this actually gives us an opportunity to participate in a global tripartite discussion on this important matter. Our main objective today is to create a balanced ILO programme to guarantee fair migration, which would involve all parties and take into account all problems: political, economic, legal and social problems. Fortunately, Belarus does not experience any of the problems we examine on a yearly basis at the International Labour Conference, such as unemployment. We have enough jobs for any citizen wishing to make a living. These issues also include compliance with our labour legislation, with the rights conferred on trade unions and state organizations. We cannot be direct participants in such ILO initiatives, but we will assist actively in resolving the issues that the ILO identifies today. Belarus has a quite effective social system to protect workers' rights. This does not simply involve compliance with labour legislation, as I have already outlined, but also socio-labour issues, in particular collective bargaining and social partnerships. This is something that is allowed in our country and something that exists at all levels: local, industry and national. Belarus has been active and will continue to be active in helping to solve the issues under the ILO's consideration.

I should like to make a few general comments on the work of this very large and important organization, the International Labour Organization, and the work of its permanent secretariat, the International Labour Office. Year after year, we feel, as do many other delegations, that the principles and methods of work of the International Labour Office, its experts and committees need to be modified. We need to ensure respect for the principle of tripartism, transparency in decision-making, pluralism of opinions and objectivity.

In this regard, I cannot fail to mention the lack of objectivity and transparency in certain decision-making processes, particularly with regard to what happened, during the current session, to Belarus in the Committee on the Application of Standards. This year, Belarus had an initial contacts mission, which produced a balanced report, reflecting the significant progress made in fulfilling the recommendations of the Committee on the Application of Standards. When the matter was brought before the Committee, there was support from various parties. Of course, some criticism was voiced but, on the whole, comments were positive. The Committee's decision itself is positive, outlining prospects for the future and noting the successful overcoming of problems. Yet, at the same time, it concludes with a request to include a special paragraph. What is this supposed to mean? There were thousands of people involved in the Committee's decision-making process and then only three people actually wrote that decision. Was this a mistake? I urge you not to vote for and not to endorse, during the current session, the decision put forward by the Committee.

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

Increased migration is one of the most visible and significant aspects of globalization. Growing numbers of people move within countries and across

borders, looking for better employment opportunities, better lifestyles and a decent future.

Social, economic, political and environmental problems are root causes of migration. As to the labour market, migration is a symptom of imbalances in sending countries, such as high rates of unemployment and underemployment among low-skilled workers, low wages for skilled workers, and unmet demand for education and acquisition of skills.

According to the 2013 World Economic Forum, more than 400 million people worldwide are considered migrants. At the same time, a prolonged recession and stagnant employment growth have led to anti-immigrant sentiment and to proposed legislation to restrict the rights of migrants in many countries.

Although migration is usually seen as problematic, it contributes to sustainable development. For households in poor areas, remittances improve security and, with the support of appropriate policies, can contribute to local economic growth. In industrial countries with ageing populations migrant workers are an increasingly important part of the labour force.

While addressing the growing negative sentiment on migration, international dialogue needs to address the weakness in policy-making on migration, inter alia, the miscalculation of economic outlooks and the absence of a private sector. In this context, efforts should be focused on developing arguments based on the contributions migration makes to the economy and society, and on the need to include the private sector, as an equal player, in migration policy-making.

Considering the manifold links between migration and employment, migration policy has to be coherent and complement the policy fields of education and vocational training, economic promotion and the labour market.

There is also a need for political focus on the consequences of international migration for economic and social progress in the migrants' countries of origin. Also, policy needs to seek to encourage the use of remittances by creating effective incentives for productive and employment-oriented investments in the economy.

Hence, my considerations on the issue are as follows.

First, policies should address how to increase labour market flexibility while maintaining and strengthening workers' rights and improving working conditions.

Second, remittances are important for households and communities, but are often ignored in development policies. Better support in the form of services, training and infrastructure improves the capacity of migrants and their households to make productive investments in their home areas.

Third, educated and skilled migration can result in a brain drain and a decrease in human capital, which requires long-term efforts to be balanced by education and training.

I will conclude my remarks by noting that, in my view, the ILO's strategic approach to the issue could be based on the four pillars of: capacity enhancement; policy advocacy; policy-oriented research; and international cooperation.

In this context, the following activities could also be undertaken: technical cooperation with government entities of developing countries in the areas of migration management and policy development;

conducting research and advisory programmes on labour migration; and development of national, regional and international migration policies and strategies.

Mr GOCHE (*Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe*)

Let me begin my address by expressing my heartfelt congratulations to the President and the other Officers of the Conference on their election and, subsequently, on ably steering the work of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The key role that the ILO should play in labour migration cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, we salute the Director-General for choosing a pertinent topic, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, as the focus of his Report this year. My Government is indeed encouraged by the Office's continued effort on the migration front, including the important role played by the Director-General at the 2013 United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Further, we commend the role played by the ILO as Chair of the Global Migration Group (GMG).

It is regrettable that, for too many years, migration has been mistakenly viewed as a scourge and not as a development enabler. As a result, it has continued to be poorly conceived as a special and exclusive enclave for the security apparatus, especially within most governments. The status quo of erroneously viewing migration mostly as a security threat is a matter of serious concern to my Government. Zimbabwe believes in the notion of not just the free movement of goods but also the free movement of persons. It is therefore my sincere hope that the ILO can take advantage of its presence on platforms such as the GMG to contribute to the effective protection of migrants' rights.

It is indeed true that the fragmentation of global migration initiatives and multilateral institutions concerned with migration has been the major Achilles heel in setting an ILO agenda on migration. This fragmentation creates serious disharmony and unnecessary competition at the national level due to diverse ideologies. At the multilateral stage, it results in the wastage of resources through the administration of different institutions with overlapping mandates.

The ILO must therefore clearly define its particular roles and competencies across the very wide spectrum of migration management. It must nevertheless be clear that, for us, the entry point in seeking a collaborative relationship with other multilateral institutions is not as a fringe partner but on the basis that the greatest percentage of migrants is made up of workers and members of their families. Indeed, for this to be achieved, the Organization must be prepared to fund the agenda with adequate resources.

For us ultimately to make a significant impact within the multilateral system, the tripartite constituents will need to interrogate the factors that hinder the ratification of Conventions Nos 97 and 143. These Conventions are outdated and, therefore, my Government supports the elaboration of a new comprehensive instrument. This will mobilize fresh commitment among member States and social partners in a rapidly changing global environment.

Like many other countries, Zimbabwe continues to pursue sustainable means of addressing migration

challenges, all the more so, given the skills flight from the country due to sanctions-induced socio-economic challenges. My Government actively promotes circular migration and the return of skilled human resources from its diaspora, including through bilateral cooperation schemes on labour migration with our neighbours.

This thrust is supported by observations in the Director-General's Report, which shows that there is a significant amount of intraregional migration across all regions, with that of Africa being well above 50 per cent between 2005 and 2010.

My Government looks forward to the continued support of the Office concerning its labour migration initiatives. We also look forward to the Office's contribution to our national development plan through the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation, Zim Asset for short, particularly with respect to employment creation and poverty reduction.

As I now conclude, I would like to mention my Government's firm support for the conclusions of the 2013 Tripartite Technical Meeting on Labour Migration and the subsequent decision of the Governing Body to make labour migration an explicit priority of the ILO.

Mr TANIGAWA (*Employer, Japan*)

On behalf of the Japanese Business Federation, Keidanren, I would like to thank the Director-General and his team for the excellent Reports which they have submitted for discussion by the Conference.

First of all, allow me to touch briefly on how Japanese employers see the initiative launched by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, known as "Abenomics", and to suggest how the ILO may incorporate the outcome of this initiative into its work.

When he took office in December 2012, Prime Minister Abe undertook to pursue the economic policies outlined in his election campaign. This comprised three measures, referred to in the initiative as "arrows". The first arrow is aggressive monetary easing, with an inflation target of 2 per cent; the second arrow is a flexible fiscal policy, including stimulus packages of ¥10 trillion in public spending; and the third arrow is a new growth strategy, with the revitalization of Japan's industry, market creation and global outreach. We strongly believe that the third arrow is the most important of the three, but this has not yet run its course.

Abenomics has facilitated a recovery from the economic downturn occasioned by the global financial crisis and the Great East Japan Earthquake. Since the first quarter of 2013, the real growth rate of the country's GDP has picked up somewhat. The current unemployment rate stands at 3.6 per cent, the lowest it has been over the past decade, and the ratio between jobs and applicants is 1.08. We understand the importance of employers' confidence in efforts to boost the economy and hire more people.

I recall that, in my statement here in 2013, I pointed out that economic growth led by vibrant corporate activities is the key to solving the challenges of employment. There is now clear evidence of this, which can be shared with all participants at this session.

We held the recurrent discussion on employment four years ago and we are to hold it again this year. Since that last discussion, the ILO has been trying

to overcome employment challenges by promoting decent work, but the situation of employment has not recovered everywhere in the world. People stay longer in unemployment, and vulnerable workers, in particular young workers, stay unemployed.

In order to overcome these employment challenges, all ILO constituents must recognize the role of private companies as the source of employment. The Director-General has been proposing a direct engagement with private companies but, in this year's Report, there is one indicator in particular, on improving the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, with which we are not satisfied. We assume that the ILO has not allocated sufficient funds and staff for this particular indicator and we are concerned about losing momentum in the efforts by the Organization on the ground to give effect to the idea of sustainable enterprises.

Last but not least, I conclude my statement by repeating once again the following remark. We would value it if the Office could recognize the importance of enterprises that create jobs and would place more emphasis on the development and sustainability of enterprises as a prerequisite for efforts to address the continuing challenge of job creation. We would also like to emphasize that we have focal points for enterprises within the secretariat, namely, ACT/EMP. We have the IOE and we have employers' organizations in the member States. Any new initiative should therefore be carried out through these entities, in order to respect – and not to undermine – the ILO's governance mechanisms.

Mr MWESIGWA (*Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, Uganda*)

I congratulate the President on his election to the Chair and on guiding this great assembly graciously. I commend the Officers of the Conference for their administrative support for the President's work. I further applaud the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Ryder, and the entire International Labour Organization for their creativity and vigilance in building a future with decent work.

At its 97th Session in 2008, the Conference adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, calling on all Members of the Organization to pursue policies based on the strategic objectives of employment, social protection, social dialogue and fundamental principles and rights at work.

In pursuit of this Declaration, the creation of employment opportunities has continued to be one of the main channels to poverty reduction, economic transformation and social cohesion in Uganda. Uganda's unemployment rate is currently 4.2 per cent. Therefore, accelerating job creation is a cornerstone in the Government's development strategy for socio-economic transformation. Both the National Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan 2010–15 prioritize enhancing gainful employment as a key prerequisite to realizing the long-term development vision of the country as a society that has been transformed into a modern and prosperous country within 30 years.

I also wish to commend the Governing Body for placing an item on the agenda on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy. The informal economy is significantly impacting the world of work, with as much as 40–80 per cent of the labour force in developing countries working within it. Increasingly, transition to formality has

emerged as a priority policy agenda in developed and developing countries.

In Uganda, like most developing countries, the informal sector represents an important part of the economy and certainly of the labour market, and thus plays a major role in employment creation, production and income generation. The informal sector is a source of employment to a significant proportion of the population. It employs over 1.8 million households. In an attempt to facilitate transitions from the informal to the formal economy, the Government of Uganda is finalizing the informal sector policy and strategy.

At its 317th Session in March 2013, the Governing Body decided to place a standard-setting item on the agenda of this 103rd Session of the Conference in 2014, with a view to supplementing Convention No. 29 to address implementation gaps and advance prevention, protection and compensation measures to effectively achieve the elimination of forced labour.

In this respect, I wish to report that the Government of the Republic of Uganda is committed to the abolition of forced labour in accordance with the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), which Uganda ratified immediately after independence in 1963. This is further demonstrated by the eventual repeal of the Public Order and Security Act, No. 20 of 1967, which empowered the Executive to restrict an individual's association or communication with others, independently of the commission of any offence and subject to penalties involving compulsory labour. Likewise, the Government repealed the Community Farm Settlement Decree, 1975.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for its technical and financial support for various development programmes. Finally, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Uganda to the ILO objectives of defending social justice and promoting fair globalization in the transformation of the world of work.

Original Arabic: Ms ASHRY (Minister of Manpower and Migration, Egypt)

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to congratulate the President on his election at this session and for the trust that has been vested in him.

I would also like to thank the Director-General for his Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. This is a comprehensive document which will contribute to the Organization's quest for fair globalization under which the dignity of all individuals is assured.

The Egyptian Government is witnessing with great approbation the efforts deployed by the Director-General in pursuit of this goal, including at the World Economic Forum in Davos, in the framework of the G20 and through the joint communiqué on multilateral cooperation issued by Germany, the ILO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization.

With regard to the Report before us, I would like to highlight the following points.

Migration is a phenomenon of unprecedented global concern. We can say that there is no country in the world which does not know one or another form of migration. Given the constant increase in the number of migrants, who today total more than

231 million, or some 3 per cent of the world's population, we can no longer afford to ignore this issue. That is why migration should no longer be viewed merely as a problem which needs solving, but as a project which must be managed in a sound manner with the involvement of all stakeholders.

The fact that the ILO is currently chairing the GMG gives us the opportunity to put the spotlight on specific aspects of migrant labour, salient among which are the following: the need to encourage wider accession to the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the ratification of which Egypt has been considering; including gender issues and the rights of women, girls and migrants' families in migration-related policies; protecting migrant workers against arbitrary practices and exploitation; and coordinating efforts by international organizations and the various agencies dealing with migration, with a view to setting up centres specializing in international migration in the labour-sending countries, for the compilation of statistics and studies on migration. These centres will monitor the shapes and patterns of migration, analyse foreign labour markets and train researchers specializing in this area.

Now that the process of a free and democratic election of the President has been completed, in compliance with the accepted international standards, the Arab Republic of Egypt is more determined than ever to achieve the aspirations of the revolutionary movements of 25 January 2011 and 30 June 2013 for liberty and social justice and to respond to the demands of its citizens, both within the country and abroad. To this end, we have drafted a decision for the purpose of establishing the country's first high commission for Egyptians abroad, which will be entrusted with protecting their rights, maintaining their links with their home country and their involvement in its development, and providing information and guidance to persons wishing to emigrate on the issue of legal migration and also organizing retraining programmes.

At the same time, efforts are under way to reorganize the domestic labour market by drafting specific legislation on this matter. Accordingly, a new bill on trade unions has been drafted in line with international standards and will be tabled in the new Parliament once the latter has been elected, as stipulated in the Egyptian Constitution. In addition, the country's first National Social Dialogue Council has been constituted, under the presidency of the Minister of Manpower, and comprises representatives of the employers and various trade union organizations.

A new Labour Code has been drafted in keeping with international labour standards. For the first time in Egyptian jurisprudence, a bill has been drafted on the convocation of special courts which will be able swiftly to resolve labour disputes.

Lastly, the Report *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories* sounds a warning of pending catastrophe which fully corresponds to reality and must be carefully heeded. Steps must be taken to promote decent work opportunities and programmes, and to end Israeli practices obstructing free movement and economic activities in the occupied territories so as to prevent the situation deteriorating still further. International efforts must be mustered to support the Arab workers in the occupied Arab territories.

In responding to the Reports, Zambia hereby states that it is a beneficiary of capacity-building programmes offered by the ILO. About 35 officers from various ministries participated in a workshop on international labour standards and reporting to enable us to understand and respond to the observations and requests of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. In addition, more than 32 officers underwent refresher and orientation courses on labour administration.

As a signatory to the ILO Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), and also in line with the theme of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, Zambia has enacted the Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act to facilitate the issuance of regulations for vulnerable employees in general categories and the retail and domestic sectors, aimed at moving the working poor out of poverty.

While we can report that the majority of employers inspected are complying with the minimum wage, it is a challenge for SMEs in the retail, hospitality and agriculture sectors. Inadequacies of the inspectorate sometimes contribute to continued non-compliance.

The Conference debates reveal strong linkages between minimum wage and the transition from the informal to the formal economy. The wide promotion of the principle of minimum wage can assist countries in the mainstreaming of the Decent Work Agenda at the national level and in lifting the welfare of the workers currently operating in the informal economy.

Zambia welcomes the discussion on employment. In 2013, a strategy on industrialization and job creation was launched, aimed at creating 1 million jobs, new formal-sector jobs, over a period of five years.

Furthermore, Zambia launched a project on decent jobs for youth and improved food security through the development of sustainable rural enterprises, which runs from 2013 to 2017. This intends to facilitate the creation of at least 3,000 decent jobs for young people and to support the performance improvement of at least 5,000 youths or youth-run enterprises. This project will be implemented under the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) and supported through the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC).

In addition, an initiative on more and better jobs in the mining sector is yet another avenue where Zambia hopes to create new and decent employment.

With all these programmes in place, there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) in Zambia to monitor effectively and report on not only the number of new jobs created, but also the quality and rate at which they are being created in relation to population and economic growth.

Zambia commends the Governing Body for proposing the agenda on improving Convention No. 29, in order to address emerging trends. Due to Zambia's geographical position, it is affected both as a source and a transition point for traffickers. To curb this vice, which makes migrant workers vulnerable to forced labour, the Government of the Republic of Zambia acceded to the Protocol to Pre-

vent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in 2005, which requires member States, among other things, to make human trafficking a criminal offence and to take appropriate measures to prevent it.

I am delighted to inform this Conference that a national policy to combat human trafficking was adopted in 2007, followed by the enactment of the comprehensive Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2008 (No. 11). We therefore look forward to the Conference outcome on forced labour to enable us to complement efforts under way.

I also wish to pay special tribute to Mr Guy Ryder, the ILO Director-General, for paying a visit to Zambia in 2013 and launching Zambia's second DWCP which runs from 2013 to 2016.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude for the unwavering support that the Government of the Republic of Zambia receives from its social partners.

Original Russian: Mr MUSLUMOV (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Azerbaijan)

Allow me to begin by expressing our thanks to Mr Ryder, the ILO Director-General, for presenting his Report. This forum proves just how vital international cooperation is for sustainable social development and fair migration. It also identifies new possibilities to implement these strategies. I agree that some of these migration policy issues go beyond the ILO's mandate. In particular, they refer to issues mentioned in the Report related to security and multiculturalism. The Republic of Azerbaijan is a vivid example of how the ILO's principles can and should be implemented at a country level. Our country, on the basis of lasting democracy and economic development, is gradually moving forward along this path.

In order to ensure decent work, a process of establishing market economy institutions is under way as a precondition for the development of employment and social protection.

Over the past ten years, the GDP of our country increased tenfold, and investment in our economy amounted to US\$132 billion, more than 70 per cent of which is foreign investment. Our strategic currency reserves exceeded our foreign sovereign debt tenfold. Over 1.2 million new jobs were created; the unemployment rate fell to 5 per cent; the poverty rate dropped to 5.3 per cent; and household income actually increased more than sixfold. Migration is one of the key factors for social transformation today. Azerbaijan's participation in the system of international migration and the sustainable development of our economy have made our national workforce more mobile, both inside and outside our country. Increased investment, macroeconomic and political stability, legal frameworks, the development of transit routes and a number of other aspects have led to an influx of foreign migrant workers to Azerbaijan.

The successful implementation of our oil strategy, the efficient use of natural resources to develop the non-oil sector and the further increase in economic integration will facilitate further development of migration processes.

Azerbaijan, while building a democratic State based on the rule of law, has ratified a number of international regulatory instruments on the rights of

migrant workers. At present, a sufficiently developed legislation on the status and the rights of migrant workers is in force in Azerbaijan. Our country has signed bilateral agreements on migration with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Belarus and Turkey. Azerbaijan is one of the few countries that has acceded to the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. In early 2014, we signed the Readmission Agreement with the EU, which will help to further improve our capacity to regulate migration processes. With regard to issues of multiculturalism reflected in the Report, I should like to note that owing to the rich cultural heritage and traditions of tolerance of Azerbaijan and to the importance of promoting in the international arena all of our society's achievements in this field, our President signed a decree on the establishment of the Baku International Centre on Multiculturalism in May 2014. All of this demonstrates that our country attaches great importance to protecting the rights and freedoms of migrant workers and to ensuring their social protection on the basis of democratic principles.

I would, however, like to draw your attention to the fact that social security is increasingly important today in further developing social rights, including those of migrants. In that respect, it should be noted that the unresolved armed conflicts and threats posed by terrorism restrict social development opportunities, not only in some countries but worldwide. Thus, the social development of Azerbaijan, against the backdrop of economic transformation, is stunted considerably by the occupation of 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia and the presence of over 1 million forced migrants in our country. This, in my opinion, requires greater efforts to be made by the international community in order to overcome the problems hindering our achievement of the ILO's strategic objectives.

I would also like to address an issue which has a direct impact on migration processes, international trade liberalization and division of labour, as well as access of competing products from developing countries to the commodity and service markets of developed countries. The economic focus of globalization makes migrant processes dependent on global financial and trade markets.

Today's session of the Conference, in defining new ILO initiatives to promote fair migration, once again reaffirms the key position of the ILO within the UN system. In conclusion, I wish you all productive work. I am confident that the relevant ILO standards in this area can, and should, help to identify responses to overcome the main challenges reflected in the Report of the Director-General.

Original Spanish: Mr GAMBERA (Worker, Uruguay)

It is a great honour to address this august assembly on behalf of the workers of Uruguay.

In his Report, the Director-General refers to the changes that have taken place in the world of work since the ILO's establishment in 1919 and their implications for the ILO and for the capacity of this Organization to fulfil its mandate.

I would like to mention a number of the issues that form the cornerstone of the ILO and reflect the spirit of its founders.

First, the idea that there is an inextricable link between peace and social justice. Any situation of injustice, such as low wages, the absence of decent

working conditions, child exploitation, the violation of freedom of association and so on, is a factor which is contrary to peace.

Second, the aim of international labour legislation was not only to combat the situations of injustice that were – and are still – being experienced by workers across the world, but also to prevent unfair competition among nations. Therefore, there is a close link between labour standards and the rules of international trade.

The current crises have reopened the discussions of the past; the challenges raised by the unemployment of millions of people, the technological revolution (the end of which is not yet in sight), demographic change, the inequalities and the divide between the rich and the poor, the depletion of natural resources and the questioning of the idea that progress is infinite have led to renewed debate between those who argue in favour of the “supremacy of the market” and those who are in favour of policy, in other words those who support active social and employment policies to tackle the major challenges referred to by the Director-General.

We therefore note with serious concern what is now going on: old solutions, applied for a long time in Latin America, are now being resuscitated, involving wage cuts, less favourable working conditions, reductions in industrial rights, the loss of social protection and restrictions on union rights. This boils down to deregulation and a return to the old type of Darwinian capitalism.

On the other hand, the ILO and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) recently have appreciated the progress made in our country in the field of social and labour policies over the last decade.

Today, because we have limited time, we will draw attention only to the most recent development, which is that domestic and rural workers are now involved in collective bargaining and have their own collective agreements. Furthermore, a law has recently been adopted on the criminal liability of enterprises which will be applied to employers who do not adopt the necessary measures to prevent occupational risks.

Now, over the last decade and following the negotiations of the wage councils, workers in our country, as a result of our campaign, have seen an increase in real wages of just over 40 per cent. It is not only workers that are doing well: our country is going through an exceptional period of growth in GDP. In 2013, our production in physical volume was almost 73 per cent higher than the 2003 level.

Macroeconomic stability and the establishment of clear rules have in fact created a climate of negotiation, encouraging the development of entrepreneurial activity. Such activities benefit from legislation to promote investment with significant tax breaks and benefits for SMEs.

All sectors of the economy are expanding: both export sectors and those linked to the internal market, which are benefiting from the increase in household incomes. Investment in the private sector has increased by 345 per cent in ten years. Although the tax reform involved a reduction in corporate income tax in order to encourage investment, the amounts generated by this tax have actually increased since 2008 as there has been an increase in company profits.

So, clearly, not only the workers have benefited. We in Uruguay serve as empirical evidence that it is

possible to both grow and redistribute at the same time, improving the living conditions of our people, and that it is possible to achieve development by applying, from the outset, social policies that will meet the needs of the whole population, promoting internal consumption and public investment.

We are convinced that there is still a lot to be done in terms of social justice and the redistribution of wealth. It is only if we are mobilized and if we fight that we will in fact be able to guarantee what we have achieved and move forward with the reforms over the next five years, in the context of a new government that will be elected in October this year.

Finally, as the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War approaches, on behalf of the workers of Uruguay in this assembly, I should just like to remember and pay tribute to the millions who fell victim to the needlessness of that war.

We will continue to campaign for democracy, peace and freedom. These values are so close to the hearts of workers throughout the world, and when they are called into question it is we, the workers, who are the weakest and the most disadvantaged, very often having to pay with our lives.

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

I would like to congratulate the President on the trust that has been placed in him on being elected to lead the work of this session of the Conference. I present my respects to Mr Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Office, who has shown great capacity in managing the Organization. We are very proud of his participation in the Second Arab Forum on Employment and Development held in Riyadh at the end of February and also the different meetings organized on the margins of the Forum. In recent years, the Arab region has made changes and faced significant challenges, particularly in terms of development, employment, unemployment and poverty. Unemployment has reached high levels. Therefore, we need to find non-traditional solutions to this. It is not enough to involve the other ministries concerned, civil society and private sector institutions, and trade unions in drawing up policies that meet the needs of changing labour markets. We also need international cooperation to be able to overcome unemployment which risks destroying stability throughout the world. The ILO is therefore required to attach particular importance to this issue and provide the necessary funding for participation that satisfies the needs and priorities of the member States.

The Director-General's choice of the subject of fair migration for his Report is appropriate and responds to the constant appeals that have been made to give all requisite attention to this issue and to try and improve policies and practices in order to establish programmes which serve development, increase the possibilities of decent work and meet the fundamental rights of migrant workers. Since efforts began to liberalize trade and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was adopted and implemented, and subsequently extended to services, the debate has remained open on the possibility of complete or partial integration of the labour aspect into such liberalization, given that there is no reason to distinguish this factor from the other elements of production. The issue of migration, and the regulation

thereof, does not require one of the parties to monitor what the other is doing.

We must all cooperate on the basis of complementarity between the different regions, economic blocs and international agencies, in order to come closer together and avoid development disparities. The fact that such disparities continue to exist at the economic and social levels, and the broadening of gaps in development between the regions remain the underlying reasons for the increase in the level of labour migration, in particular the worsening of, and dangers implicit in, the phenomenon of illegal migration. For this reason, we agree with the statement in the Director-General's Report concerning the importance of cooperation in the establishment of policies designed to create an environment for fair migration, in order to resolve effectively the different problems of illegal migration. We should respond fairly to the interests of all parties, be they countries or migrants, so as to share prosperity fairly and to avoid the harmful effects on development in countries of origin, owing to the loss of qualified manpower as a result of selective migration policies being applied.

The ILO works on the basis of its Constitution, which states that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. Social justice is not compatible with the Israeli occupation and its continuous organized violations and attacks against the rights of workers and of the Palestinian people as part of colonization activities, and of the rights of the tripartite partners. The Director-General assessed the situation this year as painful and specified that there is no real progress of note. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating and construction of settlements has more than doubled. Unemployment is on the increase since all economic sectors are paralyzed. This evermore threatening time bomb must be defused and all the different international institutions must oppose this aggression and such practices which sabotage the operation of peace in the region. It is time for our Organization to discuss these violations and the suffering of workers and of the Palestinian people, as part of the agenda of this session or a future session of the Conference, as these issues fall within the framework created by the international principles and standards that have been established and enshrined by this noble Organization. We must also provide all possible support to the Palestinian people so that they may regain their right to create an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

Mr KONKOLEWSKY (Representative, International Social Security Association)

It is my great pleasure to convey to all delegates to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference the greetings of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and its membership of 340 government departments and social security institutions from 157 countries. Let me start by congratulating the ILO Director-General on the progress in his reform agenda. It is encouraging for workers and for populations worldwide that the ILO succeeds in strengthening its voice at the international level and its impact at the national level. The high relevance of the topics on the agenda of this year's session of the Conference as well as the quality of the Reports clearly reflect the important commitment to furthering the ILO's core mission of promoting social justice, ensuring decent work, and

improving the conditions for vulnerable populations.

The ISSA remains highly committed to supporting and collaborating with the ILO in achieving these objectives. As you may know, the ISSA has been a partner of the ILO since its creation in 1927. After 87 years of collaboration, our recent Memorandum of Understanding and the definition of social protection as one of the ILO's critical priorities have provided new impetus to our joint work. I am pleased that through the introduction of an innovative centre for excellence in social security administration, based on professional guidelines and practical learning and support services, the ISSA is better equipped than ever to be a relevant partner of the ILO. Strengthening social protection is no doubt at the heart of the two major global challenges on the agenda of this session of the Conference, namely, ensuring fair migration and promoting the transition from informal to formal employment.

As outlined in the Director-General's Report, social protection coverage must be a cornerstone of any agenda for fair migration. The lack of access to social security exposes migrant workers to major risks, including informality. No doubt, further efforts to extend coverage at the national level are a precondition to ensuring migrant workers' access to social protection. The ILO's new milestone publication, the *World Social Protection Report 2014/15*, which draws on ISSA data shows that despite the impressive recent extension of coverage, the right to comprehensive social security is still a reality for only a minority of the world's population. Extension efforts must therefore be further intensified, and both the activities of the ILO to foster political will and of the ISSA to develop administrative capacities for implementation are crucial. In addition, specific measures to extend pension and health coverage to migrant workers and to combat discrimination are required. Social security agreements are an important tool in this regard and we should work closely together to facilitate their development and implementation.

Furthermore, social protection is also an important element of measures promoting the transition to formality. Administrative steps such as identification and registration directly contribute to formalization. However, administrative flexibility is important to meet the needs of diverse groups in the informal sector. The ISSA series on administrative solutions for difficult-to-cover groups provides support in developing appropriate measures. The challenges of achieving fair migration and formality demonstrate the close relationship between employment and social protection. Clearly, the promotion of decent work must go hand in hand with the promotion of extended social security coverage.

The ISSA is at the ILO's side to ensure that social security realizes its huge positive potential for the living and working conditions of all vulnerable populations. Together we can make this world a more just and peaceful place for everyone.

Original Arabic: Mr JERAD (Representative, Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb)

Allow me to congratulate the President on his election at the current session.

At the outset, I would like to highlight the very important issues raised by Mr Ryder in his Report, which demonstrates that progress has been made by many countries in the world in terms of attaining

decent work, ensuring social protection, providing employment for young people and tackling the issue of work in the informal sector, and also in coming up with socially appropriate solutions to migration problems.

In the Arab Maghreb, unemployment rates among young people have risen. While it might appear that in some countries these rates have declined, this is attributable to the extensive growth of job opportunities in the informal sector, which now employs more than 60 per cent of our workforce. As for social protection schemes, in our countries these have usually been limited to the provision of temporary assistance, contrary to the stipulations of international Conventions, which clearly state that all workers must enjoy their full rights in a sustainable manner. Regrettably, corruption is rife in our countries and in many cases employment opportunities are granted to young people on the basis of political, sectarian and partisan affiliations.

Young people, workers and the general public in our countries have risen up in protest to reclaim their right to employment, to dignity and to freedom. This revolution has been supported by many international human rights bodies and organizations, including the ILO. The situation in our countries has proved, however, that the process of building democracy and ensuring a successful transition to democracy is much more complex and difficult than overthrowing an oppressive regime. We therefore need your support in order to set in place an environment conducive to the attainment of democracy in both its political dimension, which incorporates public and private liberties, and its social dimension, covering justice and equality, in a spirit of dialogue that respects the rights and freedoms of association and human rights and is far removed from all forms of the violence and terrorism threatening our societies.

The decline in foreign investment has rendered the situation much more difficult in our countries. It has led to a reduction in employment opportunities and a concomitant increase in unemployment. Illegal migration has increased and this has resulted in tragedies on an unprecedented scale which have cost the lives of so many of our young people.

The focus placed on migration by the Director-General in his Report demonstrates that this essentially human problem has now acquired a global dimension demanding the attention of all governments, unions and civil society. The downturn in the international situation and the lack of cooperation between countries have engendered political stances that are hostile to foreigners and to the formation of xenophobic attitudes and responses, encouraging increasingly mistaken notions of cultural identity and affiliation. As a result, this has led to restrictions on the basic rights of migrant workers.

As we all know, the challenges posed by migration and its impact on communities, both in the countries of origin and the receiving countries, are likely to intensify as international relations become more fraught. This necessitates stepped-up cooperation and coordination among the trade unions of the countries of the South in calling upon European countries to respect the principles of equality and equal opportunity and to recognize fully the rights of migrants and children and families in conformity with international treaties and Conventions.

With regard to the situation of Arab workers in the occupied territories, it is evident from the Re-

port of the Director-General that this situation has deteriorated still further. Is it really possible to talk about normal working conditions in view of the obstacles placed on Palestinian labour, the restrictions, the blockade and the denial of employment opportunities? Can we really talk about the rights of workers in the settlements, with their labour brokers, long working hours and ban on efforts by unions to pursue labour-related matters?

The description of the labour system in the occupied Arab territories, in the Syrian Golan and the shab'a farms in Lebanon, demonstrates to us that those iniquities can only be overcome through a

political solution, and necessitates an appeal to all peace-loving forces in the world to advocate the just cause of the Palestinian people and to confront the arrogance of the Israelis. The Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb reaffirms its determination to continue to mobilize its supporters throughout the world in order to expose the policy of double standards pursued by the United States and its blatant interference in our internal affairs, including its efforts to obstruct solutions that would bring about peace, security and stability in the region.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.20 p.m.)

Fourth sitting

Wednesday, 4 June 2014, 2.40 p.m.

Presidents: Mr Funes de Rioja and Mr Sakurada

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

Ms LEHTO-KOMULAINEN (*Worker, Finland*)

Let me first congratulate the President on his election. I thank the Director-General for his Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. It is heartbreaking to read about these young men and women with no work and few prospects for the future. It is particularly worrying that the situation of Palestinian women remains precarious. I support the conclusions of the Report.

Let me turn to migration. The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, co-chaired by the then President of my country, issued conclusions on migration ten years ago. The Commission was especially worried about migrant women who risk being marginalized and driven to illegal economic activities. The Commission was also concerned about the brain drain from poor countries to rich ones.

The Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, rightly states that migrant workers must be able to exercise their fundamental rights at work, including trade union rights. Migrant workers must be able to receive equal pay for work of equal value. That is also the way to ensure that migration is not misused for the purpose of undercutting existing terms and conditions of work. I share this view. Labour legislation and the terms of collective agreements in the country of work must be strictly applied to all workers.

What are the roles of the social partners, governments and the ILO in migration? Let me start with the social partners. First, the social partners can, through a joint commitment, undertake constructive and valuable efforts against discrimination and xenophobia. Second, in my own country it is the duty of workers' and employers' organizations to oversee that the terms of collective agreements are respected. It is important to have shop stewards and other workers' representatives with effective rights in the workplace, so that they can tackle any problems that arise. There are migrant workers who work temporarily in Finland, many through temporary agencies, who are often denied the terms of the collective agreement. Also, the longer the supply chain, the more there appear to be problems in this regard.

Third, the social partners, for their part, should make sure that migrant workers are aware of their

rights. It is the obligation of the employer to provide written information about the employment contract, workplace, labour legislation including health and safety, and the collective agreement in question. This information should be given in all languages spoken at the workplace. Trade unions need to be able to inform all migrant workers about their rights and the functioning of the labour market. It is crucial for trade unions to reach out to migrant workers and gain a better understanding of their situation. Employers could contribute more by providing language learning opportunities.

As for governments, labour inspection is discussed in the Report and is very important because, in Finland, they monitor the terms of generally binding collective agreements. Labour inspectorates also need more resources.

What is the role of the ILO in migration? The fundamental and other Conventions of the ILO need to be applied equally to workers, no matter their nationality. The rights of migrant workers to freedom of association and freedom of collective bargaining need to be ensured and overseen by the ILO supervisory bodies. We, as trade unions, support the ratification of Conventions Nos 97 and 143, which Finland has not ratified. The Finnish trade unions also support a Protocol to supplement Convention No. 29.

As stated in the Report, migration policies should always be viewed from a broad perspective. Elements like migration, education and employment can be taken into account together.

To conclude, the ILO is moving towards its 100th anniversary. It is important that there is an ILO agenda for fair migration that not only respects the fundamental rights of migrant workers but also offers real opportunities for decent work. The equality of migrant workers remains one of the key issues in the globalized yet polarized world of work.

Original French: Ms SENDAZIRASA (Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Security, Burundi)

On behalf of the tripartite delegation of Burundi and on behalf of the Government which I represent at this plenary of the International Labour Conference, we should like to seize this valuable opportunity to express our views on the Report of the ILO Director-General, particularly with regard to Burundi's achievements thanks to the financial and technical support from the ILO, just one year after the changes that took place at the head of this noble International Labour Organization. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President

of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Government of Burundi and all the social partners would like to express their sincere gratitude to the ILO, through Mr Ryder, the Director-General, for the great work that has been done worldwide, as reflected in the Report presented to the International Labour Conference.

The Government of Burundi has taken due note of the Report of the Director-General and we have made significant headway in the core issues of decent work over this past year in our country thanks to constructive and open cooperation between Burundi and the International Labour Office.

The Government of Burundi has already taken positive steps to address the precarious situation of the population of Burundi, the majority of whom live in poverty, not only by guaranteeing free primary school education for all children, but also by guaranteeing free health care to all children under 5 and to all women who give birth.

However, while the Government of Burundi has made efforts to help the aforementioned groups by providing them with a health insurance card for less than US\$2 to cover more than 80 per cent of health-care costs for low-income groups, the national social protection policy adopted in 2011, which was prepared on the basis of the expertise of the International Labour Office, means that we are in a position today under the leadership of His Excellency President Nkurunziza, the President of the Republic of Burundi, who also chairs the National Committee for Social Protection, to review a strategy to introduce universal health insurance within the next three years.

Work along these lines is already under way thanks to four important bodies: a national committee of 11 ministers; a technical committee of 20 persons, including technical and financial experts, social partners, insurance providers, religious groups, all actors in the field of social protection and so on; a provincial committee with 15 members headed by the governor of the province and in all the 17 provinces of Burundi; and a communal committee with 12 members headed by the administrator of each of the 129 communes of Burundi. The work of these bodies helps us to advance swiftly our vision of universal health insurance because we aim to have health care for each of Burundi's 129 communes by the end of 2014.

Work to this end is going well thanks to the financial assistance of the African Development Bank and to the expertise of the ILO, which provides advice locally. It is essential to couple a solidarity-based economy with health insurance because, thanks to this assistance, even indigent members of our society will have a health insurance card, thereby avoiding stigmatization.

At the same time, we are working with highly committed technical experts who can see that there is commitment at the highest level. The World Bank, for example, will support our strategy for implementing our national social protection policy and also support vulnerable groups of the population through social safety nets. In this way, we will introduce universal health insurance effectively, without taking a step backwards, because our national social protection policy promotes the coupling of health insurance and a solidarity-based economy as an effective means of eradicating poverty and strengthening the social protection floor.

In order to ensure that social protection is gradually extended to the whole population, the Government has just taken one further step by allowing health insurance schemes in the formal private sector enabling comprehensive promotion of social protection.

Moreover, to allow all children to go to school and to ensure alignment between vocational courses and employment, the Government has just opened a specialized school so that young people, after completing their basic schooling, can undertake technical and vocational training in order to find employment on the labour market easily.

We should like to recall that the progress made in promoting social protection and community development has earned the President of Burundi many awards, the most recent being an award for exemplary community development.

As far as employment is concerned, the Government of Burundi and the social partners have just established a coherent and inclusive national employment policy, providing clear guidance for job creation, with special emphasis on certain vulnerable groups of the population, such as young people, women and persons with disabilities.

The Office has worked with Burundi to help us set up a project to create jobs for young people in rural areas, which was financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Some 20,000 jobs will be created between 2013 and 2017.

Unemployed young people are potential victims of various political tendencies, which can readily become a double-edged sword.

As for social dialogue, the social partners of Burundi now have a permanent executive secretariat in the National Committee for Social Dialogue.

This is a brief overview of the major projects and achievements in our country.

I cannot conclude without reiterating, once again, our gratitude to the ILO and, more specifically, to the Director-General.

Although we have made a great deal of progress, we still have a long way to go and we will still need support from the ILO and from other partners if we are to achieve our objectives.

On that note, I would like to conclude. Long live global partnership! Long live the ILO!

Ms NWE (Employer, Myanmar)

As a nation in transition, Myanmar has challenges to overcome. One is private sector development which aims at the development of SMEs, job creation and the country's economic growth. Myanmar is also preparing for the economic integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), scheduled to be achieved by the end of 2015. There will be a free flow of skilled labour, goods, services and so on. In addition, there is the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership among other members and their six free trade partners.

All these factors encourage labour migration and it is important for employers not to shape this migration ideology into a necessity but for it to be a choice made by potential migrants. Even before economic integration is fully realized, migration within ASEAN is already rising. According to recent US census data, international migration of labour has gained ground. While contributing to host countries' economic growth and increasing home countries' foreign currency earnings, migrants deserve to have fair national treatment wherever they

work and whoever they serve. They are global citizens.

In this regard, the employers of Myanmar heartily welcome the Director-General's Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. Domestically, there are things that can be done to improve the labour market situation, for the betterment of decent job creation, by providing skills training from the enterprise to the national level.

In this context, while the role of the government is to produce relevant laws accompanied by enforceable rules and regulations, and policies followed by effective implementation, the role of the business community becomes relatively important. The Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry is taking a big step forward in shouldering responsibility by providing sound and realistic inputs and information in drafting and crafting laws related to employment and skill development, collecting and sharing knowledge on international best practices to introduce global means into our system, and aiming to develop a global-friendly home-grown concept. In this regard, we are receiving technical assistance from several international organizations, such as the ILO for industrial relations and the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ) for skills training.

One salient point is that migration can be viewed as human capital investment. Younger potential migrants have greater incentives to migrate than older ones, since migration entails some fixed costs which need to be recovered over the migrant's lifetime of employment. Highly skilled workers self-select migration for a higher return. Low-skilled workers tend to benefit from employment where the demand is high, gaining exposure, which in turn benefits home countries since experience is brought back. It is of great value for human resources to be moulded into human capital by providing and promoting skills, and hence enhancing their qualifications and their livelihood.

As part of this trend, we work closely with technology and employment-related ministries in the country, to upgrade the level of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system. We have established a TVET unit in the Chamber, putting effective effort into developing and promoting the skills of workers in the global pursuit of decent work both domestically and regionally. While planning for the supply of qualified human resources, the business community also cooperates with the Government to enable businesses to grow, focusing on SME development, encouraging entrepreneurship and business start-ups, from self-employment into supply chain businesses, which means jobs and value addition. Domestic investments have increased 30 per cent over the past year, and foreign investment increased from US\$300 million in 2011 to US\$3.9 billion in 2013. We expect this to result in decent job creation, and financial and technological assistance to our SMEs so as to transform them into supporting industries. There is an ongoing search for every investment to exercise responsibility for society and the environment. We have attempted to adopt a monitoring mechanism which will be modified and intensified in the days to come.

The Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry has become a member of the ASEAN Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Network. We are planning to host a United Nations Global Compact

(UNGC)–CSR Local Network Myanmar Summit before the end of the year, the aim of which is to organize several hundred enterprises in the country. We believe that every business entity has committed to at least two or three of the ten principles of the UNGC. This will be our starting point. We will find remedies together to achieve full commitment to UNGC principles. It is not easy but our hearts are in it.

We also believe that with all the constructive support from all of you, we can move along the path to our destiny harmoniously.

Mr ASHIEY (Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, Ghana)

It is my pleasure to address this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference on the theme "building a future with decent work". I wish to commend the outgoing Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General and his team for the progress made in the promotion of social justice through the various programmes during the past year.

The carefully chosen topics of setting an agenda for fair migration, the need to transition from informal to formal economies, the eradication of forced labour from our societies and the issue of employment are all very relevant to our circumstances.

I welcome the evaluation of the implementation of the ILO programme, as it provides tangible examples of measurable results, success stories and good practices. I am particularly happy to note that not only did Africa receive the highest level of funding in terms of technical assistance, of which a significant amount was dedicated to my country, but the region has also registered the highest number of results: about one third of the total.

I encourage the ILO to continue with a rigorous assessment of the impact of these technical cooperation programmes to ensure good value for the resources committed.

The fact that the delivery rate reached 80 per cent – the highest rate ever – justifies and proves the effectiveness of the Director-General's reform agenda. The increase in outcomes also reflects renewed efforts by the ILO to assist its Members in the attainment of the MDGs, with emphasis on inclusive growth, decent employment and social protection. These objectives are interdependent and essential to the achievement of the MDGs, as rightly noted by the UN Secretary-General.

In the ILO's capacity as Chair of the GMG, setting an ILO agenda for fair migration could not have come at a better time. As noted in the Report, no country is exempt from the effects of migration, since every country is one of either origin, transit or destination. Ghana, by virtue of the peace and stability enjoyed in the subregion, has played host to many of its neighbours. This role has become even more crucial since our President, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, assumed the chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in May 2014.

In this regard, I welcome the eight-point proposal by the ILO, which includes: promoting decent work in countries of origin, including the contribution of migrants; formulating orderly and fair migration schemes in regional integration processes; promoting bilateral agreements for well-regulated and fair migration between member States; and tripartism,

knowledge and capacity building. These approaches will help harness the enormous potential of our young people for development.

The transition from the informal to the formal economy remains an important issue for my country. In Ghana, the informal sector accounts for about 80 to 90 per cent of the national economy and therefore has enormous potential for contributing to the country's economic growth and job creation. To this effect, strategies and specific policy interventions being pursued include resource pooling in enterprise networks, clusters and the promotion of co-operatives. Other types of assistance will include financial and non-financial assistance, such as credit, market information and other business advisory and extension services from support institutions.

In this connection, Ghana is working towards improving its labour statistics and has started developing a labour market information system. It is envisaged that, by December 2014, Ghana will have finished developing the system as a useful tool for forecasting and development planning as well as for linking job providers to jobseekers.

I am pleased to inform you that Ghana is also making significant progress in the elimination of child labour in the West African region. Acknowledging that it has best practice examples to share, Ghana has subjected itself to be peer-reviewed by member States in the subregion this year on our country interventions to eliminate child labour, with specific reference to cocoa-growing areas. Other areas of intervention will include combating child labour in the Lake Volta region and in the oil, gas and mining sectors.

As regards social protection, the Government of Ghana continues to roll out a number of interventions. Nevertheless, the Government believes strongly that the best form of social protection is the provision of decent and sustainable jobs which guarantee a meaningful livelihood for its citizens.

While chronic unemployment remains a headache for governments, "skills mismatch" has been identified as a major cause. A multisectoral stakeholders' conference held to address the problem of skills mismatch recommended a shift of focus to TVET to address the unemployment problem and promote decent work. Plans are under way to promote stronger collaboration between academia and industry or the world of work.

In order to confront face on the problem of youth unemployment, our Government has instituted the Youth Enterprise Support programme worth 3 million Ghanaian cedis (GHS), under which youth entrepreneurship and job creation will be promoted. The Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund has also been established to ensure the accelerated development of physical infrastructure, including the development of oil and gas facilities, the expansion of the country's harbours, airports, roads and railways, and the construction of houses, schools and hospitals.

In the fall we intend to hold a jobs summit in Ghana aimed at providing a platform to critically examine and find solutions to the issues of growing underemployment and unemployment, especially among the country's young people and women. This constitutes a very important part of our country strategy, experiences from which we hope to share with other Members. In this regard, we will continue to count on our partnership with the ILO to achieve our goals.

In conclusion, I wish to seize this opportunity to extend my warmest invitation to the leadership of the ILO, especially Mr Ryder, to attend the forthcoming jobs summit scheduled for September 2014, to be hosted by the President of the Republic of Ghana under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations.

Mr BOŠKOVIĆ (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro*)

The informal economy, as an activity parallel to the regular economy, is present in both the developed and underdeveloped parts of the world, except that in developed economies the phenomenon is combated more successfully, while in underdeveloped systems that way of doing business often becomes dominant and constitutes one of the basic sources of income for a large part of the population. In fact, the informal economy represents a global problem. It is spreading, especially in the developing countries, and threatening the foundations of their social and economic systems.

The complexity of the problem of the informal economy, in terms of both the causes and the consequences of its occurrence, necessitates its consideration from the socio-legal, socio-psychological, historical, cultural and other standpoints in order to determine the presence of the phenomenon and to identify ways of dealing with it.

As an inseparable part of the informal economy, informal employment poses a crucial problem for economic policy-makers, especially where fiscal and labour market policies are concerned.

Just as there are differences in the definition and terminology used to describe the hidden economy, there are also differences in the definition of the so-called "black market". Often, work in that area is described in such terms as "undeclared", "informal", "unprotected", "hidden", "actual work" and others.

Informal employment in Montenegro, as in most countries, most frequently occurs in low-profit, labour-intensive sectors, such as trade, transport, construction, agriculture and catering. The key factors affecting informal employment are the belief that the financial benefits of avoiding taxes and contributions exceed the financial costs of the penalties for such activities, and a firm conviction of the inefficiency of inspection services. A significant proportion of business entities participating in informal employment are fully confident that they will not be discovered. The main criticisms levelled against inspection services by enterprises and citizens concern the existence of corruption, inconsistency and the rigorous application of the rules, and the frequency of visits.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare carried out a survey, for its own purposes, which found that companies founded recently are more extensively involved in informal employment because it enables them to be more competitive, in particular in surmounting barriers to their entrance into the market.

Based on that survey, we found that the proportion of the population engaged in informal employment ranged from 20.9 to 33.3 per cent of the total employed population in Montenegro. Applying the model of damage assessment of informal employment, the resulting damage inflicted on the budget has been assessed at approximately 6.8 per cent per year.

It has been agreed to continue work in this area in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, through the conduct of new research into informal employment, with the aim of reducing the share of the so-called “grey economy” in Montenegro.

An important role in the campaign against the grey economy in the labour market is played by all inspections, and in particular by labour inspection. The task of the labour inspection service is to suppress the operation of the grey economy in the labour market, in other words the “black market”, sometimes also referred to as “black employment”. The actions of the labour inspection service in suppressing the black market are rendered still more effective by reports from citizens, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and employees, which are submitted directly to the labour inspectors in 15 offices across Montenegro, and also through the Inspection Board, in particular through its call centre. The aforementioned reports (mostly anonymous) identify employers who engage employees in informal work, as well as other irregularities.

The government campaign to involve citizens in the struggle against the grey economy, in which citizens are encouraged to report employers who are known to be working in the black market, has also contributed to the suppression of informal employment.

In addition to its regular activities, the labour inspection service conducts intensified supervisory inspections during the summer and winter tourist seasons and during national and religious holidays. These inspections are planned on the basis of a risk analysis and they primarily concern those employers who engage a large number of people, often illegally, especially in the construction, catering, trade, transport and agriculture sectors.

These labour inspection measures have had the effect of increasing the numbers of legally employed persons and lowering the unemployment rate. In addition, they have led to an increase in the influx of funds to the budget from the payment of mandatory social insurance contributions, and also from the payment of fines.

In conclusion, allow me to emphasize that Montenegro is determined to continue efforts to improve its legal, political and economic systems, bringing them to the highest international standards and adopting best practices in that regard.

Mr MOHAMED (*Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Mauritius*)

I would like, first of all, to congratulate the President on his election and I would also immediately like to commend the Director-General of the ILO on his Reports. Congratulations also are in order to the ILO for the issues and themes chosen and placed on the agenda.

(The speaker continues in French.)

There is no doubt that there are clear links and continuity in terms of the ideas contained in all the reports submitted to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference and the items on the agenda: firstly, the facilitation of the transition from the informal to the formal economy; secondly, the strengthening of measures concerning prevention, protection and compensation of victims of forced labour and, above all, the elimination of forced la-

bour; thirdly, the strategic objective of employment; and, finally, fair migration and, annexed to the Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*.

The one thing that undoubtedly links all of these issues and reports on the Conference agenda is decent work. One Report that really captured my interest was *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. However, before focusing on that issue, I wish to refer both the President and the audience to a specific Report.

(The speaker continues in English.)

The document in question is the Report submitted to the 81st Session of the International Labour Conference (1994), entitled *Special Report of the Director-General on the Review of the Declaration concerning Action against Apartheid in South Africa*. I refer to the third paragraph of Chapter 1 of this document: “An ILO-United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour reported in 1953 that apartheid policies had the indirect effect of channelling ‘the bulk of the indigenous inhabitants into agricultural and manual work and thus to create a permanent, abundant and cheap labour force’ that was tantamount to forced labour”. And when I read further in that Report of the Committee, I read: “It is in this indirect sense therefore that, in the Committee’s view, a system of forced labour of significance to the national economy appears to exist in the Union of South Africa.” It was a country where there was no liberty of movement. It was a country where people were forced to have a permit to circulate and without that permit people could not even work.

Undoubtedly, there is a parallel that I draw here and that is why I earlier on commended the Director-General of the ILO on the Appendix with regard to *The situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories*. It is in this Report that I see once again that the situation is far from under control. The Report brings to mind vivid images: images of violence, confrontation, absence of freedom, policies of a State that has undoubtedly restructured the workforce and suppressed industry; one needs a permit to work there. It has increased the dependence of the workers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory upon Israel. You need a permit to work and that permit can be removed from you unilaterally. This is a shocking state of affairs and that is why I am of the humble view that there is clearly a parallel that can be drawn between the situation in South Africa back in 1994, as described by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the situation as clearly described by the Director-General here, in the occupied Arab territories.

The Director-General is entirely right when he says that forced labour is mutating. It has evolved from what it was back in 1930 when the Inspection of Emigrants Convention, 1926 (No. 21), was brought in. What it was in 1957 is not what it is today. And that is why I believe that a flexible approach in the interpretation of forced labour is very important.

That brings me to the situation of the people of the Chagos Archipelago, who were forcibly removed from that territory and sent to other countries, such as Mauritius. Those people are in a prison where they cannot work. The prison may be different but they cannot work as they used to in the

Chagos Archipelago. They are forced to be in a situation that they did not choose.

This was forced upon them and that is why I invite the ILO to look into situations like that of the Chagos Archipelago, to put in the same effort that it did when it looked into the situation of apartheid. We have to work together to eradicate forced labour but we have to put aside our egos and our self-interest.

Original Japanese: Mr KOGA (Worker, Japan)

It is a pleasure and honour for me to address the Conference on behalf of the Japanese workers.

As the Director-General mentioned in this year's Report, *ILO programme implementation 2012–13*, submitted to the Conference, we have seen steady progress on ratification of ILO fundamental Conventions in the Asia and the Pacific region over the past decade. However, at the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that the region has made slow progress compared to other regions. In particular, we should be firmly committed to Convention No. 87, and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), in the region more than ever. Regrettably, Japan has not ratified all eight fundamental Conventions; Convention No. 105 and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), have yet to be ratified. We have seen little progress on this matter and efforts by all stakeholders are needed more than ever to overcome this stalemate.

I would now like to touch on recovery in the wake of natural disasters. Three years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. And still, over 260,000 people have been forced to leave their own communities, many of them still faced with serious problems. Looking around the world, we have seen many large-scale natural disasters, seriously damaging people's lives, property and their way of life.

How might the ILO play an efficient role in disaster recovery? Social security, including unemployment insurance, which would help survivors get back to their normal lives is, of course, important. Furthermore, job creation is what is really needed in the affected areas. People can regain their hope, energy and dignity through work, and that is what leads to the real reconstruction. In this regard, the ILO has outstanding experience and expertise. We appreciate the contribution that the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has made to our region, which is affected by many natural disasters. We, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC–RENGO), will step up our efforts through the international trade union movement and we also urge our Government to reconstruct swiftly the affected areas.

In addition, the Director-General brought to the attention of the Conference a potentially controversial issue, namely that of fair migration. It is necessary to bear in mind respect for the rights of migrants. We are concerned by the current discussion, which identifies steps to fill labour shortages in certain sectors and destination countries and to bolster international competitiveness, while ignoring the lack of effective labour market policies and protection for vulnerable groups. In Japan, there is also much debate on increasing the number of foreign workers coming into the country, including migrant workers. Regrettably, again, Japan has not ratified any of the international labour standards related to migration. We should mention, therefore, that the

ongoing discussion in Japan reflects neither the spirit nor the letter of these instruments and tends to be misguided. JTUC–RENGO requests the Government to hold a discussion at all levels of civil society, including social partners, to build consensus on this multifaceted issue.

In addition, we are concerned that ILO tripartism is now undermined in Japan. This session of the Conference is a timely occasion for all constituents to reaffirm their recognition of the significance, the value and the role of tripartism. Issues related to the world of work have become increasingly complicated and the pace of change has accelerated.

By way of conclusion, we are committed to strengthening the ILO's activities as Japanese workers, and we look forward to the Director-General's initiatives to tackle the many challenges that lie ahead.

(Mr Sakurada takes the Chair.)

Original French: Mr CAMARA (Minister of Technical Education, Vocational Training, Employment and Labour, Guinea)

I would like to begin by conveying warm greetings from the authorities of the Republic of Guinea, in particular from the President of the Republic, Mr Alpha Condé. At the same time, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of our session.

The items on the agenda of this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference reflect the continuing will of the tripartite constituents of the ILO to work ceaselessly for the well-being of the populations of our respective countries, despite the numerous fluctuations which characterize the world economy in general and, in particular, the economies of developing countries. My country pays tribute to the determination of the ILO, through the tireless efforts of Mr Ryder, the Director-General of the Office, and the support of the Governing Body, who work to find solutions and opportunities for synergies with a view to concrete action being taken.

The eradication of forced labour requires a multi-sectoral response, as well as close cooperation between the social partners and many civil society actors. Labour market institutions play a central role in this regard. Despite the broad scope of Convention No. 29, and the measures taken by States, forced labour remains the result of shortcomings in the implementation of prevention, victim protection and compensation measures. That is why my Government believes that these shortcomings must be overcome through a legal framework and national policies which clearly define an integrated approach that targets all forms of forced labour and identifies all those measures necessary for their elimination. The same can be said for the task of defining the working methods for effective coordination among the various stakeholders.

In terms of the world of work, and in a world and, indeed, in a country like ours, where more than 60 per cent of jobs are generated by the informal economy, the issue of transitioning from the informal to the formal economy is both highly significant and strategic. We are aware of the phenomena of rising unemployment and poverty that affect a large part of the population and my Government hopes that the ILO's approach to transitioning from the informal to the formal economy will be adapted to our States.

The recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment is one of considerable social and economic importance and cannot be ignored by any country or society. Employment policies are the most appropriate and effective means of fully taking into account this economic and social parameter. We are also aware of the increasing poverty affecting a large section of the population. The Government has decided to adopt a fresh approach to economic planning, setting aims with tighter deadlines and implementing more appropriate strategies. As a part of my Government's plan, five aims have been set in order to allow Guinea to rejoin the circle of so-called "emerging countries" as quickly as possible: the improvement of governance and the introduction of institutional reforms; the fight against poverty; the development of economic infrastructure and public amenities; the development, economic expansion and promotion of sectors that will deliver growth; and the restructuring of the defence forces and the improvement of security for the country's citizens. These development plans show how aware my Government is of what needs to be done in order to ensure that economic and social progress is made in Guinea.

This is an overview of our approach to the challenges that face us as we seek to improve the living conditions of Guineans. We also call upon the ILO to provide technical and financial assistance concerning the design, drafting and implementation of a true labour policy, as well as the review of the text of our national employment promotion policy.

My delegation also approves of the vision and viewpoints expressed in the Director-General's Report. My Government has always considered that social security is a fundamental human right and wholeheartedly subscribes to the relevant provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is why the drafting and implementation of a national social protection policy which covers the whole population is of the utmost priority for Guinea. Thus, a preliminary draft national social protection policy was recently approved and adopted by all the stakeholders concerned. As to social protection for civil servants, despite the existence of statutory provisions and various laudable efforts, it has to be said that social protection procedures for civil servants are currently flawed and inefficient. Thanks to the latest tripartite negotiations with the social partners, Guinea now has new public administrative bodies that focus on social protection. The bodies in question are the National Social Security Fund for State Employees (CNPSAE) and the National Institute for Compulsory Health Insurance (INAMO).

I would again like to congratulate the Director-General on the significant role played by the International Labour Office in the consolidation of social peace in Guinea, thanks to the support it has ceaselessly provided in so many forms to our Government and our social partners. I would also like to express our solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Lastly, I wish to pay tribute to the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body for their commendable leadership of the ILO and for the support provided to my country through the many sectoral activities of the Office.

Original Arabic: Mr MAJDALANI (Minister of Labour, Palestine)

I am the Minister of Labour of the State of Palestine. Allow me to convey to all present the greetings of our brother, President Mahmoud Abbas.

Ms STRANO (Government, United States)

Speaking on a point of order, and not in rebuttal, the United States wishes to point out that the ILO does not recognize Palestine as a State.

Original Arabic: Mr MAJDALANI (Minister of Labour, Palestine)

The United Nations has recognized Palestine as a State; if the United States chooses not to do so, that is the United States' problem.

At the outset allow me, therefore, to convey the greetings of our brother, Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the State of Palestine. I also pass on salutations from the Prime Minister, Mr Hamdallah, together with their wishes for the Conference's success in attaining its objectives and promoting international cooperation in the world of work and other associated areas. We greatly appreciate the choice of topics for this year's session made by the Director-General, namely, the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and forced labour. These are familiar problems to the developing countries, including our own, Palestine.

In this context, we would like to support the efforts made by the Director-General to restructure and reform the Organization, as described in his Report *ILO programme implementation 2012–13*. We all agree that peace and social peace are two elements that any ambitious society wants to secure in its quest for progress, prosperity and the well-being of its population. Our Palestinian society, which is suffering under the yoke of occupation, yearns perhaps more than any other for those objectives. Palestine, however, lacks one of the essential preconditions for the realization of universal and sustainable development and for the achievement of social peace and the peace made possible by political independence.

In this respect, I would like to tell you that the Palestinian people are living under very difficult conditions, owing to the measures imposed under the occupation and settlement policy and the blockade of Gaza, which all have the effect of increasing poverty and unemployment and deprive the Palestinian people of a life of security and tranquillity. These are a consequence of the seizure of Palestinian land for settlements, the Judaization of Palestinian territory and, in particular, the city of Jerusalem, and the deliberate destruction of citizens' property and other facilities, with the aim of weakening and paralysing the Palestinian economy and keeping it in a state of dependence on the Israeli economy, so that Israel can pursue its policies of aggression and appropriation of Palestinian assets and obstruct our national policy designed to free us from the occupation and establish our own independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

In the preface to his Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, the Director-General expressed his concern about this situation, noting that, unless all the restrictions on economic activity are removed, no improvement in the situation of workers in the country can be expected.

It is therefore vital that the international community express its solidarity with the Palestinian people faced with Israeli occupation and should condemn the settlement policy, the building of the racist separation wall, the campaign to isolate Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian territories and the Gaza blockade. These policies are disrupting the

lives of the Palestinian people and violating their cherished historical and religious sites.

The Report also states that the resumption and intensification of settlement activity is a visible and politically and psychologically perilous factor in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. It points out that, over the past year, the construction of settlements has more than doubled and further expansion plans have been announced by the Israeli Government, which, when completed, will sever East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, thus interrupting the territorial continuity needed for a viable Palestinian State.

The Report warns of a rise in violence by settlers and that that occupation and settler activity is leading to a dangerous culture of impunity. Where Gaza is concerned, it notes that the economic and social situation has taken a turn for the worse and that food security is affecting almost 60 per cent of the population, with 80 per cent relying on humanitarian aid.

Israeli policies and measures have brought the Palestinian economy to the brink of collapse, in particular over the last few years, and this has had dire effects on the situation of Palestinian workers. These measures have severely undermined the notion of decent work and exacerbated unemployment, which, in the first quarter of 2014, stood at 25.5 per cent. They have also helped spread poverty, which has reached unprecedented levels, with more than 60 per cent of the Palestinian population, including skilled workers and young people, living below the poverty line. The Palestinian people are counting on your support.

Mr LOKUGE (*Minister of Labour and Labour Relations, Sri Lanka*)

Global labour migration will be one of the most important determinants and influences on migration in the coming years. I therefore wish, at the outset, to extend our congratulations and appreciation to the Director-General for his impressive and thoughtful Report, in which he has suggested eight initiatives to be implemented for fair migration. To achieve fair migration, Sri Lanka recognizes the importance of tripartism, coherence and standards.

I would also like to express appreciation to the ILO for having undertaken a General Survey on minimum wage fixing mechanisms and submitting a report on it to the International Labour Conference. The report contains valuable information.

In Sri Lanka, we have a minimum wage fixing mechanism for private sector workers called wages boards. In order to simplify the process of wage fixing and to introduce a common wage policy for the entire workforce, the Government of Sri Lanka recently established the National Pay Commission. I hope the information in the ILO report will be useful to the Pay Commission in its preliminary work.

Employment is crucial to socio-economic development, especially since we are in the post-crisis period, and issues relating to employment need to be addressed and evaluated. I therefore applaud the Governing Body of the International Labour Office for having selected the recurrent discussion on employment as the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. This Declaration called for member States of the ILO to pursue policies based on the strategic objectives, namely: employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights at work.

Accordingly, Sri Lanka prepared a comprehensive National Human Resource and Employment Policy and Workplan, following extensive discussions with all relevant stakeholders – including trade unions and employer representatives – and with the blessing of the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa.

In this regard, I personally, as the Minister of Labour, and on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka, appreciate the extensive support and full cooperation extended by the ILO through technical assistance.

At this session of the Conference, we have a discussion on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy as a standard-setting item. Most of the developing countries have large informal economies. In Sri Lanka this accounts for more than 60 per cent and workers in the informal economy suffer without decent work. Therefore, measures need to be taken to protect their employment rights.

I believe that standard setting alone is not sufficient to formalize the informal economy, because it deals with economic structure and the level of economic development. It is therefore necessary to create an environment that enables people to move from the informal to the formal sector. Providing financial assistance, infrastructure facilities, information on available marketplaces, upgrading business knowledge and skills, and supporting the establishment of cooperatives to gain the benefits of economies of scale are very important in this regard.

Sri Lanka hosted the World Conference on Youth last month in Colombo and youth employment was one of the main issues discussed. In future, a number of activities are to be carried out as a result of the conference. Since the ILO extended its support to the World Conference on Youth, I request that the ILO should continue its support to implement initiatives for youth employment in Sri Lanka.

Last but not least, I would like to express appreciation for the reform process initiated by the Director-General and the hope that it will bring benefits to the constituents of the ILO.

Original Arabic: Mr AL-RUBAIEE (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq)

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Iraq, allow me to convey my sincerest greetings and to wish the Conference every success. This Organization is assuming responsibilities that are as sensitive as they are important, with the aim of sheltering the labour and employment sector from the crises and challenges which it currently faces and protecting our modern world from the downsides and dire consequences of globalization.

The fact that the Director-General has chosen fair migration as the principal topic for our session reflects the urgent need to tackle a phenomenon which is of concern to the entire international community, relating to the situation and future prospects of migrant workers leaving their countries in search of earnings and security. The situation is all the more complex when the migration is illegal.

With reference to the Report of the Director-General, we wish to call for an employment strategy to protect migrants and, in that connection, suggest that the following issues should be considered.

First, there should be effective national legislation and policies designed to reduce unregulated or abusive labour migration practices, and the treatment of migrants should be carefully monitored to detect their exploitation in employment offensive to their human dignity.

Second, the principle of equal treatment of national workers and migrant workers in regular status should be upheld. Steps should be taken to guarantee a secure working environment, protected by social security and OSH systems.

Third, bilateral and multilateral agreements on employment and the management of required labour should be promoted, in accordance with the international labour standards and the Decent Work Agenda.

Fourth, the scope of labour inspection should be widened to include areas with concentrations of migrant workers, with the aim of detecting violations and malpractices, upholding the fundamental principles and rights of workers and ensuring decent work.

International cooperation in technology exchange, conducted on the basis of equality and without conditions, and productive structural change are necessary catalysts for the growth of productivity and the creation of a labour market capable of providing the new skills and occupations that now predominate in employment programmes and policies.

The Government of Iraq urges the Conference to heed the comments by the Arab group in response to the Report by the Director-General *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. We would like, from this rostrum, to take the opportunity to congratulate the Palestinians on their national reconciliation and formation of a government of national unity.

As for international efforts to tackle the growth of the informal economy, we favour the adoption of a Recommendation to promote the transition of all these activities to the formal economy, in compliance with the fundamental labour rights and principles.

Item 4 of our agenda deals with an indisputable humanitarian imperative to end all modern forms of slavery and human trafficking. We must focus our energies on the total and immediate abolition of forced labour and ensure effective tracking of the institutional and political frameworks set in place by certain States to justify and facilitate the practice of this flagrant human rights violation. In this context, we note that, under article 37(3), the Constitution of Iraq has prohibited forced labour.

The labour sector in Iraq has undergone a rapid process of change at legislative, regulatory and technical levels, despite the difficulties experienced by the country since 2003 and the predations wrought by terrorism and violence in many sectors in our country. This draft labour legislation is fully consistent with ILO standards and rules. According to international experts, these new instruments – in particular, the new Labour Code and the Pension and Social Security Code currently being enacted – represent a major advance for workers. In addition, we are now able to confirm that the Iraqi Government ratified the new draft Labour Code in 2013.

The country's challenges notwithstanding, it is undergoing a major transformation and carrying out an extensive volume of work in the areas of vocational training, entrepreneurship, social security, implementation of the national employment plan

and the creation of legal and regulatory frameworks for employers' and workers' organizations, in the context of respect for the principles of freedom of association and of pluralism, while extending the scope of social dialogue and promoting its viability with social partners.

In 2014, we also passed into law a social security act, pursuant to which a national high-level commission has been created, mandated to work towards poverty reduction through the provision of regulatory concessions, financial assistance and social benefits. Conditional cash transfers, guaranteed by statute, in the areas of both education and health, will be a massive boost to the development of our human capital.

In conclusion, we reiterate our country's need for technical support, with a view to drawing on the Organization's experience in the field of labour market surveys, the development of labour services, labour inspection and occupational safety services, and in the actuarial analysis of workers' social security funds.

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

Namibia congratulates the President on his election to steer the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference and assures him of our support.

My delegation also welcomes the Director-General's Report, which addresses, among other things, pertinent issues such as labour law, social protection floors, domestic workers and minimum wages. We would like to commend the Director-General because the issues raised in his Report continue to be the priorities of the Namibian Government.

As reported last year, the Wages Commission for Domestic Workers has concluded its work. Its recommendations were submitted to my office and are receiving attention.

This year, the Labour Advisory Council benefited from technical assistance in the form of a workshop on the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188). The tripartite Labour Advisory Council agreed in principle to the ratification of said Convention and requested that a gap analysis be carried out. It is expected that, by the end of August this year, the gap analysis will be finalized, after which Namibia will be in a position to make a pronouncement on the possible ratification.

You may recall that last year we informed this august house that we were in the process of facilitating the ratification of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), but policy issues needed to be addressed first. In this regard, my delegation wishes to inform this meeting that His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia launched the National Employment Policy in October of last year. This is an indication that Namibia is on the right track to consider the ratification of Convention No. 122.

Namibia is pleased that the discussion on the agenda for this year's session of the International Labour Conference includes the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26). Currently, the minimum wage in Namibia is regulated by collective agreement in three sectors, namely construction, agriculture and security. We will take advantage of these discussions on this agenda item. I wish to add that article 95 of the Namibian Constitution provides that workers are paid a living wage

adequate for the maintenance of a decent standard of living.

Namibia has been a signatory to Convention No. 29 since 2000. We are confident that, at the end of the Conference, the supplementary measures to address the significant implementation gaps will be adopted.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia, in conjunction with the ILO, embarked upon a review of social protection expenditure, which was concluded recently. The review informed the nation that Namibia only lacks the employment insurance to fulfil all the conditions of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). In addition, the Government is hard at work to implement the National Pension Fund (NPF) and the National Medical Benefit Fund (NMBF).

In conclusion, the notion of the informal economy and its workers should be noted as very sensitive, as the livelihoods of many people depend on the employment offered. The employment prospects may not be as promising as in the formal economy but it feeds many households with the meagre income it provides. There are both internal and external forces at work in the informal sector, which have made it the fastest-growing economy in many countries.

While the International Labour Conference advocates for transition to the formal economy as the most desired vehicle, the attitude and approach by which member States contemplate achieving this transition will play a significant role if we want to be successful.

Original French: Mr SY (Minister for the Public Service, Labour, Social Dialogue and Relations with Institutions, Senegal)

On behalf of the delegation of Senegal, I extend my warm congratulations to the President and the Officers of the Conference on their election.

The Conference is an appropriate time to take stock of the activities of the ILO, which, over the years, has shown itself to be a tool for regulating and promoting social justice in the current context of advanced globalization. It is the right time, therefore, to congratulate Mr Ryder and his team for their sustained efforts in pursuit of their noble mission.

The delegation of Senegal welcomes the theme that has been selected for this 103rd Session of the Conference, which is highly relevant in view of current developments, as are the other technical items on the agenda.

The Report presented by the Director-General, *ILO programme implementation 2012–13*, provides important information on the overall performance of the Organization and the content and value of the results obtained. This is important because it shows, once again, that the Organization strives to respond to the needs of our time and to provide the world with fitting responses to the challenges we all face.

The ILO, which has outlasted the League of Nations, has contributed significantly to the coming of a better world by remaining true to the tasks assigned to it by its constituents. Indeed, as a monitor and a pioneer, our Organization strives to embody the eloquent words of former Director-General David Morse: “The ILO ... will continue to seek to promote social evolution by peaceful means, to identify emerging social needs and problems and threats to social peace, and to stimulate action to deal with such problems.”

It is in this spirit that issues that have hitherto been ignored or not sufficiently recognized, such as maritime labour, domestic workers, green jobs, migrant workers, and that are very real problems of our time, have been tackled by the ILO, which has also promoted universal awareness of these problems.

We welcome the inestimable contribution made by the ILO to improving the lot of mankind. We encourage the ILO to continue its efforts, particularly within the context of growing economic inequality, which produces appalling social imbalances that threaten global peace and security.

Building a future with decent work is an overarching issue of concern to governments, those involved in the world of work and populations in general. Today, working conditions are negatively affected by demographic tension, as well as the harmful effects of the global economic crisis on employment and underemployment. These have an impact on the balance of social security schemes in different sectors of the economy.

Another issue is the fact that formal and urban labour markets are coming under pressure as a result of migration and rural exodus. This is the reason why we cannot but approve the integrated approach adopted by the Governing Body towards the transition from the informal to the formal economy, forced labour and the strategic objective of employment.

It is through this holistic approach that we will be able to find solutions to unemployment and underemployment, promote sustainable social security systems, ensure social cover for all workers in the informal economy and respond to the specific problems of the elderly, in particular by providing them with care.

I am also pleased to recall that Senegal, under the vision of our Head of State, His Excellency Macky Sall, has resolutely set out on the path towards economic growth combined with social progress.

This approach has been brought to life by the adoption of a new development plan called the Emerging Senegal Plan, which is based on four strategic objectives: structural transformation of the economy and growth; development of human capital; reinforcement of social protection and sustainable development; and promotion of good governance and transparency. Indeed, it was with this in mind that the social partners of Senegal developed a roadmap and signed an agreement on social stability and economic emergence following the first social conference, held in April 2014.

While reiterating our support for the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact, we remain optimistic and committed to working for the attainment of decent work.

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

On behalf of the workers of Korea, I would like to begin by expressing my condolences to the late Jin Ki-seung and Yeom Ho-seuk, who lost their lives protesting unjust dismissal and labour repression.

My condolences also go to those who lost their lives as a result of corporate greed and government irresponsibility. As is widely known, the Sewol ferry disaster claimed almost 300 lives. Sixteen people are still missing. The bereaved family members are now urging the Government to implement a thorough investigation into the disaster and hold ac-

countable those responsible for it, and to legislate a special law to secure a safe country. As the Government is shirking its responsibility, the bereaved families are appealing to the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) for solidarity and support.

Workers in Korea responded to this and stood together with the families. Because we clearly understood that deregulation and outsourcing of safety management, which have been promoted on the pretext of economic activation, threaten not only workers' occupational safety but also the lives of all the citizens. When the workers took to the street to raise their concerns, the Government reacted by arresting the General-Secretary of the KCTU. That is why people in Korea say that the Sewol ferry disaster is no different from the Soma mine tragedy in Turkey.

This disaster was followed by many other accidents, which raised the death toll day by day. On average, around 2,400 workers have died in industrial accidents. May I draw your attention to the fact that in the last two months, eight workers died in Hyundai Heavy Industries, which reportedly has the world's largest shipyard, and all of them were sub-contracted workers. For this reason, workers in Korea are going to stage an all-out struggle late in June to build a society which will put safety and lives before profit. Please keep an eye on the struggle and show your solidarity.

As the Director-General pointed out in his opening remarks, migration is high on the agenda of policy-makers. I am pleased to take part in this timely discussion.

It has been ten years since the employment permit system was introduced in Korea. Now, out of 550,000 migrants in Korea, around 250,000 from 15 Asian countries are living and working under the EPS. The Government is advertising this as an excellent system. However, the experience of migrant workers shows countless problems. As the system offers employers the right to employ migrant workers, it is the employers who have all the authority.

Further, it is a system for short-term circulation of migrants and does not allow migrant workers to change their employer freely. Migrant workers are exceptionally allowed to change their workplace, but this is almost impossible in practice. The system is continuously deteriorating. The workers were deprived of the right to choose their own job when the Ministry of Labour decided to no longer provide workers with a list of employers who were seeking to employ migrant workers. This year the Government revised the related law so that severance pay may not be paid during their stay in Korea. Migrant workers who are pursuing a "Korean dream" find themselves in a situation of forced labour. The rate of industrial accidents, including fatal accidents, is much higher for migrant workers. Those workers suffer from the low wages paid, long working hours, discrimination based on race and human rights violations, but they cannot resist.

Further, the Migrants' Trade Union, which was established by the migrant workers themselves in an attempt to protect their rights, has not been recognized for seven years, while the Supreme Court makes a decision, regardless of what was recommended by the ILO. In this regard, I support the eight points suggested by the Director-General for fair migration. In addition to this, I would like to underline that the fundamental rights of migrant workers should be top priority in any policy.

Lastly, I emphasize that the role of trade unions is crucial to realize all the tasks that we face, and to build a society where people, safety and lives come before profits. That is why I believe that freedom of association is a fundamental principle of this Organization. In this sense, special attention should be paid to the Government of Korea, which continuously fails to implement this important principle.

Mr GIBSON (*Minister of Labour and
National Insurance, Bahamas*)

On behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, allow me to congratulate the President and his Vice-Presidents on their election at this 103rd Session of the Conference.

I am certain that my colleague ministers will agree that, under their able leadership, we may anticipate a most productive session.

In addition, I take this opportunity to extend warm greetings to the Director-General and the Governing Body of the ILO on this 103rd Session of the Conference.

Since his appointment in October 2012, I may say without fear of contradiction that the Director-General has made himself available to all constituents. The ministers of member States of the Caribbean region are particularly pleased that he has been able to find the time in his busy schedule to visit them and to discuss the challenges that are specific to our region. We, in this region, anticipate the deepening of this relationship with the ILO administration, as we work collaboratively to accomplish the goals set before us.

In his Executive summary, the Director-General spoke of the 2012–13 biennium as having been one of reform and consolidation. This is evident from the successful structures and Strategic Policy Framework established under his able guidance. The Bahamas was one of the first countries of our region to establish its DWCP. Once again, we place on record our appreciation to the members of the hardworking team in the Port of Spain subregional office for their invaluable assistance.

Over the past 12 months, the Government of the Bahamas has undertaken a number of strategies and legislative initiatives in keeping with the ILO standards and best practices outlined in the Report of the Director-General.

First, I am proud to report that the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, which emanate from the Health and Safety at Work Act 2002, are in the final stages of adoption by our Government and are expected to be approved by Parliament during the next 30 days. These regulations will further guarantee that all workers in the Bahamas have a statutory right to work in a healthy and safe environment.

Second, our Government has introduced legislation to strengthen the role of the health and safety inspectors and to provide them with the tools necessary to ensure greater compliance.

In our quest to reduce the level of unemployment in the Bahamas, our Government has embarked on a number of major foreign investment initiatives which are expected to come on-stream in the very near future. In December 2014, the largest foreign investment venture in the Caribbean will open its doors and is expected to employ some 5,000 workers. In addition, our Government expects that, over the next 18 months, major investments on the islands of Bimini, San Salvador, Eleuthera and New Providence will result in an additional 5,000 jobs.

In addition to the direct foreign investment, we have committed ourselves to investing US\$100 million in the establishment of the Bahamas Agricultural and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI). This Institute will help to promote food security in the Bahamas, with the establishment of a so-called “tutorial commercial farm”, scheduled to open in August 2014. The Institute will be located in Andros, the largest island in our archipelago, and will provide teaching, skills training, professional development and research, along with extension work in the fields of agriculture and the marine sciences, ensuring increased levels of employment.

Our Government recently amended the National Insurance Act, with the effect that workers in the hotel and tourism sector can now have their national insurance contributions calculated on the basis of their gratuities and tips, in addition to their wages, and, in doing so, derive greater benefits based on a higher contributions ceiling.

The structure of the ILO is based on the tripartite relationship between Governments, Employers and Workers. In keeping with the spirit of this structure, the Government of the Bahamas has established the National Tripartite Council. The enabling legislation is awaiting its third reading and passage by Parliament; at the request of the social partners, however, copies of the draft have been submitted to the ILO subregional office in Port of Spain. Comments have been received from the ILO and, as soon as discussions are completed, the bill will be passed by Parliament.

Lastly, I wish to join with all member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in expressing support for the continuation of the Caribbean subregional office in Port of Spain for it to be maintained at its current structural level.

Mr NICOLESCU (*Employer, Romania*)

First of all, on behalf of the Employers’ delegation of Romania, I should like to congratulate the ILO Director-General, Mr Ryder, and his team on the varied and productive work done over the last year.

In 2013, the Romanian economy saw some slight improvements: our gross national product (GNP) increased by 3.5 per cent, one of the highest increases in the EU; unemployment stands at 7.1 per cent, one of the lowest rates in Europe. Despite these developments, the 450,000 SMEs, representing 99 per cent of all Romanian businesses, have faced a number of banking, fiscal, commercial and human resource challenges and difficulties.

Recently, a new law on SMEs was adopted in April 2014 thanks to the major contribution made by the Romanian SMEs’ confederation (NRCSMS). This law implements numerous elements of the Small Business Act for Europe in Romania and lays down a solid basis for the development of the SME sector. It is essential, now, that the provisions of the SME law, starting with the creation of a special fund for micro-grants, for innovation and technology, for microfinance and for ecological products, take effect within the next few months.

We should like to continue by outlining certain aspects of the main themes of the 103rd Session of the Conference.

First, regarding the strategic objective of employment, we consider it necessary to pay more attention to increasing the number of SMEs and to amplifying their functionality and performance. All

studies demonstrate that in almost all countries, SMEs have been the only enterprises which have created new jobs over the last five years. In order to increase the number and quality of new jobs, it is necessary that the stimulants used by national governments, such as state assistance, improving research and development activities, creating new jobs and so on, are tailored dimensionally and structurally to the specificities of SMEs.

Second, in drawing up the ILO Recommendation on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, which entails diversified and complex challenges at all levels, a pragmatic approach focused on all of the factors related to this transition should be predominant. A win-win approach with emphasis on voluntary compliance measures, such as a fiscal lottery, could greatly contribute to the formulation of a realistic and efficient ILO Recommendation that is able to bring about substantial positive economic, social and educational changes in all countries.

Third, the ILO, the most comprehensive tripartite organization, should play a more proactive role and take more proactive actions. So far, the ILO’s approach has most often been reactive, based on feedback on past changes in seeking and providing answers to ongoing problems.

The transition to a knowledge-based economy and society, differing greatly from our current economy and society, requires new vision, approaches, actions and behaviour. For the ILO, one of the first steps in this direction is to initiate and conduct, over the next period, a multidisciplinary study focused on the necessary changes to be made in order to identify the approaches and actions that the Office should take in the context of the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. Such a study should provide the ILO with the necessary information to increase its efficiency and prestige substantially, contributing greatly to the anticipation, prevention and resolutions from the tripartite perspective of the complex and difficult problems facing governments and employers’ organizations and trade unions. This approach, of course, is not easy to implement, but it is essential for the future of the ILO and for tripartite social dialogue, both at the national and international levels.

The Alliance of Romanian Employers’ Confederation (ACPR) is ready to be directly involved in such a necessary and prestigious project.

Mr CHISAMBO (*Employer, Zambia*)

I am greatly humbled to take the floor to speak at this year’s session of the International Labour Conference. Allow me to start my speech by commending the ILO Director-General and his team for moving along the right path in the work of the Office, especially in the implementation of the 2014–15 biennium workplan focusing on the areas of critical importance. The performance indicators on action taken in a number of areas of critical importance, as provided for in the Report, suggest that both human and financial resources have been applied to deliver on the expectations of the ILO and its constituencies. I wish to encourage the Office to maintain this confidence and level of satisfaction as it moves ahead with its present and future work.

It is encouraging to note that the Office has, on a yearly basis, been conducting surveys on global employment trends and that the results of the surveys have proved that unemployment levels in most

parts of the world are rising, with an overall increase in unemployment of approximately 5 million people, which effectively increases the global number of unemployed to 203 million from 197 million in 2012.

The Director-General's Report notes that Africa is experiencing positive economic growth, yet progress is slow in the creation of productive employment and decent work for women and men. This is indeed a concern for the ILO and also a concern to our governments and workers' and employers' organizations.

It is for this reason that the current discussions on employment policies for sustainable recovery and development, as part of the recurrent discussion under the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the discussion on transitioning from the informal to formal economy are well timed.

It will therefore be inevitable that the conclusions of the two Conference committees provide guidance on initiatives for employment creation at the national level. This should be complemented by assistance from the ILO, under its capacity-building programme for governments and workers' and employers' organizations in tripartite initiatives in the formulation and implementation of national employment creation strategies that may include skills development programmes for enhanced productivity and stimulation of employment creation for different groups of our people. Initiatives such as the National Youth Employment Strategy and Action Plan that my country, Zambia, and other African countries have prepared should be supported by the Office to ensure successful implementation.

Such initiatives must also be supported by effective management information systems that should inform the member States and their social partners on progress being made in terms of employment creation and the different labour dynamics.

My federation wishes to thank the ILO for the technical and financial support that Zambia has been receiving and also for the number of projects that have been set up in the Lusaka ILO Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, of which most are aimed at promoting and creating decent and productive employment.

These projects are a major contribution to the implementation of our second DWCP (2013–16), which was launched by the ILO Director-General, Mr Ryder, when he visited Zambia last year.

The issue of social protection floors is still a challenge to most of our countries and, as you are aware, this resulted in the adoption of Recommendation No. 202 as a guiding instrument for member States to implement social protection floors within the strategies for the extension of social security that should progressively ensure higher levels of social security for as many people as possible. While I note the efforts made by the Office in providing advisory services to constituents in 30 member States on the design, administration, management and governance of social security schemes, and efforts in facilitating national dialogues on national social protection extension strategies, the Office should invest more time and resources in encouraging meaningful national dialogue on social protection and building the capacity of the tripartite social partners to enable them to design, implement, monitor and evaluate national social protection floor policies and programmes.

Original Arabic: Mr SHAHER SAED (Worker, Palestine)

I speak to you on behalf of the workers of Palestine and express our gratitude to you for all the efforts made at the international level by the tripartite partners in the framework of ILO activities.

I would also like to thank the Director-General of the ILO and the members of the mission which visited the occupied Palestinian Arab territories and which reviewed important aspects of the life of our Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation. I thank them for their professionalism, which is evident in a number of sections of the Report of the Director-General describing the deleterious effects of the occupation. It may be seen from this Report that the continued occupation by Israel is the cause of the destruction of human life in Palestine. The fact-finding mission looks at the underlying causes of the situation faced by Palestinian workers and the destruction of the Palestinian economy by the occupation which has pillaged and laid waste to the resources of our people. It draws attention to the negative effects of the occupation for our people and it likens the situation of the workers in Gaza to a tinderbox.

Indeed, the closures, the roadblocks, the suppression of freedom of movement and the control exercised over all aspects of life, in full view of the rest of the world, are proof that the occupation is pursuing a deliberate policy of destruction of the Palestinian people and constitutes the principal cause of the continuing rise in unemployment. This is exacerbating poverty among Palestinian workers and demonstrating that the Israeli occupation policy is deliberately designed to drive our people into poverty.

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank have been reduced by this policy to a holding area for unemployed workers avid for alternative sources of income. I fail to understand why the rest of the world is so astonished at the spread of violence and the street demonstrations by young people, when Gaza has been subject to a blockade for nine long years, preventing its workers from seeking employment beyond its frontiers. The Israeli occupation army controls the crossings between Gaza and Israel. The same applies to the West Bank, although in a less heavy-handed and brutal manner, with the crossing points to Israel closing or opening to workers in accordance with the whim of the soldiers guarding them. These soldiers delight in humiliating the workers, who sometimes have to wait more than five hours until those among them who hold security passes are allowed to proceed to their workplaces.

For all these reasons, we are calling from this platform for a mission to investigate Israeli practices at the crossing points, so that the whole world is made aware of the repressive and humiliating goings-on at the Israeli roadblocks.

The settlers have fashioned humiliating work programmes for the Palestinian workers, creating situations of virtual servitude. Some 35,000 Palestinian workers are employed in these settlements, where they are subject to the most barbaric forms of humiliation by their Israeli employers. For these reasons, I am calling on the ILO to help put an end to these practices and, in particular, to the activities of the brokers exploiting the workers in the settlements. I place it on record once again that our workers are being subjected to the most odious forms of humiliation by Israeli employers.

Efforts must also be made to improve the situation of workers within Palestine and to update the labour legislation. Flagrant violations are being committed against workers and the labour law is not respected.

The Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions is endeavouring to resolve the problems faced by workers. We aim, working together with our tripartite partners and the ILO, to improve the situation of workers in general. We are working with other tripartite partners to ensure social security cover for all the workers of Palestine. Our aim is to see the application of Convention No. 102.

The practices of the Israeli occupation against workers in Palestine form part of a carefully orchestrated programme. We urge you, on behalf the workers of Palestine, to put an end to this occupation of our land and of our home country, so that a Palestinian State may be established with Al-Quds as its capital, to put an end to the settlement process and to demolish the racist separation wall, which divides the workers from their families and from one another. We insist that an inquiry be held into the crimes perpetrated against our workers. Only one week ago, workers were immolated at their workplace within the Green Line.

We call for a high-level mission from the ILO to Palestine, to investigate the crimes committed against our workers.

In conclusion, we stress once again that it is the Israeli occupation which is to blame for the humiliation suffered by the Palestinian working people. For that reason, a stop must be put to the occupation of our land and our people.

Ms LYNCH (*Worker, Ireland*)

In his address to the Irish Houses of Parliament in 1963, President John F. Kennedy quoted a line from Gaelic poet, Ethna Carbery, "They are going, going, going, and we cannot bid them stay". Then, as now, I doubt that there are many families in Ireland who have not been touched by emigration, as many of our young people migrate in search of better work and opportunities.

As the recent European elections demonstrate, fair immigration is an issue of real significance, not only to Skype parents and grandparents but also to workers and their trade unions, who for some time now have voiced concerns about the way in which EU rules are being used to create a race to the bottom led by competition based on lower wages and conditions of employment for posted and cross-border migrant workers.

Decent work is central to fair migration, and fair migration is central to the fight against xenophobia and racism.

Fair migration means a level playing field where, as a minimum in the host country, the place where the workers are working, employment rights and collective agreements apply to all workers, regardless of their immigration status.

The recession in Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe, has had a greater negative impact on migrant workers. Pre-recession disadvantages and discrimination, which were considerable for migrant groups, have persisted and some communities have been particularly badly affected. While I accept that the extent of discrimination is challenging to quantify, it is hard to argue that discrimination is not a factor behind the fact that black African workers in Ireland are over four times more likely to be unemployed compared with their white Irish colleagues.

Some exploitative trends have emerged. These are often exacerbated by government policies and practices, such as an unemployment system that leaves far too much control of employees' permission to work in the hands of the employer.

Other problems arise when workers seek redress on foot of their exploitation. Making a complaint against an existing or former employer is a daunting and formidable step for any person to take, irrespective of their nationality, but for isolated migrant workers, especially undocumented workers, this is particularly difficult as they face intimidation in various forms, including threats of deportation and threats to their families. But, even where workers do have the courage to take their case, and win their case, and are made an award for redress, the bad employer has one last trick up his or her sleeve. They simply cease trading in the name of the company and entirely frustrate the employee from being able to enforce the award, and this problem is likely to get far worse if the proposals for a single person limited company go ahead without any safeguards to hold the directors responsible.

Labour is not a commodity, and for many the week's wage is all that stands between that worker losing his or her home and being able to feed his or her family. I think that policy-makers, focused solely on company law, forget this or ignore this too easily. An example in Ireland at the moment is a situation where migrant workers are now on the 13th day of their sit-in at their workplace, the Paris bakery, having been left high and dry, and the only way that they are going to be able to secure the payment of their €100,000 in back pay is to undertake this action.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions encourages the Director-General to include this type of situation in his consideration and to look at the type of measures needed to ensure that worker exploitation and employment rules evasion do not accompany labour migration. An important part of this consideration needs to be what measures can be taken to promote decent work in international trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions encourages the Director-General to include and develop a tripartite social progress clause aimed at providing safeguards against potentially negative economic, social and labour consequences arising out of international agreements such as the TTIP.

Finally, I would like to make the Director-General aware of an important breakthrough in relation to respect for the right to collective bargaining in Ireland. The Government has recently agreed to bring forward legislation that will include effective protections to prevent dismissal or other prejudicial retaliation by employers against workers, importantly, migrant workers who seek to collectively bargain through a trade union.

Original French: Mr ADA (Minister of Employment, Labour and Social Security, Niger)

First of all, allow me to join with previous speakers in conveying to the President, on behalf of the delegation of Niger, and on my own behalf, my warmest congratulations on his election to preside over the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

In view of the foresight with which the President conducts our work, I have no doubt that the noble

objectives of this 103rd Session, the main theme of which is building a future with decent work, will be achieved.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Director-General, Mr Ryder, for his second Report to the Conference.

For a better appreciation of this Report, I would like to recall the vision set out in the Director-General's previous Report, which took up the multiple challenges facing workers, enterprises and governments throughout the world, and in which he had the support of the Governing Body and the Conference.

I therefore note with pleasure, through this document, the significant progress in the implementation of the ILO's programme for the biennium 2012–13, particularly in the African region.

I further note that the results summed up in the Report under consideration have been achieved thanks to the dynamic cooperation that the Director-General wished to extend even further, despite a global context still marked by the consequences of the 2008 crisis and the slow recovery of the economy and employment.

In fact, aside from strengthening direct cooperation with the ILO constituents, which we welcome, the Director-General has stated right from the time he took office that he supports consistency across programmes on employment and social protection within the UN system. A perfect example of this is the proactive role played by the ILO through the National Forum on Social Protection in Niger.

Furthermore, we welcome the processes under way to reform the ILO's governing organs, in which my country, Niger, played an active part through the Africa group at the Governing Body and which led to significant efficiency gains.

The main issues before the 103rd Session are real challenges, both for the ILO and for the entire world. They include, among other things, employment, minimum wages, the transition from the informal to the formal economy, forced labour, fair labour migration, child labour and the promotion of decent work.

It is therefore up to the tripartite constituents to respond to the Director-General's appeal and place employment at the heart of programmes and policies, and to step up measures to put a stop to forced labour and tackle the unacceptable treatment that is all too often experienced by migrant workers.

Niger fully subscribes to this message and wishes to renew its strong support for the ILO in its efforts to tackle these major challenges. I would now like to inform the Conference of some actions undertaken by my country that show the progress made under the Decent Work Agenda.

The Economic and Social Development Plan of Niger, which is the reference framework for the policies and strategies for the period 2012–15, covers, among others, the 3N initiative, "Nigerians nourish Nigerians" (*Nigériens nourrissent les Nigériens*), and the DWCP.

The Government of Niger's determined campaign against unemployment in general, and youth unemployment in particular, has made it possible to create 470,226 jobs in three years, including 20,241 for young graduates who have entered the civil service. This is far more than the Government's target of creating 50,000 jobs per year during the five-year term of President Mahamadou Issoufou.

We would like to emphasize the launch of elections, the establishment of a National Observatory for Employment and Training, the revision of minimum wages by profession, the drafting of a national policy framework for OSH, the development of a national action plan to combat child labour, the drafting of a new list of occupational diseases, the launch of a process to implement basic social protection, the launch of a process to introduce universal health insurance and a strategy to develop labour-based practices with the support of the ILO, among others.

All these measures are aimed at improving the living standards of workers and contribute significantly to the calm social atmosphere required for the smooth running of social and economic activities.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage the ILO to resolutely continue its cooperation with international organizations and other UN agencies with a view to more consistent policies and reaffirm my country's hope that we will see more active cooperation with the ILO, particularly regarding the effective implementation of our DWCP.

Mr JONES (*Worker, New Zealand*)

I stand here proud of the fact that my country, New Zealand, was a founding Member of the ILO in 1919 and, historically, has taken its obligations as a Member seriously.

Despite this, I am saddened to have to report that the record of the current Government of New Zealand in adhering to ILO Conventions does not present a very bright picture.

For example, with regards to the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the right of working women to equal pay, the performance of the Government of New Zealand has been very poor. Even though there is a 13.8 per cent gender pay gap in New Zealand, one of the first acts the Government of New Zealand took after coming into office was to abolish the Pay and Employment Equity Unit.

Last year, New Zealand's Employment Court upheld a significant case brought by the Service and Food Workers Union (SFWU) on behalf of caregiver Kristine Bartlett that she had been discriminated against under the New Zealand 1972 Equal Pay Act because she worked in a female-dominated industry.

It was sad to see our Government, as a signatory to Convention No. 100, argue that the Equal Pay Act does not allow female workers to argue that, because their workforce is dominated by women, an equal pay remedy is not allowed based on external male comparators.

This case has gone to the New Zealand Court of Appeal and we are currently awaiting a decision. This ruling could provide thousands of New Zealand working women in female-dominated industries with the recognition and pay they have long deserved.

The Government's position on the Kristine Bartlett claim is nothing short of shameful, given our proud history of being the first nation to recognize women's right to vote.

In addition to impeding the rights of women to gain equal pay, the Government of New Zealand has spent the last six years further eroding our employment legislation and attacking the fundamental rights of New Zealand workers.

Our current employment legislation remains so weak that collective bargaining is still not available to a large majority of New Zealand workers.

Instead of strengthening collective bargaining, the Government of New Zealand has progressively weakened it even further.

It is currently in the process of passing further legislation, including: removing the obligation of unions and employers to conclude collective agreements; allowing employers to refuse to negotiate multi-employer or industry collective agreements by simply opting out of this process; allowing employers to employ all new workers on inferior individual terms and conditions, even when a union-negotiated collective agreement is in place; and taking away the protection of our most vulnerable workers in contracting and transfer situations.

These moves will further weaken employment conditions and collective bargaining and will put barriers in the way of freedom of association.

The proposed changes are in breach of Conventions Nos 87 and 98.

The weakening of collective bargaining since the 1980s is a principal cause of New Zealand having the second-fastest growth of income and wealth inequality in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) between 1982 and 2012.

As a result, we have gone from being one of the most equal to one of the most unequal of the OECD countries.

The wealthiest 1 per cent now own the same as the bottom 79 per cent of our national wealth.

According to official statistics, we now have over 200,000 New Zealand children living below the poverty line and many of these are not even being fed before attending school and come from families where both parents are working.

This is unacceptable in a country of just over 4 million people, where we produce more food than we consume.

Clearly, the current Government of New Zealand has no intention of actually adhering to their commitments to ILO Conventions Nos 87, 98 and 100.

Our Government needs to live up to our proud history.

Workers should be proud of, and supported by, our governments. Unions will continue to mobilize New Zealanders to tell our Government to stop the destruction of workers' rights and focus on measures to address inequality for all New Zealanders.

I call on other nations and the ILO to encourage them to do the same.

Original Spanish: Mr PUGA (Worker, Panama)

In the last few years, Panama has been a constant stage for trade union struggles against an authoritarian and anti-worker Government with a destructive entrepreneurial mentality which has caused death and injury and has maimed people for life, leading to a drastic deterioration of relations between workers and employers in a negative way.

The unity of action and solidarity of workers, both nationally and internationally, has achieved victories in this unequal struggle. In addition to its hostile language, the Martinelli Government has now started lying to international organizations, alleging that in Panama there are no labour problems and that dialogue and agreed solutions prevail; and even that the ILO Committee of Experts on the Applica-

tion of Conventions and Recommendations, for the first time in 15 years, has omitted to mention Panama in its annual report thanks to this fruitful dialogue, which is an outright lie. It is enough to read pages 215, 437, 475 and 551 of the report of this Committee for 2014, which contradict that statement. The situation has not changed. The Government is preventing substantive agreements from being reached in the dialogue forums that the ILO has promoted. It respects none of the very few agreements that have been reached. It continues to persecute trade union leaders, with the support of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary, which endorse its anti-union actions by finding against unionists or delaying their findings. Trade unions continue to be denied a legal personality. Those who object are persecuted and there is a total absence of real and effective dialogue.

Freedom of association is prevented because permission to reform the statutes of trade unions to convert company unions into industrial unions is denied, as in the recent case of the Union of Telecommunications Workers and others. Freedom of association is denied to the public sector, as the ILO's Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), have not been ratified. Obstacles are put in the way of collective bargaining, lists of demands are rejected and conciliation proceedings are prevented, as in the recent case of the Single National Union of Construction Industry and Allied Workers (SUNTRACS), which led to a two-week strike; and then there is the obvious inability to resolve the teachers' strike.

President Martinelli, who was condemned by the world's workers at the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, has unlawfully appointed his friends to some state institutions, such as to the Social Security Fund, to represent workers, which is against the law that allows trade union organizations to appoint these representatives themselves. He orders the judiciary to prosecute trade union leaders and allows "yellow" unions and the infringement of labour law by employers, especially the transnational corporations, which act with impunity.

We express our solidarity with the workers of Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia and El Salvador, and all those who are fighting for the right to life and freedom of association, and we condemn the repression of workers in any part of the world that needs our solidarity.

We support the initiatives for a government of national unity and to combat poverty by reducing informal labour, and we will continue to struggle to achieve real decent work in our country and in the region in the framework of the global campaign against an inhuman neoliberalism that puts profits before life. We do not doubt that this will be overcome, because justice and reason always conquer avarice and evil.

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

The Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) expresses thanks to the ILO for the opportunity to address this plenary. Many of the estimated 232 million migrants in the world come from Africa. So, on the issue of migration, we Africans know it, we feel it and we live it. It is therefore an issue that is quite dear to our hearts. But let me say

that there is no country in the world, that we know of, that is composed entirely of its own people. For every country, we know, is comprised of its people and people that have come to settle there.

Migration is not a crime, it is not a sin and it is not a curse. It is part of human history and existence. In fact, migration can be beneficial to all concerned. Perhaps the most developed country in the world is the United States. This is a country that is known as a country of migrants. This is all the more reason why every country has a duty to defend the socio-economic interests of migrants.

In many cases, people have had to migrate because of conflicts, climate change, low standards of living and even because of the reality of colonialism. Also, a lot of Africans have moved in search of better working conditions overseas in order to send much-needed financial aid back home, with further remittances accounting for huge percentages of national annual incomes. So a pressing challenge for all humanity is to address the causes that have led to the unregulated movement of people from their countries. This is a sure way of stemming the mass exodus of people. This, to us, is a better solution than that of increasing security, implementing harsh measures, or even outsourcing migrants to other underprivileged countries. People who are desperate to migrate cannot be deterred by such tactics. To confirm this, all we need to do is examine the tragedies that have occurred off the Italian coast of Lampedusa where, annually, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at least 2,000 would-be migrants perish in the seas. These victims, of course, include women and children.

Also, in order to stem the tide and significantly reduce forced labour, the world has to squarely take on the criminality and crimes against humanity called human trafficking. This, we believe, should be checkmated in the receiving countries.

Migration is a reality. We must do all we can to ensure that migrants are guaranteed their trade union and human rights at all times and in all climes. For migrants, there should be fairness in conditions of work, equal pay for equal work and a fair tax policy.

The OATUU appeals to all sending countries to be alive to their responsibilities towards the protection of the interests and rights of their people, both at home and abroad. We appeal to governments and employers to protect the trade union and human rights of workers. Any violation of these rights should be punished according to the law. Also, we ask our brothers and sisters in the trade union movement across the world to organize and unionize migrant workers and ensure that their fundamental human rights are guaranteed.

The OATUU supports the eight components of the ILO's agenda for fair migration, as highlighted by the Director-General in his Report. However, we insist on the important role to be played by governments in collaboration with the social partners with regard to the improvement of governance issues in handling migration matters. Governments should put in place practical and humane national legal frameworks for labour migration and ensure bilateral agreements.

For our part, the OATUU will continue to support this.

Finally, African workers once again call for the reform of the ILO at all levels, to make it all inclu-

sive. It will hurt the ILO's long-term objectives and endanger its health if some parts of the world behave and carry on as if they are indigenes of the ILO and the rest of us, the vast majority of us, are migrants.

Original Spanish: Ms CABRERA (Government, Uruguay)

In this presentation, our Government would like to link the items on the agenda of this Conference to the ongoing processes in our country.

One of the items on the agenda is informality. We are all aware that this economic phenomenon inevitably leads to exclusion, increasing poverty and unbridled inequality. It excludes people from benefits provided by the formal system to millions worldwide. It deprives them of access to social security, health and public education systems and restricts any society's potential for prosperity.

Our region is no exception and some countries have high levels of informality. Uruguay has the lowest level of informality in Latin America, after a marked decrease over the last nine years. To illustrate this, let me give you just one figure. Over the period, the number of contributors to social security increased by over 60 per cent, rising from approximately 900,000 to almost 1.5 million jobs contributing to social security. However, despite this performance, our rate of informality could be considered high in comparison to other parts of the world. Our country is strongly committed to improving our performance in this regard, considering that further formalization is synonymous with greater inclusion and social progress.

We would like to report on the instruments that we have adopted in recent years to improve our performance. We are increasing coordination amongst various state bodies – such as the labour inspectorate, and the social security and tax authorities, which are responsible for examining and addressing the problem of informality – to ensure that they collaborate, so as to avoid wasting either human or material resources. This required not only institutional coordination but also regulations to prevent informality. As a result of this coordination, significant investment has been made in technology, to enable the interoperability of the bodies involved. Thus, any inspection activity carried out by one body is immediately notified to all the others. This saves time and effort and helps guide our work. It not only facilitates the work of supervisory mechanisms but it provides a formidable data collection tool for statistical purposes and designing new policies.

These efforts would be thwarted without an appropriate and continuous training policy for our inspectorate teams, aiming to equip them with better tools with which to carry out their work. We have also approved provisions to encourage certain groups to register themselves in the social security system. Such provisions include the creation of a single social tax, which has provided an excellent instrument for social integration. In addition, at the centre of our activities lies a policy of open social dialogue to promote collective bargaining. The promotion and protection of this fundamental human right results in strong organizations which are capable of effectively regulating professional sectors, making a decisive contribution to formalizing the labour market and making it more transparent.

I would also like to draw your attention to the Act on Financial Inclusion which we recently adopted

and which obliges employers to pay wages through the banking system, thereby preventing such transactions from being hidden or declared incorrectly to the social security and tax systems. We have also adopted an Act on Corporate Criminal Liability on the basis that informality is an attack on occupational safety and health (OSH). This act establishes provisions that hold employers criminally liable if they do not meet the safety obligations established in their contracts with workers, in our Constitution and in a number of international treaties signed by our country, including the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). The standard, which has been incorrectly interpreted by employers, stipulates that those who place the life and health of their dependants at risk are to be held criminally liable. The employers' sector considers that it establishes an obstacle to productivity. The Government of Uruguay adopted it after a long parliamentary discussion and is convinced that it will result in the protection of workers' health and lives. Acting as the guardian of these legal rights is the least that we can require from a State which claims responsibility for its most important asset: its people. We also believe that implementing this standard will help create fair working conditions and penalize unfair competition between enterprises in the formal and informal sectors.

Our last two Governments invested in social dialogue to reform our system of industrial relations and we will continue to use this mechanism as a guarantee of prosperity in the productive and social development of our nation, objectively considering that this has been the means of achieving better wealth distribution and social justice.

Original Arabic: Mr AL-BAWI (Worker, Iraq)

It is with pleasure that I present my warm congratulations to the President for the confidence he earned to be elected as head of the Conference. I would also like to send greetings from the Iraqi trade unions and workers, who wish the Conference every success so that it may reach its objectives and adopt decisions which will ensure the peace and prosperity of societies.

The Conference has not only responsibilities and major tasks regarding the tripartite partners but also, and above all, the duty to support, through all available means, the creation of sustainable development at economic, social and environmental levels. ILO functions include promoting conditions to facilitate the provision of social services through a social security system that covers all members of society, so that justice and peace prevail and the future of coming generations is ensured.

Children and mothers need to be protected and children need to be afforded all their legitimate rights concerning decent living conditions, education and protection against exploitation, which still exists in many parts of the world.

I appeal, on the occasion of this session of the Conference, to the Palestinian people to form their National Unity Government, which would represent a step along the path towards the acquisition of their legitimate rights.

Women must be afforded their social rights. Society should offer them protection and provide them and their families with all necessary security. Society should ensure that their basic needs are met, such as clothing, housing, and medical and social services.

All of the Earth's inhabitants, each one according to his or her capacities, are called on to protect the Earth against factors which contribute to its destruction, including factories. Industrialized countries are accountable, before humanity, for the effects of industrialization on living creatures, forests, agriculture and marine life. It is vital to remove all causes of pollution and anything which could harm human beings, animals and vegetation.

Furthermore, all countries should be encouraged to implement the Conventions and Recommendations of the Organization, which has always supported workers and ensured the monitoring of social security, trade unions and the introduction of labour legislation, and has underscored the fundamental rights of workers, including the exercise of trade union rights in full freedom and without interference of any kind.

Mr ROELANTS DU VIVIER (Representative, International Co-operative Alliance)

First of all, on behalf of the International Co-operative Alliance, I would like to congratulate the ILO Director-General on his appointment, and also on what his team has already achieved in such a short time, in particular the new boost given to the Cooperatives Unit of this house and the series of public statements in favour of cooperatives.

The International Co-operative Alliance represents cooperatives and their members worldwide. Members of cooperatives have been estimated at 1 billion persons, which accounts for around 15 per cent of the world's adult citizens.

Cooperatives directly employ several tens of millions of people and, even more significantly, they are key in maintaining, partly or totally, the jobs or the income of several hundreds of millions of people worldwide, including farmers, and also transport workers, and an increasing number of street vendors, waste pickers and domestic workers. Cooperatives have provided, or are providing, most of these cooperative members with the highest level of formality which they can possibly attain in their situation, considering that in some countries 50–80 per cent of people are in the informal economy.

This transforming capacity of cooperatives is not new. As early as in the nineteenth century, rural credits and agricultural cooperatives in Europe gradually lifted farmers out of informality and debt. This process in the agricultural sector then extended to most of what has become the industrialized world and, more recently, to emerging countries. Today, we are seeing an explosion in the creation of cooperatives in public services such as health, education and energy, and the labour market integration of disabled and disadvantaged persons, with a host of new employment opportunities including informal sector workers. With large-scale restructuring of enterprises all over the world, we are also witnessing a surge in the transformation of enterprises in crisis or without heirs into cooperatives, thereby maintaining many of their jobs and preventing workers from having to struggle in the informal economy. Many credit cooperatives have been providing small productive loans to informal workers and producers, thereby helping them to consolidate their businesses and make the transition towards formality.

This important record of cooperatives ensuring the transition is what justified the presence of the cooperative movement in this house, at this session

of the International Labour Conference, in view of the work of the Committee on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy.

But why do cooperatives play such an important role in the transition towards the formal economy? Because a fundamental aspect of their mission is to satisfy ordinary people's needs, such as work, production and credit, through an enterprise which is democratically controlled by those same citizens. It is important to note that the solidarity-based enterprise model is defined by standards that have been designed by cooperatives themselves, enshrined in the ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193), and translated into laws almost everywhere in the world. Apart from democratic control by ordinary citizens, these standards also include a strong emphasis on education and training, cooperation among cooperatives and their commitment towards the surrounding community. Based on those standards, cooperatives provide their members with a number of things: legal bases, economies of scale, skills training, accumulation, access to markets and to credit, and a long-term vision. This enables the transition towards the formal economy and delivers higher than average employment security, social protection and contribution to development, as has been repeatedly recognized by the United Nations, which proclaimed 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives, providing an occasion for the cooperative movement to now engage in a cooperative decade. All this is backed by concrete evidence captured in studies, books, reports and videos.

Another point I want to underline, to conclude, is the capacity of cooperatives for resilience and innovation amid periods of crisis. They showed it in the United States and Canada during the Great Depression. After the global crisis struck in 2008, and under the current protracted EU crisis, a series of studies have shown that cooperatives have been more resilient, on average, than firms. We have shown this in the cooperative sector I work for, industry and services, through annual surveys in terms of enterprise survival, job maintenance and, in many cases, net job creation and capital to debt ratio. Cooperative banking has also shown it, in particular in terms of gains in market shares since 2008. This resilience, of course, has its limits but one of our clear findings has been that the more intensely cooperatives work together and cooperate among themselves, the stronger this resilience appears to be. It also shows the relevance in today's world of an economy of cooperation, not only between individual citizens in their enterprises, but also among enterprises in generating decent and sustainable jobs, and shared and inclusive wealth for all.

For this reason, cooperatives are a fundamental development agent to be taken into account in the post-2015 development goals and in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Original Spanish: Mr ZEPEDA (Worker, Nicaragua)

Social dialogue implies addressing concerns and resolving problems, because social dialogue that does not provide solutions is pointless.

In my country, Nicaragua, the Government has adopted a policy of reconciliation, dialogue and the promotion of consensus and understanding as the means to resolve economic, social and industrial problems.

Using a development model rooted in the restoration of rights, progress is being made on integrated policies in which all national social and economic sectors participate directly and adopt leading roles.

Constitutional reforms have just been approved to establish and consolidate progress on our development model. These reforms recognized tripartism as a constitutional right and as the means of achieving and strengthening social dialogue and the participation of workers in the definition and application of social and economic policies.

This government principle of promoting and establishing consensus has enabled employers and workers to reach wage agreements and social security and tax reforms to be carried out through consensus, thereby guaranteeing industrial and social peace and tranquillity. In Nicaragua, agreements that benefit workers are reached at the negotiating table.

As a country, we have problems and difficulties. We depend on the financial policies of international institutions and on the prices that are set by international markets for both the products that we export and for those that we import. This is why the Government has called on workers and employers, by means of government structures, to agree on short- and long-term plans, based on efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, so that together we may find a solution to such difficulties. The restoration of rights makes it possible to address and reduce poverty. Consensus and stability have an impact on economic growth and allow for the development of social plans and programmes focusing on the poorest, and on those who are most affected by the neoliberal policies promoted by liberal governments in the 1990s and the early 2000s.

The Government of President Daniel Ortega makes and applies coherent government policies through constant dialogue with the sectors that are leading the country's development. This has led to effective macroeconomic management, which has been recognized by the international financial institutions. Further recognition has been given to the implementation of social programmes.

Our people believe that problems are resolved through dialogue. It is therefore essential to find the path towards consensus. We need to learn to live together in a world contaminated by egoism, exclusion and monopoly by the few. The winds of change are pushing us to accord greater value to inclusive processes. The ILO should not be left behind in that regard. It should not just expound theories and ideas, but it should take up the challenge of identifying ways and mechanisms to strengthen respect for the basic principles of industrial relations.

Nicaragua, a country with a smaller territory than other nations, has found the path towards consensus, helping us make progress towards and strengthen the direct democracy exercised by the organized grass-roots community.

The guarantee of access to education, the implementation of preventive and community health policies, technical and financial support for production and the promotion of economic and productive projects have unwaveringly contributed to job creation and wage increases, where possible and appropriate, moving us ever closer to our promised land.

Before concluding, I would like to make the position of the Workers' group clear by denouncing the attack made by the Employers against the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions

and Recommendations to avoid discussing workers' right to strike in the Committee on the Application of Standards.

Original Spanish: Mr ACEVEDO (Worker, Guatemala)

I would like to congratulate the President on his election. Allow me to convey fraternal greetings from the workers of Guatemala. We would like to thank once again the Director-General of the ILO and the international trade union movement, as well as all governments and employers who have shown solidarity with our workers in view of the serious situation which we face at the moment in Guatemala, especially for the trade unions and their activities. We would also like to extend our thanks to the ILO high-level mission which came to Guatemala in September 2013.

The National Employment and Income Survey 2013 provides us with up-to-date information about the labour situation in Guatemala. It shows that official unemployment rose from 2.9 per cent in 2012 to 3.2 per cent in 2013, while formal employment increased from 25.5 to 30.8 per cent. A large number of Guatemalans are without social security coverage and so they have no certainty about their future welfare since they have no health insurance or old-age pensions. The Government has focused more on projecting a good international image but that has not improved the labour conditions in the country. Social conflicts are not being handled properly. The use of the state of emergency shows that the Government lacks the appropriate methods for managing conflicts.

Along the same lines, the Government has often gone back on its decisions when it has not obtained the expected results and this creates uncertainty. There have been no improvements in compliance with labour laws. The two years of leadership by the Patriotic Party have shown that this is a government which favours the private sector, as shown by the friction concerning the possible adoption of the Rural Development Act and the intention to amend the Constitution and the Labour Code, and there are many other laws they want to change at the expense of the disadvantaged majorities and which even violate the ILO Conventions ratified by Guatemala.

The awarding of licences for the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, in particular to multinational companies which have not met national or international legal requirements, notably by failing to consult indigenous communities as provided for in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), has resulted in a series of demonstrations, in particular by indigenous movements in different regions of the country. This is also because the multinationals have ignored the legitimate consultations held by indigenous and *campesino* organizations. Guatemala has maintained the stability of its economy but at great social cost, which is reflected in the general malaise in the country and the unpopularity of the Government.

Regarding the situation of migrants and family remittances, the increase in deportations in 2013 not only shows a strategic turning point in the containment of migration but also indicates that migration continues to be a dream for thousands of Central Americans. The number of deportations of Guatemalans from the United States and Mexico totalled 77,489 Guatemalans in 2013, with 49,217 by air and 28,272 by land, an average of 213 per day, men, women and children.

Regarding the situation of women, we have to raise awareness of violence against girls and women of all ages, in the home, in schools, in the workplace, in the streets and even in the media. This violence includes verbal and physical abuse, denial of rights, the idea that women's bodies are the property of men, sexual harassment and harassment at work, sexual abuse, assault and murder. Over 600 girls and young women were murdered in 2013 and in recent years, according to the Prosecution Service, there have been an average of 45,000 complaints of violence against women per year and over 15,000 complaints of domestic violence.

Further problems include the situation of indigenous peoples and intercultural bilingual education, as well as the situation of self-employed workers, for whom the term "informal economy" is a misnomer. And there are big issues to resolve in the labour and trade union spheres in Guatemala.

In view of all the above, we call upon the world to ensure that national labour standards are respected and that a formal and urgent appeal be made to the Government of Guatemala, led by General Otto Pérez Molina, to launch a true process of peace and reconciliation which will enable all Guatemalans, through social dialogue, to achieve a dignified way of life with decent work and fair wages without discrimination of any kind.

Mr PROVE (Representative, World Council of Churches)

I present this statement from the Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, on behalf of the more than 340 member churches from Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, different Protestant and also Pentecostal traditions, with a total constituency of approximately 560 million people around the world. We are not only neighbours of the ILO here in Geneva; we are present in most of the countries represented at this Conference.

We appreciate this opportunity to celebrate the long-standing relationship between the ILO and the World Council of Churches, which is based on shared values. The World Council of Churches strongly affirms that labour is not a commodity but an essential dimension of human dignity and life in community. We are convinced that aspirations to human dignity and rights must be transcribed into freedom of association and decent jobs. Decent work and social justice are essential elements to enable communities and families, peoples and nations, to move away from insecurity and poverty to a stable future of justice and lasting peace.

But this is not what we see happening around us. We listened attentively to the Report of the Director-General, who pointed us to the scandal of forced labour and human trafficking, which must be addressed firmly and effectively by all of us. Migrants need our support in countries of origin, transition and destination. Many of our member churches have seen this, and are accompanying migrants and speaking out for their rights. We also support all efforts to advance decent work and social protection in the informal sector.

We deeply appreciate that Pope Francis shares these concerns, and we agree with him that decent work for all must be included in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The ILO affirmed in the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 the spiritual dimension of labour. This is indeed an important reason why we can see con-

vergences on the values of decent work and social justice among religious traditions. Christian love of the neighbour, for instance, means not just the concern for our friend, family member or work colleague, but also the nameless victim left abandoned by the roadside, as we are taught in the parables of Jesus. Ignoring them and their dignity and rights betrays the essence of the Christian calling.

Therefore, we have intensified our cooperation with the ILO in partnership with representatives of other faith communities. We are convinced that it needs all people of goodwill to advance peace through social justice and decent work on the basis of shared values. We are working together for very practical and tangible outcomes, especially for young people in their search for decent work. We hope that such initiatives can demonstrate the readiness and commitment of faith communities to cooperate for the common good and contribute actively to overcoming sources of instability and violence. We wish you a successful session of the International Labour Conference.

Ms CHIKARMANE (*Representative, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing*)

I speak on behalf of Suman More, who stands beside me because she speaks a language that is a not a language of the ILO. I share with you what Suman wants to say to you in her own words.

“I was born into an untouchable family in an untouchable quarter of a small village. We had no land and my father was a bonded labourer. During a severe drought we were not allowed to touch the village water pots. We left for the city to look for work when I was 9 years old. We were illiterate, had no money, no house, no work, just hungry bellies that we carried around with us. We started collecting recyclable materials that we could sell to the traders: bones, paper, plastic, metal, glass. We were part of what Sharan Burrow on Monday referred to as the ‘desperation sector’. This is not just my story but that of millions of informal economy workers: recyclers, street vendors, domestic workers, garment workers, day workers and others who are all part of the desperation sector. Every economic crisis swells our ranks. The researchers will tell you that women, Dalits, black people, intra-country and trans-border migrants, the dispossessed, and the excluded and their children are more likely to be in the informal economy.

The global capitalist economy searches for new markets in the twenty-first century developing world, creating enormous quantities of waste. An estimated 24 million informal recycling workers – waste pickers and itinerant waste buyers – in the developing world recover discarded materials from waste. We say to you that we are public service providers. We say to you that we cleanse the streets of recyclable materials. We provide environmental services, ensuring an afterlife to materials by diverting them from streets and landfills into recycling. We sort and grade collected materials and reintroduce them into manufacturing. You could say that we are self-employed ‘procurement agents’ for the manufacturing enterprises. We are important bottom-of-the-pyramid workers in the recycling value chain and we create jobs downstream in transport, intermediate materials processing and in manufacturing. We are the guardians of the green economy but our working conditions are far from decent. You can help to change this.

Informal recycling workers in Asia, Latin America and Africa are organizing and we have made significant gains through our collective struggles. Our experiences have shown that when our situation improves, our children stop working. Today, I continue to be a recycling worker but my son is a university-educated journalist. I am a member of a waste pickers’ trade union and also of a workers’ cooperative that has a formal agreement with the municipal government. I represent the informal worker in transition.

For recycling workers, the street is a combination of the mine, the oil well, the forest and the factory floor because paper, plastic, metal and glass are the most commonly collected materials. We operate on the streets not out of choice but because of the nature of our work. It is our workplace as it is the workplace of millions of informal workers in developing countries. Workplaces change with the nature of production. For many, information technology has made the home the workplace, as it has been for piece-rate contracted workers. We need to acknowledge that public space is a workplace and the ILO’s definition of the decent workplace incorporates provision for drinking water, washrooms, rest areas and, above all, earmarking of workspaces to ensure security of livelihoods.

We call upon you to count us among workers. Irrespective of whether we work on farms, in factories, in our homes, others’ homes or in public spaces, we must be counted. Our contribution to the economy must be recorded and quantified. Our rights to organize into associations, unions and co-operatives and to represent ourselves as workers, and our rights to social protection, must be realized. Informal recycling workers must be paid for the public and environmental services that we provide. We manage public waste and we must have access to recyclables to enable us to send millions of tonnes of materials back into production. Policies that dispossess us of the mines above the earth and encourage corporate accumulation by predatory waste management companies must be reviewed and dispensed with. Instead, we call upon our governments to make public investments in worker co-operatives so that the profits are spread among the workers. These are some of the pathways to reduce the economic and social inequalities that we talk so much about these days.

At this time, we end by remembering a street vendor who died yesterday of a heart attack in Lima, Peru, when she returned home after a protest demonstration. These are some of the struggles that we face daily on the streets.”

Original Arabic: Mr AL KHULAIFI (*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Qatar*)

It is a great pleasure for me to congratulate the President on his election to the head of this plenary and I wish him every success in his work.

I would also like to thank the Director-General and all the staff of the ILO for their sustained efforts to carry forward the work of the Organization and to assist member States, and for the preparation of the excellent Reports before us.

As you know, Qatar is endeavouring to reform its labour legislation, with a view to upholding the rights of workers and ensuring protection of their employment. Accordingly, the necessary amendments have been made to the Labour Code regarding the protection of salaries, developed in coopera-

tion with the Qatar Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and also with local banks. Pursuant to these amendments, companies will be obliged to remit the salaries of their employees to their accounts in banks or in transfer and foreign exchange institutions, or directly to their accounts in their own countries. Work is also under way on the creation within the Ministry of an office for the monitoring of salaries.

The provisions of the Labour Code relating to labour inspections are currently being amended, to strengthen the powers of labour inspectors to report on violations and to impose the necessary penalties in such areas as housing, workplace conditions, and OSH. The amendment process is currently at a fairly advanced stage.

The number of inspectors has been increased over the last three months from 150 to 200 and interviews are currently being held within the offices of the labour inspection service for the recruitment of new inspectors. This recruitment is based on specific criteria for these functions.

The Qatari Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is constantly working to develop the system for labour inspection and the inspection of OSH through the training of inspectors, both within Qatar and in coordination with the ILO by sending inspectors to the International Training Centre in Turin.

The Ministry is engaged in continuous cooperation with the ILO in this area, with a view to benefiting from the Organization's related experience and expertise. Together with the ILO, we are currently exploring a technical cooperation programme that incorporates labour and OSH inspection, international labour standards, and capacity building for the management of labour relations in dispute-settlement procedures, taking due account of all the provisions of Convention No. 81.

In addition, work is proceeding both swiftly and smoothly on the repeal of Act No. 4 of 2009 on the system of sponsorship (*kafala*), which regulates the entry and exit of migrants, and also their residence in the country. Repeal of the Act was announced less than one month ago, in the city of Doha. Once the Act has been repealed, steps will be taken to formalize relations between workers and employers, and also the arrangements and authorization for exiting the country, which will have to be based on a labour contract system.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the housing construction programme for migrant workers, which is being conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Municipalities and Urban Development, and also to the amendment of Ministerial Order No. 17 of 2005, on workers' housing conditions, which lays down the standards for workers' living quarters, taking due account of the observations by certain NGOs regarding migrant workers. We are endeavouring to resolve these issues and are anxious to ensure the best possible working conditions for all workers employed in Qatar.

Ms HOLST (*Representative, Education International*)

Education International (EI) represents more than 30 million teachers, academics, researchers, education support professionals and workers through 400 national organizations. EI will continue to work closely with the ILO International Labour Standards Department on defending freedom of association and collective bargaining for public servants, and

with the ILO Social Protection Department to promote education rights and social protection for disadvantaged groups, such as refugees, migrants and indigenous peoples. EI will also continue to support the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) through the right to education. We will continue to reflect with the ILO Skills and Employability Branch to prepare tomorrow's workforce through skills and training policies. And EI will continue to act with the ILO Sectoral Activities Department and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) to integrate more formally all the components of the ILO's education-related work, because education is a decent work strategy in itself.

Education is part of the solution to fight poverty, unemployment and inequality. Therefore, education must be a key post-2015 development goal. To Government representatives I will say: your country must continue to invest in quality public education; in vocational education and training; in early childhood education; in higher education and research; and, of course, in quality teacher education programmes and in new teachers. I believe it is the best investment you can make.

Since the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, tangible progress has been achieved, but not enough. Fifty-seven million children and 69 million adolescents have no access to basic education. Sixty-eight million children are stuck in child labour. One out of ten adults is illiterate, mostly women.

Basic skills acquisition and the quality and relevance of knowledge and competencies are of key concern. However, international studies show a decline in the quality of learning. At the same time, education unions report that conditions of work in the education sector are also falling. Teacher autonomy and status are declining. Trade union rights and teachers' voices are undermined.

The ILO report *Employment policies for sustainable recovery and development* calls for coordinated and integrated public policies for an increase of the levels of educational attainment.

Teachers' unions are ready to engage with governments through social dialogue mechanisms. Partnerships are needed to bridge the world of education and training with decent and productive work. EI is working not only with the ILO, but also with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the OECD to make the voice of education unions and educators heard. Their expertise and advice can enhance quality education, secure relevant skills and address societal, as well as employers', needs. In 2013, EI launched a major campaign called "Unite for Quality Education". Highlights of the EI campaign show clearly that where education unions are at the table to explore reforms, the quality of education is dramatically improved.

Quality education is the basis for democracy, citizenship and social justice, and education unions are committed to expand the education opportunities to empower all citizens to make this world a better place.

Original Arabic: Mr SAHBANI (*Representative, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions*)

It is an honour for me to participate here in this discussion of the Director-General's Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. On behalf of my own organization, the Union of Workers of Tunisia,

allow me to express my commendation and to extend my thanks for the efforts made by the Organization's experts in preparing this excellent Report, which deals with one of the most important problems faced by developing countries, in particular since the mid-nineteenth century.

Migration is not a new phenomenon: since time immemorial it has made possible exchanges and rapprochements between different communities. As noted in the Report, migration affects 5 per cent of the world's population, in other words, nigh on 300 million people. It has an indirect impact on an even greater number of people and we could even say that at least one fifth of all humankind is affected by migration or its economic, social, psychological or political repercussions.

My country, Tunisia, and the countries south of the Mediterranean constitute the region most affected by migration. Over the last three years waves of spontaneous migration have surged from our region northwards across the Mediterranean, turning the Mediterranean into a mass grave for thousands of workers from the Maghreb and elsewhere in Africa in quest of a better life in the countries on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Security-based approaches are incapable of suppressing this process. In our view, its solution lies only in development. To that end, we must ensure decent working and living conditions in the countries of the South and find a new way of measuring the resources available on the global labour market. The solution is to be sought by enabling our countries to conserve their human resources, in particular those among them with professional qualifications. It is unacceptable for the poor countries of the South to be turned into laboratories for the training of specialists and honing of skills which are then exported to rich countries. The costs of training an engineer, a doctor or a computer specialist are never less than US\$200,000. If we calculate the number of trained

specialists emigrating every year from the countries of the South, in Africa, Asia and America, we will find that these countries are losing hundreds of billions of dollars every year. We hear of remittances from migrants. These remittances, however, represent only a fraction of the astronomical losses suffered annually by our countries, robbed every year of thousands of our specialists, who are lured to the advanced industrialized countries by the promise of high salaries and decent working conditions.

"Fair migration" is an attractive slogan, capable of exciting hope and optimism. We believe that this fairness can only be achieved through development in the countries affected by the export of labour and skills. Fairness can only be created today through solidarity, through the involvement of the authorities in the receiving countries, mobilizing resources and creating jobs in the countries of the South, thus removing the incentive for young people to emigrate. Some countries receive thousands of specialists and skilled workers every year from the French-speaking countries of the Arab Maghreb: these workers and specialists have cost their sending countries billions of dollars, yet the receiving countries offer nothing in compensation to the countries of the Maghreb. Only through development can we achieve fair migration. We must draw up plans and programmes to guarantee jobs in our own countries.

In conclusion, I would like to draw the attention of Conference participants to the fact that my country, Tunisia, does not respect the right of association, and practises discrimination against union members, even though it has ratified all the ILO instruments guaranteeing freedom of association. In this, it is applying double standards since it is depriving the trade union organizations of the advantages and rights enjoyed by other organizations which do not have the capacity to take workers under their wing and to defend their interests.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.05 p.m.)

Fifth sitting

Thursday, 5 June 2014, 10 a.m.

President: Mr Funes de Rioja

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

Mr ITH (*Minister for Labour and Vocational
Training, Cambodia*)

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be present at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. On behalf of the Cambodian delegation to the Conference and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference for their election, which indeed testifies to the confidence and the trust placed in them for their full capacity to efficiently undertake this task. I would like to refer to, and to totally agree with, the Director-General's Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, and the reports *Employment policies for sustainable recovery and development*, *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy*, and *Strengthening action to end forced labour*, which are to be commended for their high quality and relevance.

The Reports are indeed very important, since they take up various challenges that the world of work is experiencing today and reveal the important role played by the ILO. The Reports highlight several challenges which are not only the concern of Cambodia, but also all ILO member States. To address this challenge, the Royal Government of Cambodia has adopted: a new development strategy; a rectangular strategy for growth, development, equity and efficiency; a new five-year national strategy development plan; and a new five-year labour and TVET strategy development plan for 2014–18. In addition, Cambodia has also formulated a skills and TVET development policy, an additional development policy, a national employment policy and a new industrial relations policy, as well as a more robust social security scheme, a mechanism to improve labour market information and an employment services strategy. To implement these strategies and plans, Cambodia has sought more bilateral and regional cooperation with, and support from, its development partners, including the ILO. Therefore, I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my profound gratitude to the ILO for providing technical assistance to the Kingdom of Cambodia, and remain highly committed to smooth and close cooperation between the ILO and the Kingdom of Cambodia.

With regard to the theme of the Director-General's Report to the Conference at this 103rd Session, I would like to stress the following key progress that has been made. For labour migration, Cambodia is strengthening the implementation

of the new Subdecree No. 190, concerning the sending of Cambodian workers to work abroad through private recruitment agencies, by issuing eight *prakas* (declarations) on offering and preparing pre-departure orientation programmes and standardized contracts. For employment, Cambodia is improving the employment services of both local and overseas employment, aiming at balancing the labour force of both local and overseas labour markets, while formulating national employment policies. For the way out of informality, Cambodia is enforcing the provisions of national law and regulations, focusing on not only the formal economy but also the informal economy, to comply with Cambodian labour law and international standards.

As to the strengthening of Convention No. 29, Cambodia has supported and put in place the ILO monitoring process in metal factories in Cambodia. Through this process, it was ascertained that there is no forced labour in Cambodia, and Cambodia is internationally recognized as one of the world's top countries for better working conditions. Cambodia calls for close cooperation with the ILO, ILO partners and international organizations, to maintain the fundamental rights of workers and to ensure the stability, sustainability and inclusive growth of the Cambodian economy.

Original Arabic: Mr AHMED (Employer, Iraq)

It is a pleasure for me to greet you on behalf of the employers of Iraq and to express my deepest gratitude for the convening of this annual gathering in the context of the tripartite Conference. The Conference represents a forum for global social dialogue and offers an opportunity for us to share new ideas and exchange experiences which have proved effective in raising the level of work and production in the interests of achieving sustainable economic and social development.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Conference on their election and to wish them every success in their work.

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation of the Director-General's Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. This is an important issue, as governments must undertake genuine economic reforms and give the private sector a greater role in an endeavour to reduce labour migration and to mitigate its serious consequences.

Effective and strong workers' and employers' organizations are indispensable to the formation of an environment conducive to employment. Governments have a vital role to play in ensuring such an environment, while supporting social partners and

safeguarding their independence. Accordingly, we hope that our national Government will ratify the Convention No. 87, with a view to improving working conditions and bringing about social peace in the country.

We have observed a high degree of understanding on the part of the Government, following the employers' elections on 8 August 2012, regarding the legitimate grievances voiced by our Federation, the Iraqi Federation of Industries, for the purpose of supporting and promoting the industrial sector. This made it possible to launch an industrial initiative comprising a package of benefits, exemptions and soft loans designed to revitalize work and business.

As for the Iraqi Federation of Industries, which represents employers in Iraq, the Government has approved a large number of its applications designed to build its capacity, the most recent of which was for a financial grant of 6.5 billion Iraqi dinars (IQD), equivalent to some US\$5 million, to overhaul and refurbish the Iraqi Federation of Industries' facilities and thereby enable it to provide the best possible services to its members.

Notwithstanding progress made in the use of the Arabic language in the work of the Conference, this remains insufficient given the important role and size of the Arab group.

In this context, we welcome the importance vested by the Organization and the Director-General in the Palestinian cause and we urge the Conference to take due note of the observations made by the Arab group with regard to the Director-General's Report *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. From this platform, we would like to restate our firm and sincere support for the right of return of the Palestinian people and for the decisions relating to their future and we condemn all Israeli practices against the Palestinian people. We also welcome the Palestinian national reconciliation, which has borne fruit in a unified Government, and wish the Palestinian people future progress and success.

Original French: Mr ZAKANE (Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Security, Burkina Faso)

On behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, I welcome the holding of this 103rd Session of the Conference and emphasize our full support for discussions on the major challenges facing the world of work today.

I would like to address to the President our sincere congratulations on his election to preside over our work and assure him of our full support.

Burkina Faso welcomes the excellent Report of the Director-General and the richness of the debates on topical subjects such as labour migration, labour policies, strategies to formalize the informal sector and combating forced labour.

One of the harshest challenges faced by our States today is unemployment, particularly among young people and women. This is why reforms must be carried out that are clearly targeted at inclusive economic growth and aimed at creating employment and sustainable businesses.

In this regard, my country has developed policies on employment, labour, social protection, education, and technical and vocational training. These different policies are aimed at increasing the opportunities for decent work in our country.

In this context, since 2012 we have been implementing a special job creation programme for young people and for women. It has allowed us,

over the last two years, to train 24,311 young people and women from urban and rural areas; create 100,401 jobs; get 35,903 young people and women into work; and to invest around 16 billion CFA francs (XAF) in the national budget for employment promotion.

Furthermore, several years ago the State introduced several national funds for initiatives on job creation and self-employment for young people and women, such as the Informal Sector Support Fund, the Women's Income-generating Activities Support Fund and the Fund to Promote Youth Employment. These funds have recently been bolstered and are now seeing increased participation from young people and women.

Moreover, in September 2013 and March 2014, the Government of Burkina Faso took significant social measures to encourage the employment of young people and women, which has led to the creation of more than 100,000 jobs in less than eight months.

From this year onwards and with the support of the World Bank, the State will launch the Youth Employment and Skills Development Project. This project, which involves more than US\$50 million, will allow 48,000 young people and women to develop their skills and find employment.

In September 2014, Burkina Faso will have the privilege of hosting an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on employment, eradicating poverty and inclusive development.

This high-level meeting, which will take place ten years after the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation held in Ouagadougou in 2004, will give African Heads of State an opportunity to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted in 2004 and to identify the specific measures that need to be taken over the next decade to lay the foundation for sustainable, inclusive development.

Ten years after the first Ouagadougou Summit, African leaders understand that the process of sustainable development must focus on job creation and eradicating poverty and remain determined to speed up the creation of jobs on the continent, particularly for young people and women.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of His Excellency President Blaise Compaoré and the Government of Burkina Faso, to invite the member States of the AU to participate in this Summit and to appeal for the support of all our partners on the African continent in the Ouagadougou +10 process.

In conclusion, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, to convey to Mr Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, our heartfelt congratulations and encouragement for the reforms undertaken since he took office at the head of our Organization and to express the wish that our work will be fully successful.

Mr MAKSYMIOK (Employer, Poland)

It is a great honour to speak on behalf of Polish employers at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. We listened with great care to the Report of the Director-General of the ILO that was addressed to delegates, who are all actors in the real economy and are leading the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Report is detailed and analytical, and it comprises extensive information and results on the involvement of the ILO in implementing and achieving the strategic targets and outcomes set by the Organization for 2012 and 2013.

With great pleasure, we note the involvement of the ILO in key topics related to the problem of forced labour, the formal and informal economy and an important discussion on employment. Polish employers support the efforts of the Director-General and the Governing Body regarding full tripartite support for the supervisory system.

For about a year, the Polish economy has been going through a phase of economic recovery that is now gaining momentum. Indicators of consumption and investment are improving. The real income of Poles is increasing at the fastest pace in five years. Employers also feel more confident. They no longer fear that the European crisis will return and they are finally beginning to use funds set aside for hard times to invest and create new jobs.

The main Polish labour market challenge is the low participation rate and low employment rate for people of working age. The employment rate in Poland for the group aged 20–64 is about 65 per cent, more than ten percentage points lower than in the best European performers. The main reason for this is the low participation of women and persons over 50 years of age.

A big challenge for the near future will be reducing unemployment. Unfortunately, in recent years, registered unemployment in Poland has exceeded 13 per cent. Youth unemployment and the emigration of young people are other serious problems. Polish companies cannot find qualified employees, while youth unemployment exceeds 25 per cent. Actions to be taken should be aimed at better preparing young people for successful entry into the labour market and encouraging employers to hire young people.

In the campaign against unemployment, the provisions of the amended Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions came into force at the end of May 2014. The range of solutions is designed to improve the quality of services provided and the mobilization of the unemployed in the labour market. The actions for the coming years should also provide appropriate conditions for the return of people to the country.

The amendment provides dedicated solutions for different groups in the labour market, including young people, older people and parents returning to work after maternity leave. For example, the solutions introduce support for the professional activity of people over 50 and 60 years of age by partly subsidizing the pay of newly hired employees. Another important measure is the relocation voucher, which helps people moving for a new job and covers settlement costs for young people.

The important challenge for all social partners and the Government is to return to tripartite dialogue. In June 2013, the trade unions suspended institutional social dialogue in Poland. According to their assessments so far, real social dialogue has not taken place in recent times.

Employers agree with the need to rebuild social dialogue in Poland. In our opinion, the institution of tripartite dialogue in Poland should be fully independent from the Government and have its own budget and a rotating leadership. Like the trade unions, we expect the power realignment of social

partners, the impact of the legislative process and the disbursement of funds from the Labour Fund. We want to see better informed and evidence-based discussions, decisions and opinions on social and economic policies.

The social partners agree on the direction and the need for changes to the functioning of the tripartite commission. However, agreement has not yet been reached on specific draft legislation.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that all of the discussions of the Conference, as well as the conclusions and recommendations that come out of it, will serve as important arguments for delegations. Aside from this, plenary debates should add value and have implications for ILO actions.

Original Spanish: Ms HERNÁNDEZ (Government, Dominican Republic)

I feel honoured to represent our country at this session of the Conference.

The Dominican Republic maintained its growth rate despite the global crisis in 2009, averaging 4.76 per cent over the past five years, in contrast to the results of studies published by various authorized international organizations underlining that the world economy once again saw a reduction in growth during 2013, falling to 2.1 per cent, and that the worst growth rate was found in the developed countries. In the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, growth stood at 2.5 per cent, strongly influenced by low growth in Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela.

In this regard, the labour markets of Latin America reflected a slowdown in economic growth and a sharp fall in job creation. As a consequence, the urban employment rate fell by only 0.1 percentage points, from 56.6 per cent to 56.5 per cent. The reduced dynamics of labour demand also translated into a lower increase in formal employment, which grew by 2.9 percentage points according to a simple average of 12 countries, the lowest rate since 2002. We should bear in mind that the expansion of formal employment reflects not only new job creation, but also the formalization of existing jobs.

The Dominican Republic is working tirelessly to solve structural problems in its labour market, as well as the problem of the high level of informal labour, which is around 48 per cent. This has become the greatest challenge in our social protection system, which is under threat because all informal workers lack access to health services via insurance schemes, pension benefits and insurance policies against occupational hazards.

In this regard, the Dominican Government has set a target to extend social security coverage to 100 per cent of the population by the end of 2016, and achieving this hinges on attaining other interim goals, such as the creation of 400,000 formal jobs during this Government's term in office and the formalization of existing jobs.

In line with the Government's policy plan, the efforts of our Ministry are showing very satisfactory results for 2013, with the creation of more than 102,000 new jobs, over 35,000 of which are the fruit of promoting the formalization of micro-enterprises, guaranteeing social security coverage for both workers and their families. The first quarter of 2014 indicates a favourable projection, since more than 23,000 new jobs were created. We have created an entrepreneurship unit as part of the active policy for employment to promote ongoing training

in micro-enterprises, with the aim of encouraging entrepreneurs seeking to launch their business plans.

Through sectoral and territorial consultations, we have drawn up a national employment plan, which contains the main policies to promote decent jobs. Under this plan, we will soon unveil the National Employment Pact and link together the institutional efforts of the business sector, the trade union sector and the Government to promote a job creation culture.

The President's main objective is to promote the creation of 100,000 decent jobs each year and this was achieved in his first year in office.

The major challenge of our country is to endeavour to improve educational levels and vocational training for the economically active population working in the informal market, to create conditions for their access to credit and to the formal market. Under the national employment plan, we are drawing up a plan to establish national qualification frameworks, for which we are seeking cooperation from international organizations and the ILO.

Lastly, I would like to call on governments to focus on public employment policies and on policies aimed at formalizing the informal sector, and together we can achieve this.

Original Spanish: Ms MIR ROCA (Worker, Spain)

Once again this year, we would like to congratulate the Director-General on the Report submitted to the International Labour Conference at its 103rd Session, noting efforts made and results achieved. Greater efficiencies in resources, systems and procedures benefit us all when we use them in our work. We particularly welcome the inclusion of migration as one of the key elements of the Report. For Spanish trade unions, immigrants contribute to the medium-term and long-term sustainability of social security systems.

We would like to re-emphasize in this plenary how the financial crisis continues to create a more unjust world, where there is growing inequality, with over 200 million unemployed persons, 26 million of whom are in the EU.

The current situation in Spain is more precarious, with more long-term unemployment and fewer rights. There were 6 million unemployed in 2013 and an unemployment rate of 26.4 per cent, the second highest in the EU after Greece. In all, 3.5 million people, 60 per cent of the total unemployed workforce, have been out of work for over a year and there has also been an increase in involuntary part-time employment and temporary contracts. It is a serious situation, which goes hand in hand with an increase in the number of persons who receive no social benefits and have had their benefits cut as a result of government reforms.

Austerity policies are leading to a fragile and socially unjust recovery, with the more negative effects felt by the most vulnerable population groups. In 2013, we also noted a decrease in the quality of employment, with an increase in part-time employment and temporary contracts of less than three months, which at the end of the period means that 20 per cent of employees are on temporary contracts. Furthermore, the trend towards increasing numbers of underemployed persons has continued, currently amounting to 2.4 million, or 15 per cent of the workforce.

Spanish trade union organizations have persistently called for specific policies for the long-term unemployed, young people, immigrants and women. They have also stressed the need to combat unemployment, poverty and inequalities and the importance of interlinking active and passive employment policies to improve financial coverage, facilitating access to benefits and strengthening public employment services. They have also continued throughout this period to complain about the imposition of measures without social dialogue, which repeatedly ignored the Conference's 2013 recommendations on Convention No. 122, or the recent conclusions of the Committee on Freedom of Association relating to our complaint about the 2012 labour reform.

Spanish trade unions have requested the Government of Spain to bear in mind the importance of collaborating through institutional participation bodies and the need to increase the participation of social partners by asking for their comments in good time and in an appropriate manner.

Against this background, the Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Committees (CC.OO.) and the General Union of Workers (UGT) have called upon the Minister of Employment to implement the ILO recommendations on the 2012 labour reform, with reference to the complaint presented on 10 May 2012 regarding a violation of the right to the freedom of association and collective bargaining that is guaranteed under Conventions Nos 87, 98, and 154.

The ILO has adopted conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on Freedom of Association, recognizing the violation of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining through the 2012 labour reform carried out by the Spanish Government by royal decree, on the grounds of the complaint presented by the trade unions.

Similarly, in March 2014, Spanish trade union organizations presented a complaint against the Government because of the freezing of the minimum wage for 2014 without consulting trade unions, which amounts to a violation of the rights relating to minimum wage fixing recognized and guaranteed under Convention No. 131. Once again, the Spanish Government has not respected the minimum requirements set by the ILO Convention, by failing to hold serious and thorough consultations. You need to go back 25 years in Spanish history to find a complaint of this nature.

Trade union organizations are also asking for the basic right of freedom of association to be preserved as an essential part of the fundamental rights that govern our social and legal status. On 27 May 2014, the General Secretaries of the CC.OO. and the UGT sent letters to the Public Prosecutor complaining about the increase in criminal proceedings against workers and trade union representatives who had exercised their right to strike.

We will continue to denounce the loss of, and deterioration in, rights and democratic values in our country and to highlight the urgent need to rebuild democracy and social dialogue.

Mr HASSAN (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia)

I would like to congratulate the President on his election as the President of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Ethiopia welcomes the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. We share the basic tenets of the Report. It provides a clear analysis of the complexity of migration and highlights the urgent attention that should be given to the rights of migrants. It provides a solid foundation for enhanced engagement by the ILO based on the ILO principles, the ILO Conventions and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The Report rightly asserts that a fair deal on migration has not been achieved, and migration partnership and cooperation as well as its integration into development as a policy agenda should be enhanced. Indeed, there is an urgent need to strengthen the cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders, including the ILO, other UN organs and agencies, the IOM and related international initiatives.

We congratulate the Director-General on the high quality and relevance of the arguments contained in the Report. The Report deserves careful consideration and valuable inputs by member States, employers' and workers' organizations to enable the ILO to contribute to global efforts aimed at ensuring fair migration.

We suggest that the ILO adopt concrete measures with a view to assisting countries to implement existing obligations, promote wider accession to the relevant ILO Conventions and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopt programmes aimed at addressing various situations of migration challenges tailor-made to different conditions, adopt an evidence-based standard-setting exercise to complement existing instruments and institute a comprehensive follow-up mechanism.

We also welcome the second recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment as it has provided an opportunity to keep up the momentum of the global efforts for sustainable economic recovery and development. There is no doubt that many of the challenges facing the world are related to the unemployment crisis, in particular severe urban unemployment as well as underemployment in general, and of youth and women in particular.

We need to adopt employment-centred and coherent policy frameworks at all levels to promote job creation and improve the conditions of life and work.

The question of transition from the informal to the formal economy has emerged as a priority issue, in particular for developing countries. The informal economy has the dual features of fast growth that provides the largest employment and of being the sector least regulated by national laws, which exposes the labour force to exploitation and abuse. We need to ensure progressive transition from the informal economy to a formal economy. We thus welcome the timely debate and the first reading of the Recommendation.

The Ethiopian delegation emphasizes that the item on the adoption of supplementary measures to address the significant implementation gaps in Convention No. 29 is equally pertinent. Forced labour takes various forms, and trafficking in persons, as one of these manifestations, is of serious concern to my Government. Victims of human trafficking face serious violations of human rights, including forced labour. They are subjected to racism, xenophobic

attacks, sexual exploitation, and multiple forms of discrimination and violence. The ILO should be commended for the consistent attention given to efforts to combat forced labour in all its forms. The ILO should further intensify this firm commitment to effectively suppress forced labour through the unanimous adoption of a strong instrument based on the core principles of prevention, compensation and access to justice and also a supplementary regulatory mechanism.

Ethiopia has also taken steps to further enhance its engagement with the ILO, including by identifying areas for technical cooperation and capacity building. The Government has initiated the process of ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The Government has also intensified measures aimed at combating human trafficking, which are being coordinated by a national task force headed by the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Government of Ethiopia is determined to ensure that the high-level growth which the country has been registering remains broad-based and participatory. The Government has also taken various measures, including the adoption of the National Action Plan on Human Rights, further entrenching democracy, good governance and human rights in Ethiopia.

Mr DEVENDRA (*Worker, Sri Lanka*)

On behalf of the Workers' delegation from Sri Lanka, please allow me to make a few comments on the items placed on the agenda of this Conference.

The discussion on transitioning from the informal economy to the formal is of utmost importance to the vast majority of the working people in the world. As the statistics clearly indicate, informal economy workers constitute the majority of the total labour force in most countries, especially those in the developing world. They are almost totally unorganized and lack most of the social protection mechanisms that are available to the formal sector. But, even under these unfavourable conditions of work, the contribution that they make to the economies of their countries is most impressive. Therefore, this year's discussion should focus the attention of all governments on providing the necessary facilitation to inform the workers on carrying out their occupations, and on providing them with social protection coverage.

An interesting debate is going on at present as to whether it is possible to transform the informal economy in its entirety into a formal one. This may be due to a misunderstanding on the definition as well as the objectives of this discussion. In my own view, it is not the intention of this discussion to promote such a transformation, but to afford informal workers their basic fundamental rights embodied in the concept of decent work.

The recurrent discussion on employment is of great importance, not only to us in the trade union movement, but also from a national viewpoint. Therefore, workers' representatives in Sri Lanka actively participated in the formulation of the National Human Resources and Employment Policy. With the adoption of a related action plan, an effective monitoring mechanism is expected to be put in place to implement this policy. In our view, a long-term plan to change the educational system of our

country to make it more employment-oriented is an urgent need.

Touching on the situation in Sri Lanka, although our country has ratified all eight core ILO Conventions, the implementation process has been far from satisfactory. This is illustrated by the fact that, even though it is 14 years since domestic laws were brought into line with Conventions Nos 87 and 98, many employers continue with their acts of anti-union discrimination, regardless of the law. The authorities have responded to this situation by stating that weaknesses in the law are the cause for this open disregard. However, we are of the opinion that the implementation process has to be blamed for the current state of affairs.

The rapid increase in various forms of precarious employment, especially the practice of labour subcontracting, is of serious concern to us in the trade union movement. Since the adoption in 2007 of the ILO Recommendation on this issue, unions have campaigned for national legislation to make certain types of labour subcontracting illegal. Although a tripartite agreement was reached on this issue almost two years' ago, the draft legislation has still not received the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers. We will continue to fight for the introduction of this bill in Parliament as a matter of national importance.

*Original Spanish: Mr ECHAVARRÍA SALDARRIAGA
(Employer, Colombia)*

Allow me to congratulate the Officers of the Conference upon their election, in particular, Mr Funes de Rioja and Ms Mugo, from our Employers' group.

I would like to draw attention to two aspects of the Director-General's Report, the first regarding the programme objectives for the last biennium. While we note the progress made in the implementation of the programme, there is some work outstanding under indicators 3.1, on the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises; 3:3, on responsible enterprise-level practices; and 3:4, on integration of the principles of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration). The Governing Body and the Office should channel more financial resources to this work and provide technical assistance to constituents to enable a greater number of States to create an environment conducive to the sustainability of enterprises. In particular, efforts should be made to promote and observe the 17 conditions set out in the resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises adopted by the Conference in 2007. Sustainable enterprises are a cornerstone for employers, and are complemented by decent work.

The second aspect that I wish to underline concerns the agenda to be set on migration. The demographic realities facing us and the process of globalization mean that the movement of people must be more free. Migratory flows must be smooth and unencumbered by red tape, both for employers and for workers. The ILO should interact with the IOM and base its actions on specific data and statistics which will serve to guide the decisions of the Governing Body.

In order to maximize the benefits of labour migration, the ILO should promote actions which, apart from providing labour protection to migrants, increase opportunities for those who wish to enhance their skills and experience in receiving countries

and which also help sending countries provide opportunities to their nationals regarding remittances and future return to their country.

I would also like to refer to continuing progress in Colombia on social and labour issues.

Where social dialogue is concerned, we have observed an improvement in the functioning of such institutions as the Commission for Labour Cooperation and various subcommissions working in the regions or on the specialized topics assigned to them. All this has helped build trust between social interlocutors and the Government. This has made possible, for example, the tripartite agreement adopted in late 2013 on the legal minimum wage.

Another area for dialogue consists of the conflicts brought before the Special Committee for the Handling of Conflicts Referred to the ILO (CETCOIT), the majority of which are resolved through the understanding of the parties. In this regard, the Committee on Freedom of Association has encouraged other countries in the region to follow the Colombian model.

With regard to technical cooperation with the ILO, we note improvements in terms of institutional strengthening and budget allocations for labour issues. Skills training and capacity-building measures are being provided for labour inspectors; investigators and judicial and tax officials are being trained; and increased funding is being provided to protect persons under threat for their trade union activity. In this area, however, there is still room for improvement.

Where labour protection is concerned, virtually all Colombians are now covered by health insurance. A statutory instrument has been adopted and recently endorsed by the Constitutional Court, which has reaffirmed the fundamental right to health and ensured the provision of resources for the necessary services.

As regards job creation, a number of new jobs have been created, including in industry, bringing the unemployment rate down into single figures. This has enabled us, among other things, to step up the intake of apprentices.

I could cite many other achievements in the area of the economy which translate into social improvements. I would just like to say that sustained growth in the economy since 2000 of, on average, 4 per cent has led to a steady reduction in poverty and extreme poverty over the last decade of more than 20 percentage points, setting before us employers the challenge of meeting the needs of a larger middle class, demanding new goods and services.

Lastly, we Colombian employers hope to see support for our proposal for social understanding, tolerance and mutual respect with workers and their organizations. In this, we firmly believe that we are going in the right direction.

Ms DIMAPILIS-BALDOZ (Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines)

I congratulate the President for his esteemed leadership of the Conference at this session. The Philippines commends Mr Ryder for his support and for being the first ILO Director-General to make migration a priority issue. Following the adoption of the historic 2013 UN Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the ILO, as head of the GMG in 2014, is in the most strategic position to lead in pushing forward the UN

post-2015 development agenda. The Philippines is one of the few countries that has ratified the 2011 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The UN Committee on Migrant Workers recently affirmed our role as a model in migration management with a commitment to protect migrant workers' rights demonstrated by a strong legal, social and institutional framework, a broad domestic and foreign policy agenda, and a leading role in advancing migrant workers' rights at the international, regional and bilateral levels.

We have just concluded our historic agreements on domestic workers with Saudi Arabia and Jordan accompanied by standard employment contracts, providing for the payment of wages, working hours, rest days, and the non-withholding of passports, in accordance with the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). We are a co-signatory of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, and we led the crafting of the implementing instrument. We chair the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) and in November this year, the Dialogue will consider the approval of two initial projects: comprehensive education for workers and employers, and the development of a system for the mutual recognition of skills to enhance labour mobility and protection of migrant workers.

Fair migration is safe migration. It is rights-based and ensures that migrants are safe and protected against illegal recruiters, traffickers and smugglers, and drug syndicates. We have ratified UN and ILO instruments to prevent, suppress and punish perpetrators. We support the adoption of a Protocol or a Recommendation or both on Convention No. 29.

Safe migration also requires preventive and remedial health programmes before, during and after employment in view of the rise of pandemic diseases and the occurrence of industrial accidents affecting the health and safety of migrant workers. Fair migration is ethical migration. It removes the heavy financial burden imposed on migrants through the exaction of exorbitant fees everywhere except in countries whose laws do not allow any fees to be charged to workers. Our law allows an equivalent of one month's salary to be paid as costs by the workers, except for domestic workers whose recruitment is free. A similar system in countries of destination, to regulate and cut recruitment costs, is imperative for success.

We support the ILO initiative to develop a database of recruitment costs in low-skilled occupations in major migration countries with the support of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development. We commend the efforts by the IOM to develop a voluntary accreditation and monitoring process. Both complement our online system to strengthen labour market information and promote transparency and accountability in migration governance. Fair migration is safe migration. As countries face crises that affect the security of migrants, the need for a multilateral agreement under the UN for a safe-conduct pass during crises to allow the fast and easy evacuation, relocation and repatriation of migrants to their home countries for free is compelling.

The Philippines is a member of the United States-led Migrants in Countries in Crisis Working Group to promote safe migration. Fair migration means decent work. The ILO must launch a vigorous cam-

paign to promote the ratification of core labour standards and migration-related Conventions. We have ratified these Conventions, except the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), which will be subject to extensive tripartite consultation with ILO support. It is timely for the ILO to conduct a General Survey on this Convention for its broader and wider ratification.

In conclusion, the Philippines remains fully committed to safe, ethical and secure migration, and decent work for all. Our goal of sustainable, inclusive growth aims to create decent jobs and in the long term render migration as a genuine option rather than a necessity, but once our workers decide to work overseas our policy of protection under fair migration governance becomes primordial.

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

On behalf of the delegation of Botswana, I wish to congratulate the President on his election as the President of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. His vast experience in the work of the ILO makes him eminently suited to direct the proceedings of this session. My delegation pledges its support to him and his Vice-Presidents.

The Report of the Director-General submitted to the Conference clearly outlines the progress made. My delegation has noted the achievements made and challenges confronted. In particular, we commend the International Labour Office for the country-outcome results achieved, which exceed the target set at the start of the biennium by one third. The active involvement of the ILO in the global consultations on the UN post-2015 development agenda is also noteworthy.

Fair migration, which is the subject of another Report by the Director-General, is a matter of critical importance to us all. Whether we are countries of origin, transit or destination, we all have vested interests. It must be admitted that there are both positive and negative aspects, some real and others perceptual. Among the many realities that we must face are development imbalances in the world and deficits in governance. These are some of the drivers of migration which must be addressed.

We continue to support the reform agenda of the ILO in order to achieve greater efficiency and focus. The intended sharpening of the strategic direction scheduled for 2015 is thus most welcome. This should enable us to make difficult but necessary choices in the face of limited resources, at the international level, as at the national level.

In this context, the proposed reforms aimed at enhancing the organizational and operational effectiveness of the ILO are appreciated. I must, however, hasten to point out that, in executing the restructuring of the ILO field offices, it is our wish that the interests of member States and the logistical arrangements in place, among other things, should be taken into account. We also look forward to a shorter session next year. This will be good for ensuring the greater availability of political leaders at the Conference, and their sharing in the outcomes, thus enhancing the legitimacy of the Organization.

The subject of employment policies for sustainable recovery and development is perhaps the most pressing of our time. In Botswana, employment creation remains a priority in our endeavour to address the challenges that are confronting our country, including youth unemployment and poverty. We have identified the need to create a conducive environ-

ment for enterprise development, human-resource development, diversification and value addition to our natural resources, and the empowerment of the most vulnerable groups. These include women, young people and people with disabilities. The sustenance of jobs created calls for the strengthening of institutions and governance systems that nurture enterprises and the promotion of rights at work.

We agree that part of the solution at the international level requires a shared understanding of the facts which underline the employment challenges. Similarly, much can be gained from policy success stories.

But apart from what we can do within the ILO, it is clear that there is a role in this for the wider multilateral system. Developing countries, for instance, can benefit from a conducive multilateral trading system, as well as greater inflows of foreign direct investment. Greater collaboration and partnerships across institutions, such as that which takes place with migration, is thus necessary.

The recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment therefore affords us an opportunity, not only to engage in dialogue on ways to create more and better jobs, but also to assess the lingering effects of the global economic crisis on our efforts to create job opportunities. For us in Africa, the special summit on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development, to be held Ouagadougou in September 2014, is of ever-increasing importance.

The agenda item on transitioning from the informal to the formal economy is complementary to the wider subject of employment. Clearly, informality as a pretext for avoiding obligations is undesirable and deserves no protection. However, the case of developing countries, where estimates show that between 40 and 80 per cent of the labour force is in the informal economy, requires that care be taken. For formalization to be sustainable it should ride on the back of profitable enterprises which provide decent jobs.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by conveying my Government's appreciation for the invaluable assistance that we continue to receive from the ILO. The ILO Decent Work Team for Eastern and Southern Africa and the ILO Country Office for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (DWT/CO-Pretoria) deserve a special mention. On account of this support, Botswana is currently at an advanced stage in developing the Botswana National Employment Policy, a national OSH policy, the National Policy on HIV/AIDS and Employment, and the National Internship and Apprenticeship Policy. We are also grateful for the recently concluded feasibility study on the establishment of the National Pension Fund. I have no doubt that all these endeavours will go a long way towards the attainment of the goal of decent work.

*Original Spanish: Ms GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ
(Minister of Labour and Social Security, Cuba)*

In the coming days a new Labour Code will enter into force in Cuba. The new Code will consolidate and strengthen regulations guaranteeing the protection of rights and compliance with the duties arising from the employment relationship existing between workers and employers. The Code is the result of wide-ranging consultations with the workers, who made over 170,000 proposals, leading to significant amendments to the original version of the text. The

changes put forward were supported by 99 per cent of the workers consulted.

The said legal text is designed, among other things, to highlight the role of employment and employment-generated income as drivers contributing to the development of society and the fulfilment of the needs of workers and their families; and to endorse not only equality in a completely discrimination-free workplace, but also the safeguarding of the right of the workers to organize voluntarily and to establish trade unions, as well as other rights and guarantees, including the prohibition of child labour.

The Code also guarantees that there is no forced or compulsory labour of any kind in Cuba and contains legal provisions designed to ensure that the desire of the workers to establish labour relations is fully respected.

Furthermore, jobs continue to be generated in the state sector in Cuba and measures are currently being taken to stimulate employment creation in the non-state sector. This, however, does not mean that social property is being privatized, as some theorists claim.

On the contrary, such measures contribute to efforts to build socialism, allowing the State to focus on increasing efficiency in terms of the fundamental means of production, which belong to the Cuban people as a whole, rather than having to concentrate on administering activities which are not strategic for Cuba.

With regard to the Director-General's Report, under our Constitution, permanent foreign residents in Cuba have the same rights and responsibilities as Cubans.

For over 50 years now, the Government of the United States has imposed an economic, political, financial and media blockade on Cuba, justifying its actions through the use of absurd tactics such as the inclusion of Cuba on the arbitrary and unilateral list of state sponsors of terrorism. Despite all this, the process of updating Cuba's economic and social model means that the continuity and irreversible nature of socialism, economic development and the improvement of the standard of living of the people are safeguarded. All these measures are being taken in line with the decent work objectives and without recourse to the withdrawal of protection, informality, or the use of shock therapy.

Mr ANDERSON (*Employer, Australia*)

I take this podium having recently stood down from my 12 years of service as a Senior Executive and then Chief Executive of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI).

I am also concluding my 12 years of advocacy and representation of Australian and Asia-Pacific employers at this session and on the ILO Governing Body and its Committee on Freedom of Association.

Thus, I take this opportunity to pass on a few reflections on the work of the ILO, and to acknowledge persons who have been important to me in performing my responsibilities.

The ILO is one of the most complex institutions that I have been associated with, and not one well-known in my country. In part that is because of geography, but more so because, by and large, mine is a good, developed country where employment and employment conditions are respected and respectable, where social norms and institutions are well-

rooted, and where labour issues and disputes usually find their resolution in dialogue or rule of law.

But that is not always so, and certainly not so around the world. It is my commitment to Australia, as a global trading nation, that tells you why a busy Chief Executive of the ACCI has flown around the world on over 30 occasions to make an impact on the life of the ILO. Not because the ILO is perfect, far from it, nor because I believe in government from Geneva, but because dynamic and well-functioning labour markets are a necessary precondition to the social order that underpins successful economic globalization and local entrepreneurship.

There are many challenges facing the ILO and I often wonder whether its US\$800 million budget could be better spent. Equally, I challenge myself with considering whether the ILO would be recreated in this, or similar form, were it not to have existed for the best part of a century. Something that is easier for me to communicate back home is the value that I place on its institutional structure of tripartism; a structure that has given me and my Employer members the privilege of equal standing with the world's governments on this podium. This has value to industry because, if it was all to be created for the first time in 2014, I doubt whether such a notion would get past first base. However, we must strive for continuous improvement and relevance, especially of major organizations like the ILO, which is accountable to so many, lest in practice the discipline of accountability is dulled, or worse still, vanishes altogether.

The bigger question that I pose is the real deal. How can the ILO, with the strength of its powerful constituents, do much better in lifting living standards, by overseeing the creation of new jobs for the hundreds of millions who will enter the world of work over the next decade? On that score, a much closer correlation between the ILO's work and the notion of private enterprise, entrepreneurship, self-employment and the facilitative role of government is needed.

Also needed is a deeper respect by the ILO constituents for one another, with less ideology and more action-oriented agendas driven at local level. This is the approach that I applied. I have challenged myself to keep learning.

Coming here, I knew that private sector jobs are the best source of lifting people out from poverty, and that they do not grow on trees. But I have also learned that the role of government, of industry bodies, of trade unions and of the ILO itself is much more material in developing countries and regions where less stable supply chains and economies exist. An ILO simply for the Australian circumstance is not necessarily an ILO for the world.

I close by recognizing a few who have been important to me in this work. First, my Australian mentor, Bryan Noakes, who served in this place for nearly 20 years, and before him another esteemed Australian, George Polites, whose similar service means that my departure concludes almost 50 years of uninterrupted Australian Employer participation at the highest levels of the ILO. Remarkably, that is half the life of the ILO itself.

I have charted my own path and formed my own view on these matters, but, if in doing so I have honoured their past contribution in some material way, I will board my long flight home well satisfied.

Obviously, I thank the body of Australian employers and my federation for allowing such an extraordinary investment of time and senior resource over so many years to advance the work of the ILO and the global employer movement. My former staff, such as Scott Barklamb and Daniel Mam-mone, have played a big part in supporting me in these roles. I thank them.

Australian government officials, the Australian ministers who have shown an interest in this work and the Australian trade union combatants and colleagues, such as Sharan Burrow, Ged Kearney and the late Bill Mansfield, also reciprocated with respect and decency.

I also thank my many global employer colleagues, the IOE and the ILO's ACT/EMP, as well as ILO staff and the Australian contingent over here, such as Raphael Crowe and Greg Vines.

So, friends and colleagues, my stewardship of employer interests in this important global work has ended. In some form I may renew our acquaintance, but for the time being that is it, the end.

I wish you and the institution well, but even more so, the men and women of the enterprises which we serve.

Mr MORETI (*Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development, Kiribati*)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his appointment as President of the International Labour Conference at its 103rd Session.

I am happy to present a brief report on what Kiribati has achieved under its DWCP. Kiribati has been a Member of the ILO for 14 years now and during that time the national DWCP and its activities have made progress, with vibrant tripartite consultation. With the assistance of the ILO, various achievements have been accomplished. A recent development is the ratification of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185). This ratification is important as it responds to the urgent need of our seafarers' major employers to facilitate the professional movement of Kiribati's seafarers. My Government is fully committed to ensuring that all the requirements of the Convention are implemented within a year.

Labour law reform is another area on which Kiribati is currently working. The draft OSH bill has been established after consulting social partners. As part of its implementation, capacity assessment will be carried out in relation to the bill, in order to fill any gaps and organize the capacity-building programmes required for my Ministry to carry out its functions.

As part of modernizing our current labour laws, my Ministry, together with social partners, embarked on labour law reform with a view to the revision of outdated laws and the national application of the principles of the core Conventions being ratified by Kiribati. This review is an ongoing process, carefully managed through dialogue between the tripartite partners.

Unemployment is one of the major abiding challenges in Kiribati. I am proud to say that, even though Kiribati is classified as a small island State in the Pacific region, efforts to address this issue have been maintained: German shipowners have provided employment opportunities for seafarers and fishermen are employed on Japanese fishing vessels.

In April this year, I had the privilege to be in New Zealand and held meetings with key people to discuss how the Recognized Seasonal Employers Scheme could be improved to increase recruitment from Kiribati.

Last month I was in Australia and met farmers and employing agencies. The objective of my visit was to explore, with farmers and employing agencies, how the Seasonal Worker Program could be enhanced. Despite the fact that the employment schemes with both New Zealand and Australia have provided minimal employment opportunities for workers of Kiribati, I believe that the two schemes offer a win-win situation in terms of economic benefits for our workers and those host countries.

Kiribati is one of the lowest-lying atolls in the Pacific and climate change is having a rapid impact on it. Hardship, social issues, rising sea levels and threats to food security are the problems that Kiribati is facing. It is therefore critical that Australia, New Zealand and relevant development partners support Kiribati to put practical solutions in place.

Labour mobility is one of the Government's top priorities. I am pleased to highlight here that the Government of Australia continues to provide assistance in this area through the TVET sector strengthening programme. This programme aims at upgrading our Kiribati Institute of Technology through the adoption of Australian training standards. The initiative will facilitate the realization of the Government's concept of "migration with dignity" by giving our people the right skills and qualifications for employment abroad should they choose to migrate.

I am glad to say that the ILO provides assistance in this area through its training programmes. Labour migration policy is being developed to protect migrant workers. We still have a long way to go. However, with the excellent support from the ILO, I am confident that much has been achieved. In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to the Director-General and the staff of the ILO for their continuing support of Kiribati.

Let me emphasize here that the Government of Kiribati will continue to work closely with its social partners, in collaboration with the ILO, to achieve the remaining priorities set under the Kiribati DWCP. With these remarks allow me to conclude, and to bestow upon each and every one the Kiribati traditional blessings of "*te mauri, te raoi ao te tabomoa*" (health, peace and prosperity).

Original Arabic: Mr AZZI (Minister of Labour, Lebanon)

I am speaking here on behalf of Lebanon, my home country and the home country of all those who ask in which country democracy was able to emerge in the East; in which country of the East do Muslims and Christians live side by side, and a spirit of tolerance and forgiveness reigns; and which country has a population of 3,752,000, while around the world there are more than 15 million of its nationals. The answer to all these questions is Lebanon.

Today, Lebanon has been wounded and its lifeblood is seeping away. Its latest wound was inflicted by the failure of its Parliament to elect a new President. Can any of us here name any single country in the world without a president, without a leader? It is the conflicts between East and West which are weighing so heavily on the country, obstructing its elections, jeopardizing its unity and undermining its very Constitution. That is why my first appeal to

you today is to persuade those waging war in the Middle East to leave Lebanon out of their battles because Lebanon's neutrality is an inalienable property of its very being.

When reading the Report by the Director-General, whom I congratulate and thank for the attention that he has brought to Lebanon and to the Lebanese – in particular, those working in the ILO – I became increasingly aware of the importance of the issue of migration from country to country and from one group of peoples to another. The very notion of "migration" has changed. Migration no longer applies exclusively to individuals leaving their countries in search of work. What we are seeing today are organized migrations undertaken either to effect population flows in response to globalization or to provide communication links between constituents living outside international law.

It is a matter of regret that, even in the twenty-first century, we continue to see the exodus of peoples fleeing persecution, such as the Palestinian people, or fleeing war, such as the Syrian people. Lebanon is an exporter of migrants to the rest of the world and, in its turn, receives refugees and persons displaced from their countries by war, by calamities, by persecution and by occupation.

The people of Lebanon who emigrate bring to other countries a spirit of peace, culture and legal employment and take part in the construction and development of those countries, while enjoying stable employment and residence. Where the exodus to Lebanon is concerned, however, this places a burden on the shoulders of the Lebanese State which it is not in a position to bear.

For how can a country with an area of 10,452 square kilometres and a population of 3,752,000 and, therefore, a population density as high as 400 people per square kilometre accommodate more than 1.6 million Syrians displaced by a destructive war? And this at a time when, since 1948, it has already been host to half a million Palestinians awaiting recognition of their right of return. The world is now in the process of compounding the tragedies of Palestine and Syria with a new tragedy, namely, the inability of the Lebanese themselves, both the State and the people, to cope with the fall-out from the tragedies in Palestine and Syria.

The Lebanese stand shoulder to shoulder with the Palestinians and we support the people of Syria, but Lebanon, as a state entity and as a society, simply cannot absorb this exodus of humanity, equivalent to 57 per cent of its own population. Neither the country's infrastructure, nor its economy, nor its financial system, nor its geographical area, nor its religious equilibrium, nor its security situation are equal to this humanitarian challenge, particularly since this exodus is fraught with security and political risks for Lebanon, including the risk of the Syrian war spreading across the borders of Lebanon and of schisms in Lebanese population groups between those who support and those who oppose the Syrian regime.

For that reason, the second appeal that I wish to make from this international platform is to all Arab and foreign countries to meet their financial obligations, not only vis-à-vis Lebanon itself, but also to the Syrian displaced people living in Lebanon. Where, for example, are the funds that were approved at the two international pledging conferences held in Kuwait? Where are the funds ap-

proved by the Friends of Lebanon at the meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon, held in September 2013 in the framework of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and, after that, at the Group's meeting in Paris? To those who have fulfilled their commitments, I express my thanks. The other countries, which have not yet done so, we urge to come swiftly to the rescue, both of the Syrians and also of the very unity of Lebanon.

I thank the Director-General for his Reports. We, in Lebanon, stand ready to work together with all the sending countries of migrant workers in an effort to examine their situation, so as to enable them to live in freedom and dignity and to enjoy all the necessary benefits.

Ms PLUMB (*Minister for Labour, the Family, Social Protection and the Elderly, Romania*)

The Romanian delegation congratulates the Office on its Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, which we find rich in ideas, thought-provoking and likely to inspire new approaches.

We are aware that the unprecedented dynamic of profound changes in the labour market necessitates the significant adaptation of policies, including migration policies. We consider the workforce to be among the most important assets at the global level, and it is equally relevant at the level of the EU.

The concept of the free movement of workers has been developed as an instrument for economic growth and social benefits. Workers' right to freedom of movement is not a negotiable right. At the beginning of this year, upon the complete opening of the labour markets of EU Member States, there were unfounded fears regarding the risk of a massive migration of Romanian workers. Workforce migration is a natural phenomenon in open economies. It is necessary that all governments respond responsibly to this phenomenon and combat populist or xenophobic actions, rather than encouraging them.

At this year's European elections, we witnessed the kindling of unjustified fears regarding immigration, which led to an unprecedented gain in extremists' strength. The Romanian Government will pursue every effort to defend workers' right to freedom of movement and will react without hesitation when Romanian citizens are unjustly attacked.

I will take this opportunity to present several measures that the Romanian authorities have already taken, or are about to implement, aimed at improving the national labour market.

In Romania, over the last two years, approximately 100,000 jobs have been created in an effort to minimize the flow of workers migrating to other Member States. The unemployment rate in Romania is approximately 7 per cent, but what worries us most is unemployment among our youth. To lower the unemployment rate while placing youth in the job market with decent jobs, the Romanian Government has adopted the Youth Guarantee and has created appropriate programmes to implement it.

For 2014–20, the European Social Fund has budgeted for financial incentives for employers to generate new jobs for young people. Our Government seeks to reward employers who hire recent graduates with subsidies, aimed especially at supporting the absorption into the workforce of young people threatened by marginalization. This summer we aim to reduce the social contribution of the em-

ployers to 5 per cent. A tax exemption on reinvested profits, something that employers have requested in the past, will be applied with effect from 1 July as an incentive for job creation.

Since 2013, the Romanian Government has run a programme supporting efforts by young entrepreneurs to create and develop micro-companies. In this way, we are facilitating the transition of young people from education to the labour market.

With regard to women's access to the labour market, it is a known fact that women have been affected most by the crisis. Thus, we are considering the creation for women of a support programme similar to the one we have for young people.

It is crucial that the Government firmly commit itself to stronger cooperation at all levels in order to develop and implement policies based on good practice and lessons learned, on terms negotiated with social partners, in favour of decent employment. The ideas and proposals set out in the ILO Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda* are of great value for our Government's workforce policies.

In 2013, Romania's economic growth of 3.5 per cent placed our country high among new EU Member States. Projections for 2014 are consistently optimistic. We expect this growth to improve the social situation.

We favour policies actively designed to generate decent jobs, including green jobs. We want to transition to a green and intelligent economy with a social protection system.

The national tripartite social dialogue process will include an examination of social dialogue structures and of work legislation. Another result of tripartite consultation is the new law of the Romanian Economic and Social Council. The Romanian Government is ready to continue to cooperate at the international level and hopes to make progress and identify new positive and sustainable solutions to the current challenges that our labour market faces.

Original Spanish: Mr RÍOS (Government, Colombia)

Colombia's Ministry of Labour dates back to November 2011, when our institution gained legal status: for the eight years prior to that its competencies had fallen within the remit of the Ministry of Social Protection, and this of course was to the detriment of the employment sector. Since then, we have worked on structuring the work of the Ministry around five pillars: providing decent and quality work for all; guaranteeing that no worker is without social protection; creating bridges between employers and workers; recognizing that the quality of workers depends on the quality of their jobs; and focusing on the current challenges in the world of work.

These pillars and their objectives have been translated into plans, programmes and projects with outcomes including the following: the unemployment rate dropped to 9.6 per cent in 2013, following 44 consecutive months of reduction of unemployment, with youth unemployment falling from 20 per cent in 2010 to 16.4 per cent in 2013; since 2011 we have formalized 530,000 jobs; between 2012 and 2013, over 899,000 people registered with the pension system; 8.5 million people have signed up to the Occupational Risks System, representing an increase of 1.2 million over the last two years; and, according to the most recent statistics, child labour has decreased from 10.2 per cent to 9.7 per cent.

For the first time in our history a collective agreement has been signed with public sector employers and in the last two years the number of collective agreements has grown from 440 to 840 – an increase of 90 per cent.

We have also set up a public employment service with 230 centres around the country. The “Colombia Mayor” programme, which provides benefits for senior citizens who do not have pensions, has gone from supporting 400,000 to 1.3 million persons. For the more than 7 million people who have not contributed enough to receive a pension, we have a government-subsidized system of periodic financial benefits that incentivizes contributing to a pension plan.

The ILO has played an important role in this work. For two years we have been working on a project, with technical assistance, to strengthen protection of labour rights, in particular protection of freedom of association and collective bargaining. This is being done by strengthening the inspection system, social dialogue mechanisms and the Government’s capacity to protect trade union leaders and activists.

We developed a serious, consistent programme and there have been clear achievements. The ILO itself has assessed progress and found that between 89 and 91 per cent of inspectors have adopted the new procedures; and for this reason it is peculiar that we have been called upon to submit reports on Convention No. 81, which deals specifically with the area with which the ILO is providing technical assistance. This decision has led us to give some thought to what the criteria are for establishing the list of cases. What are the prevailing interests here? We are working hand in hand with the ILO, not with countries that have traditionally kept their distance from the ILO. We would therefore like to share our concerns and put forward some suggestions. Perhaps there is a need for a new methodology that is detailed, clear, easy to apply and ensures objectivity and impartiality. There could be two lists – one for countries called on to submit reports, based on a new methodology, and the other for countries called on to present examples of good practices.

Let us be frank. Today, the dubious honour of being included on the list leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of countries which believe, like we do, that we are on the right path, although of course we recognize that we still have a long road ahead and that there are errors to be corrected. Although some maintain otherwise, being included on the list has a negative connotation today. Another option would be that, instead of having a vexing and discriminatory list, all member States of the Organization could be called upon to give reports on how they are implementing ratified Conventions. To this effect, we could consider the adoption of a system analogous to the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review system, whose success is widely acknowledged.

Original Arabic: Mr ABU EL-RAGHEB (Employer, Jordan)

Speaking personally, as well as on behalf of my colleagues at the Jordan Chamber of Industry and the employers of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, I wish to express my satisfaction at participating in the work of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference under the slogan of building a

future with decent work. This is an aim that is dear to us all, Workers, Employers and Governments.

I would like, now, to turn to the issue of the progress made in Jordan in general and, in particular, the achievements of the organizations of employers in this field.

Despite the considerable economic challenges currently facing Jordan, human beings and workers are still the main concern of the Government, the employers and the trade unions. We have focused in particular on tripartite partnerships, with a view to addressing both these challenges and the exceptional circumstances that have arisen in Jordan as a result of the political situation in the region and, more specifically, the crisis in Syria. Jordan has been the country most affected by these circumstances, with an increasing number of refugees placing ever-greater pressure on our resources: food, medicines and employment. All these factors together have placed pressure on the social partners as a whole, making it even more complicated to establish a balanced labour market operating within the framework of decent practices in Jordan when compared to neighbouring States. However, we continue to work ceaselessly in order to achieve this aim within the labour market.

Under the auspices of His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, Jordan has begun the process of re-examining a number of pieces of legislation and laws related to labour, as well as reforming and developing the employment and TVET sectors in the Kingdom, in line with the national employment strategy. We have also carried out work to promote the participation of youth and women in the labour market, in particular in those isolated areas with the highest levels of poverty and unemployment. The aim here is to create healthy and stable working conditions, thus ensuring that Jordan remains a pioneer in the field of tripartite social partnerships.

Jordan continues to make every effort to promote equality in the workplace, implement international labour standards and adopt ever-more reforms at various levels.

The industrial sector is of course the sector best placed to create new jobs, with a major role in efforts to consolidate underlying economic and social stability. Given the importance of this sector, the Jordan Chamber of Industry has set up a unit focusing on employment and human resource development. The main aims of this body are to ensure communication and coordination with education and training institutions and to participate in the work and committees of the institutions concerned with regard to policy- and strategy-making, and the planning and implementation of legislation designed to ensure that the education and training system takes into account the needs of the market. The aim here is to ensure that trainees and graduates acquire the effectiveness, expertise and skills that will give rise to creativity, innovation and leadership.

The Jordan Chamber of Industry is currently working to implement a cooperation programme in collaboration with the International Youth Foundation, with the help of the TVET Support Fund in Jordan. One aim of the programme is to ensure that the employment and training unit plays a more active part in providing the industrial sector with a trained workforce, as well as in helping to find jobs for youth. The programme is designed to reach as many young Jordanians as possible, in particular in

isolated areas, in order to: make them aware of employment opportunities in the industrial sector; ensure that they gain practical qualifications that will prepare them for work; and help them to acquire vocational and technical skills.

The Chamber of Industry has signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding and cooperation with centres offering vocational and technical education and training, and also training in scientific research. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, the Chamber of Industry is working on the implementation of a number of projects financed by various international organizations operating in the country, such as the European Training Foundation, the ILO and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GTZ).

In addition, the Chamber of Commerce organized a conference, the first of its kind, aimed at SMEs, to encourage discussion on the vital and specific role that chambers of industry and commerce and organizations of employers can play in supporting such enterprises given that most enterprises, not only in Jordan but across the world, fall into this category.

We wish to thank the ILO and all its staff, in particular the colleagues at the ILO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut, who have taken part in a number of activities in Jordan designed to improve the world of work.

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

On behalf of the delegation of Afghanistan to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, I would like to congratulate the President on his election. We are highly confident that, under his wise leadership and guidance, the objective of this session of the Conference as set forth in the agenda will be achieved.

As you know, unemployment is a major social and economic problem in the world. The existence of 202 million unemployed persons worldwide indicates this fact. Unfortunately, Afghanistan, like many other countries of the world, suffers from both unemployment and underemployment. This is the product of decades of war, insecurity and natural disasters in our country, which have led to the loss or severe degradation of infrastructure and facilities in various sectors. In response, the Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has developed a four-year national socio-economic development plan. The implementation of this plan will entail the creation of sustainable employment opportunities in the country.

Afghanistan considers the informal economy as a major problem and gives priority to tackling this issue. Our Government believes that the informal economy is detrimental to Afghanistan and its citizens, reducing government revenue and consequently depriving workers of the benefits provided for under Afghan laws and international Conventions. In the area of labour administration, our Ministry has recorded good achievements, including the review of national labour law and other relevant regulations. Provisions have been adopted in labour law to ensure the prevention of forced labour and child labour, which have a devastating impact on healthy community and government. Implementation of the revised legislative documents will prepare the road for the promotion of decent work and improved working conditions in line with international labour standards.

In order to implement occupational health standards, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and other relevant institutions, has produced a list of hazardous types of work. Fortunately we are making progress towards exploitation of our mineral resources and seeking to develop the agricultural sector. Therefore, a national policy on OSH is required to protect our workers.

Implementation of the labour legislative documents requires thorough awareness on the part of workers and employers. This can be ensured by an efficient labour inspection mechanism. My Ministry, in partnership with trade unions and employers' unions and with the cooperation of domestic and international institutions, implemented a comprehensive labour law awareness campaign in the capital and provinces and obtained positive results from it.

Also, our inspection teams have visited workplaces and monitored the implementation of legislative documents and trade manuals. Considering the importance of labour inspection in the promotion of decent work, it is vital that our staff gains the required expertise to comply with international labour standards. Our Ministry has a specific plan in this regard.

In the area of labour migration, with ILO technical assistance, we have recently developed the final draft of the national labour migration policy for sending workers abroad, and soon this draft will be sent to the Council of Ministers for approval. In addition, with respect to the procedure for issuing foreigners' work permits, we have introduced new facilities that expedite permit issuance and ensure complete transparency in the process.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the ILO Office in Kabul for assisting us in developing the final draft of the national labour policy. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the ILO specifically regarding its decision to expand its activities in Afghanistan and I wish it further success.

Mr NAZIRI ASL (Government, Islamic Republic of Iran)

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. The group is confident that, under his able stewardship, this session of the International Labour Conference will lead to a successful conclusion.

Iran appreciates the Director-General's endeavours to make the Organization an example of excellence for the world of work and welcomes the reform of the organizational structure of ILO headquarters. It advocates the reform and looks forward to its tangible impact on the functioning of the Office with the ultimate objective of improving efficiency. While acknowledging the need to improve the functioning of the International Labour Conference, Iran encourages the Office to follow up this approach and to release its assessment in order to further review potential improvements by member States. It appreciates the Director-General's initiative in choosing the very important subject of labour migration to be addressed at this Conference.

Taking into account the realities and perceptions illustrated in the Director-General's Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, it is vital to construct an agenda for fair migration which not only

respects the fundamental rights of migrant workers but also offers migrants real opportunities for decent work. Iran appreciates the ILO's efforts to enhance working conditions for migrants throughout the world, and the outcome of the November 2013 Tripartite Technical Meeting on Labour Migration which provided guidance on the actions required in this respect.

Iran would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of reconfiguring the membership of the ILO Governing Body to ensure adequate representation of all regions, in particular of developing countries, which are currently under-represented in the Governing Body. Iran renews the call for all member States that have not ratified the 1986 Amendment to do so as a matter of priority. It invites the Office to brief members of the Governing Body on a regular basis on actions taken in this regard. It reaffirms that, in order to fully exercise its constitutional responsibility, it is essential that the ILO has an effective and efficient alternative standards supervisory system and it reiterates its full commitment to the ILO supervisory system, including analysis of the individual cases by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. We also express our appreciation of all the valuable efforts made by the Office to implement the ILO standards system and encourage it to continue to do so.

Iran acknowledges the important role played by the ILO to mitigate the continuing negative implications of the global financial economic crisis. According to *Global Employment Trends 2014*, the global unemployment rate continued to grow to 13.1 per cent in 2013, almost three times as high as the adult unemployment rate.

Iran expresses its concerns over the repercussions of the persistent challenge of youth unemployment and the deficit of decent work for young people. It supports measures taken by the Office towards the global development framework beyond 2015. We also welcome the constructive engagement of the ILO in the process of national, regional and global automatic consultation initiated by the United Nations. While there are many common factors among the regions, the different circumstances also require a nuanced approach that deals with regional specificities and characteristics within the global development agenda. Iran agrees that a one-size-fits-all approach should not be extended to all regions and countries.

Iran condemns the Israeli occupation of the State of Palestine and of the occupied Syrian Golan. It welcomes the Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, and is deeply concerned at the ongoing violation of human rights perpetrated by the occupying powers. Iran supports the efforts of the Government of Palestine to ensure the exercise of the people's inalienable rights to self-determination, sovereignty, independence and return to their homes. Iran recognizes with appreciation the technical assistance provided by the ILO to the Palestinian Government and its institutions, and commends the enhanced support provided by the Office to enable the Palestinian people to address the challenges of unemployment and poverty.

Iran reassures the President of its full and constructive engagement in the discussion of various important issues on the agenda of the Conference, with a view to achieving more action-oriented re-

sults for the betterment of the situation for people around the globe.

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

On behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea, I wish to acknowledge the Reports of the Director-General on fair labour migration, forced labour, the transition from the informal to the formal economy and employment policies. I also appreciate the ILO's ongoing technical assistance and capacity building for an effective national tripartite partnership development.

A new national policy framework for Papua New Guinea, Vision 2050, was specifically developed to ensure the fair distribution of benefits to all. It also sets out the objectives of nation-building, human development and integrity. The strategic plan of Vision 2050 is to develop and expand the manufacturing services, and the agriculture, forestry, fishery and tourism sectors between 2010 and 2050. Currently, Papua New Guinea's economy is dominated by the mining and energy sectors. It is estimated that these sectors contribute some 80 per cent of the country's total export revenue, the largest being the multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas industry, which has attracted major business investments and created more employment. However, our current labour force faces future challenges in our growing economy.

Over the past two decades, trade has become increasingly global and the challenges resulting from that change have been taken into account by the Government. We continue to make progress towards economic development, and envisage creating more employment for our citizens.

The Government of Papua New Guinea notes the importance of ensuring compliance with provisions on minimum wages in the informal economy, and ending forced labour, contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking, which are the subject of international concern. A clear national policy framework will set out an integrated approach that addresses all forms of forced labour and actions for its elimination through tripartite consultation. The labour market institutions have a vital role to play as universal access to decent work lies at the heart of any long-term solution. To that end, national labour inspectors also need to be given a clear mandate, training and adequate methodology to address all forms of forced labour and related practices, including preventive and punitive measures.

I am honoured to announce that, in December 2013, my Government and two social partners renewed the signature of the DWCP 2013–15, thus setting a new direction that identifies priorities and emphasizes the importance of a correlated and effective legislative framework that guarantees protection for all concerned parties. Thus far, the Government, through the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, has embarked on a labour mobilization programme and developed the labour-sending arrangements for the Papua New Guinea seasonal worker pilot scheme with the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines.

While addressing the structural drivers of change that are reshaping labour markets, the Government of Papua New Guinea is tackling the challenge of employment through various policy and legislative reviews, such as the Industrial Relations Bill, the Employment Relations Bill and the Occupational

Health and Safety Bill, which will be enacted once completed. Papua New Guinea has made significant progress towards the adoption of national employment policies which are aligned with the Government's medium-term development goals and strategies and the Vision 2050 programme, to create more decent employment.

To conclude, it should be recalled that the people are the most vulnerable resources in Papua New Guinea's development aspirations and ongoing nation-building efforts. In line with the objectives of our national framework, Papua New Guinea includes in its DWCP 2013–15 a commitment to establish a national employment policy. Such a commitment necessarily underpins cross-sectoral labour issues, including minimum wage systems, the strengthening of actions to end forced labour, the transition from the informal to the formal economy, skills development, job creation and child labour. As we collectively commit ourselves to these remaining weeks, may all our deliberations and decisions benefit humanity all over the world. We thank the ILO for its interventions and look forward to their continuation.

Mr PEIRIS (*Employer, Sri Lanka*)

It is indeed a privilege and an honour for me to represent one of the oldest employer organizations in Asia, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon, at this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Global unemployment has now reached 202 million, 5 million more than last year. One out of every eight under-25-year-olds is unemployed. These statistics are alarming. Is this social justice? At the last session, I emphasized that the ILO needs to respond differently to the challenges of the world of work. It was pointed out that the ILO needs to be less prescriptive and more proactive. This is the only way to assist in creating and generating employment. We appreciate the initiatives taken with regard to ILO reforms.

The ILO Director-General, Mr Ryder, addressing the International Monetary and Financial Committee and the Joint Development Committee last month in Washington, emphasized the need to improve employability and facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship. The ILO also needs to innovate. Our workplaces have come a long way since the industrial revolution. Today, social justice demands job creation, an enabling environment for employment generation and jobs to enable people to make a living.

This year the International Labour Conference is discussing two very important topics: facilitating transition from the informal to the formal economy and a recurrent discussion on the strategic objectives of employment. The Employers' Federation of Ceylon released a special publication this year, entitled *The Dilemma of the Informal Economy*, in view of the discussion of this topic at this Conference. The informal economy has been discussed over the years by different stakeholders from various standpoints, but we need to realize that the informal economy will not disappear. We need to provide workers in the informal economy with the necessary enabling environment so that they can choose whether or not they should enter the formal economy. We thus need to address the problems faced by those workers so that they might be in a position to make the correct choice.

It is equally important for us to take a new look at the strategic objectives of employment. We need to look at employment beyond prescriptive standards and boundaries to ensure that work is carried out in a safe environment and is rewarded in a reasonable and equitable manner. We cannot prescribe idealistic uniform standards that would inhibit employment generation.

As the ILO enters another challenging year, it is time that we look at the world of work from a different perspective. We need to adopt a long-term approach and ensure a more pleasant and productive world of work for our future generations. We need to create a predictable enabling environment for employment generation. We must focus on better talent, products and institutions, and acknowledge and accept that sustainable enterprises hold the key for productive work. It is time that the ILO reframes its strategic objectives to face the new challenges of the world of work.

Mr ROEKCHAMNONG (*Government, Thailand*)

On behalf of the Kingdom of Thailand, I am honoured to speak today at this plenary sitting of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. The issues discussed during this Conference are an important part of efforts to improve the lives of workers around the world.

For over a century, Thailand has maintained a long-standing and close relationship with the ILO, while honouring its commitment to general labour standards for its workers. Since 1919, under the guidance of His Majesty King Rama VI, Siam, as we were known at the time, joined over 40 other countries as founding Members of the ILO.

Over recent decades, we have seen the world change politically, economically and socially, and these changes were seen as a major challenge. The international community, however, did not weaken in its resolve to improve the lives of workers.

As you must be aware, Thailand is a country with great potential in terms of agriculture, fisheries, cultural heritage and the environment. Our tourism and services industries have been a major income earner and have maintained the strength of our economy. It is estimated that 25 million people, or two-thirds of the total workforce in Thailand, work in the manufacturing and services industry, in both formal and informal sectors.

Over the past two decades, Thailand has been faced with many crises, be they political, economic, or those arising from natural disasters. Despite these challenges, we have continued to promote the living standards of national workers and foreign workers from our neighbouring countries, who amount to around 2 million, in order to meet internationally accepted standards.

Thailand has worked to reduce the income gap and enhance the standard of living of workers by adopting a national minimum wage in 2012.

We are aware that health issues affect labour productivity and thus incomes. Thailand has expanded its social security system to cover medical expenses and salary compensation for those who do not enjoy income stability or are employed by private entrepreneurs. We have provided extensive employment opportunities for these and other groups in order to allow them to have access to social security.

We have also cooperated with neighbouring countries to regularize the status of illegal workers in

order to ensure equal protection in terms of wages and welfare, and to prevent abuse and trafficking.

I should also like to note that our engagement with the ILO has been very close and cordial. The former Director-General, Mr Somavia, was granted an audience with His Majesty the King in 2008, where they exchanged ideas on His Majesty's Sufficiency Economy philosophy, which is along the same lines as the ILO's principle of providing basic social protection.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Director-General, Mr Ryder, who has worked tirelessly to advance the fair migration policy, especially in the context of labour mobility, and the Decent Work programme. We appreciate his leadership as the Chair of the GMG, which advocated the protection and promotion of the rights of workers in the wider context of the recent GFMD that took place in Stockholm this year.

Finally, I hope that his Conference will prove productive and that, despite our diverse approaches, we will be successful in working for the benefit of the workers worldwide.

Mr SAJINARAYANAN (*Worker, India*)

Once again, we have gathered here to discuss and shape the destiny of the world of work. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the ILO for raising the discussion of certain issues that are vital for the voiceless, marginalized and vulnerable sections of society. Changes to the political scenario in India give new hope in heralding total transformation in the most difficult situations in the informal sector as people have voted for change. This year, we are discussing such matters as formalizing the informal economy, forced labour and employment, which are very significant for a large country like India.

India has perhaps the largest informal economy in the world. About 94 per cent of India's workers are in the unorganized sector and only 6 per cent in the organized sector. The majority work as casual agricultural wage workers, including a sizable proportion of women workers. In simple terms, informal workers are those who are not protected by any law. Hence, under constant demands from trade unions, the Government was compelled to enact the Unorganized Sector Workers Social Security Act of 2008, which ensures minimum protection for the workers in the informal economy. This is a source of solace to many millions, in spite of its implementation deficiencies. Hence, ensuring that the law reaches out right up to the last worker is a great challenge to all tripartite constituents in India. The trade union, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), has taken up the Himalayan task of "organizing the unorganized", which is part of the process of formalizing the informal economy.

While discussing the centenary initiatives, the Director-General has rightly raised concerns about the erosion of jobs, the imbalances created because of pollution, the growing gap between rich and poor, and other issues. The Director-General has produced a Report on fair migration. Tens of thousands of Indians migrate every year to the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Many face adverse workplace situations and untold miseries in different countries.

We find uncivilized labour practices all over the world, including low paid wages, unsatisfactory working conditions, etc. These practices are ram-

nant in the informal economy. Added to this, there is a grey area where the boundaries between forced labour and poor working conditions remain difficult to define.

Unfortunate people in desperate situations have no choice but to resign themselves to gruelling and poor working conditions without protest. Coercion is often used to discipline the workers and to curb protests against frequent breaches. It is the poorest and the most vulnerable who suffer the most.

The problem of bonded labour arises as a consequence of broader socio-economic problems. Debt bondage ripens into a system of bonded labour when the wages and employment conditions are bad. When examining the case of *People's Union for Democratic Rights and Others vs. Union of India and Others* (1982), the Supreme Court of India gave a new dimension to the issue by treating working below statutory minimum wages as forced labour. Under article 23 of the Constitution of India, contract labour is an area where workers are exploited in inhumane working conditions.

Human trafficking is the world's third largest organized crime after narcotics and arms trafficking. It is one of the most brutal aspects of forced labour, especially among children. Trade unions all over the world should join forces and campaign for the stronger involvement of employers' organizations, the labour judiciary and other civil society groups in efforts to free our brothers and sisters from forced labour.

We need to have a fast-track route to formalize the informal sector. Hence, there is a need for revolutionary transformation in the immediate future, which must be visible to all, especially the new generation. Any change that may perhaps only come in a century is not acceptable as starving people cannot wait. Hence, we eagerly look forward to the outcome of the discussions of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Original Arabic: Mr MATTAR (*Employer, United Arab Emirates*)

Allow me first to congratulate the President on his election at the head of the present session of the Conference, in recognition of the efforts that he has made over the last 30 years in the service of this Organization.

I would also like, on behalf of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the United Arab Emirates, to thank the Director-General for having prepared his Report focusing on one of the most burning issues of today's world, namely, labour migration.

As you will surely be aware, the United Arab Emirates today has a sound economic structure, which has enabled us to create massive investment opportunities in a range of economic sectors. In 2013, our GDP reached 1.4 trillion United Arab Emirates dirhams (AED), thanks largely to the growth of the non-petroleum sectors. More than one fourth of the world's major companies now have offices in our country. International studies estimate that the Emirates will continue to play a key role in the global economy and that our growth will surpass 5 per cent during the current year. This growth has enabled the Government to provide jobs for millions of people throughout the world. The studies also predict that this growth will continue, in recognition of which the United Arab Emirates has been chosen to host Expo 2020.

As employers, we are proud of the positive role played by migrant workers in building the infrastructure of our country. We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring decent working conditions for all workers in the country, a task that we are accomplishing in partnership with the Government. We agree with the observation in the Report that the general trend is to attract higher skilled workers, in particular since we working to achieve the United Arab Emirates' vision for 2021, which aims to speed up development and to promote investment by building a highly productive, competitive and diversified economy.

In this context, allow me to identify a number of challenges that we employers are facing within the framework of labour migration. These include, as stated in the Report, the matching of the skills and experience of workers available within the country and those abroad with the proposed job requirements, a process that has to be accomplished in the absence of any clearly documented information on the skills of these workers. In this context, I welcome the recent initiative by the Ministries of Labour of the United Arab Emirates and of Kuwait under the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, mounted in cooperation with certain construction businesses and migrant worker sending countries, such as the Philippines, Pakistan and India. The initiative is designed to facilitate the screening of workers' skills and the accreditation of their qualifications through a system of certificates attesting to their experience, issued and serving as a kind of skills passport recognized by both sending and receiving countries. We also welcome other regional initiatives designed to enhance the working environment for all those involved.

The other problem reviewed in the Report concerns the need to combat the abusive practices of certain recruitment agencies in sending countries. These lead to a situation of instability for the workers or unwillingness on their part to complete the employment contract, causing us as employers to have wasted the money spent on their recruitment.

The Government has enacted laws to regulate the work of these recruitment agencies and to combat any abusive practices, but has not as yet established any system for dealing with problems arising prior to workers' arriving in the country. We hope that we can find means of tackling this problem through continued dialogue, under the Abu Dhabi Dialogue process, between the sending countries of Asia and the migrant labour receiving countries.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the important role that the ILO must play in defending workers' rights abroad, in compliance with the 1919 Constitution of the Organisation.

I would like to join my voice with that of the Director-General in stressing that migrant labour must be an option available to all, but not an obligation imposed upon people by the need to find decent work. Respect for the rights of workers must be our top priority and must constitute a red line which we cannot cross, no matter what the purpose and nature of their migration.

Original Spanish: Ms CORTÉS AGUILAR (Minister of Labour and Workforce Development, Panama)

On behalf of the Government of Panama, I would like to congratulate the Employers' group, which has been given the honour of presiding over this International Labour Conference through the person

of Daniel Funes de Rioja – distinguished son of Latin America and Chair of the Employers' group. The Government of Panama would like to wish him every success in his new duties.

From this podium, I commend Mr Ryder for having considered for his Report to this International Labour Conference the topic of fair migration. We agree with the Director-General that this Report provides an analysis of the nature of migration in our globalized economy and the main policy of governance issues related to migration, and it presents the tripartite constituents of the ILO with the undoubtedly complex problems which will have to be addressed in any future action.

The Director-General's Report is in line with the recent forums on migration and development which have been held in the United Nations by the IOM, the ILO and the GFMD. These serve as a real point of reference which confirms, based on research, how migrants contribute to the economy and the competitiveness of the country in which they live, while also participating in the development process in their country of origin. They reaffirm the transnational nature of labour migration processes, which forge potential and actual links between countries through their various networks of identities and through their shared sense of belonging.

The extraordinary economic development which we have seen in Panama over recent years has translated into better decent work conditions. Unemployment has been significantly reduced, from 10.3 per cent in 2005 to 4.0 per cent in 2013. This is a level which specialists consider to be full employment or frictional unemployment, since, even in a context of unemployment, there are difficulties in filling many posts. In practice, the country has encountered situations where there is a scarcity of workers in certain activities and occupations. This has led to a more flexible labour migration policy, under which irregular migration flows are regulated and legalized to ensure that the migrants' rights are respected.

In this regard, the Government of Panama, since 2010, has periodically carried out extraordinary migratory regulation processes, under the overarching theme of Panama as the melting pot of peoples. This is aimed at ensuring that migrants in Panama, whether they are in an irregular situation or not, should begin the relevant migratory regulation procedures. To date, 14 such processes have been undertaken with biometric systems to register all foreign nationals. Many of these migrants come to Panama to seek work and a better quality of life – opportunities that they do not have in their countries of origin.

Another fact to take into account is the multitude of large-scale projects currently under way in our country, which include extending the Panama Canal and developing the underground railway – we are the first country in Central America to have a metro system. To meet their associated contractual obligations, multinational companies have to bring in trained personnel with the requisite experience, in accordance with the provisions of article 17 of the Labour Code, which stipulates the percentages of jobs which can be occupied by foreigners. We cannot close the doors to people who see Panama as an opportunity to realize their dreams. They all undergo a police background check and, if necessary, surveys are conducted to place them in jobs. They have access to decent work, their human rights are

protected, as is the payment of the minimum wage or the corresponding wage, they pay taxes, they have social security and they may open bank accounts. All these provisions are the responsibility of any government.

In total, around 60,000 people of various nationalities have undergone regularization benefiting from all these processes. Through these efforts, we seek to facilitate the movement of people between countries in the region and strengthen cooperation mechanisms, to ensure that these migratory movements make a positive contribution to the economic and social development of the region. This process of legalization demonstrates the solidarity and flexibility in our national labour migration legislation in favour of people who have been displaced in social and economic terms.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that the Government of Panama, sharing the vision of the ILO, has been promoting international labour standards, full employment and decent work as a central element of its economic policies. It is with great satisfaction that I inform this Conference that, through Resolution DM-192-14 of 5 May 2014, the Committee on Panama's Tripartite Agreement and its committee on compliance and the rapid processing of complaints regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining have been placed under the authority of the Office of the Ministry of Labour and Workforce Development.

On behalf of Panama, I would like to extend my thanks for the cooperation, technical assistance and steadfast backing of the ILO, which has been provided through the International Labour Standards Department. Together we have strengthened tripartite social dialogue and it is our hope that this dialogue will continue to flourish in every country.

Ms KEARNEY (*Worker, Australia*)

I bring you greetings from the Australian union movement, a movement of nearly 2 million working Australians and their families, committed to campaigning for a better life for all Australians. We acknowledge the important role of the ILO in contributing positively to lives of working people right around the world. The standards created here and adopted at regional and national levels deliver global outcomes that make our world a better place.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank my Australian colleague, Mr Peter Anderson, a long-term and respected Employers' delegate to the ILO who announced today that he is stepping down from his current international duties.

I note with interest the Director-General's comments on labour migration, which are timely and important. Migration provides access to decent work and a better life for millions of people every year. Modern Australia is predominantly a nation of migrants. Over the past 70 years, migrants to Australia have come from southern and eastern Europe, from South-East Asia, China, the subcontinent and, most recently, from Africa. They have helped shape a multicultural and progressive modern nation. Our economic development and our cultural richness could not have occurred without immigration.

Australian unions will always support a structured migration programme, evenly balanced between skilled, humanitarian and family reunion schemes. We reject unreservedly the exploitation of fear and prejudice about asylum seekers that has blighted

Australian public debate over the past decade. This debate reflects poorly on both major political parties. Australian unions reject the demonization of people who are fleeing the most deprived and violent parts of the world for a better life in our country, and we explicitly reject the policy of offshore processing of asylum seekers.

While we support a structured migration programme, we have concerns about serious flaws in the current system of temporary migration in Australia. These arrangements have opened the doors to exploitation of immigrant workers and direct flouting of laws and labour standards, undermining the employment and skills development of Australian workers, especially our young people.

When these temporary skilled migration programmes were introduced, it was to fill skill gaps and to promote global cross-skilling and employment enhancement. But some employers have instead found loopholes that allow them to employ migrant workers to do unskilled jobs for substandard wages and to exploit the workers' ignorance of labour rights. Some employers have sought to buy silence and compliance with promises of permanent residency and threats of deportation. In the worst cases, this has even involved forced labour. So we are pleased to see a discussion on, and progress towards, the new protocol updating Convention No. 29.

Today, unemployment in Australia is rising and our levels of youth unemployment are shameful. Nurse graduates, carpenters, cooks, engineers, welders, fitters and motor mechanics are among the workers who tell us they are having trouble finding work. Meanwhile, employers seek temporary visa workers for these positions, and the national Government is making it easier for employers to hire them.

Australia does need a skilled migration programme that is planned and sustainable and takes a long-term view. Where decent work opportunities are available in our growing economy, we need to make them accessible to our global sisters and brothers. If this is not sustainable and planned, we risk exposing workers to exploitation. We risk exacerbating social problems and the undermining of the social compact between labour, capital and State.

In Australia we face our own challenges. Our national Government recently proposed sweeping and harsh measures which will hurt older and younger Australians and families, in the absence of any evidence of need for them and contrary to sound economic logic. It is keen to reduce labour regulation and worker entitlements. It will not rule out reducing the minimum wage by legislation, which will undermine our standard of living. Australian unions will meet these challenges head on.

There is a significant debate in a number of countries about the level of, and the need for, a minimum wage. The Australian context is evidence that a high and regularly updated minimum wage is a key element of a sustainable economy. During the global financial crisis Australia did not go into recession thanks to an immediate stimulus, regulation of the financial sector and, we contend, the existence of a robust minimum wage.

We are glad that global financial institutions and the ILO increasingly recognize that a minimum wage is vital to fair income distribution and a healthy economy and that this has formed part of

the recurrent discussion on a sustainable economy at this session of the International Labour Conference. To meet the challenges facing the global economy and the world of work, we believe that a global tripartite approach is vital. Our Government has committed itself to such an approach to the G20, which we are proudly hosting this year in November and we are pleased that our Prime Minister may well meet with the Labour 20 group (L20) at our summit prior to the G20 Leaders' Meeting. We are also pleased that our Government has been elected to the ILO Governing Body.

This is not a time for governments and employers to reduce their commitment to the ILO, and we must continue to promote the critical importance of global policy coherence. We welcome a tripartite approach because the major themes of the ILO – decent work, inclusive growth and fair migration – are vital to shaping our policy responses. No nation is an island, and what the ILO does in making the international economy work better and the world of work understandable, is vital.

Original French: Mr LEEMANS (Worker, Belgium)

The ITUC is very pleased with the Report of the Director-General *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. This Report raises the right questions, it draws links with the work we are doing here to reinforce the Convention No. 29 and it also rightly gives the ILO a central role in the multinational governance of migratory flows. It justly condemns the way in which the debate on migration has been contaminated by racism and xenophobia. We are talking about contamination that tarnishes the political debate in public, as we have witnessed at the recent European elections, but that also affects employment in itself. The ILO needs to play an active role in safeguarding the world of work from racism and xenophobia as well as the resulting discrimination and violence.

Employers and trade unions have a shared responsibility throughout the world. The Report focuses on migrant workers who have employment. However, we know that a number of migrant workers lose their jobs and do not find work again. This is a problem that has not been addressed sufficiently in the recurrent item report. Two observations can be made: the under-representation of people of foreign origin who are unemployed and the persistence of this phenomenon. Belgium is also facing this situation.

The ILO, therefore, needs to invest in an exchange of best international practices in order to combat both direct and indirect discrimination. The Director-General takes a very severe view of the massive business that has grown up across the world, feeding off immigration, in which private agencies exact exorbitant commissions for their role as intermediaries and frequently engage in extreme exploitation. The harsh words in the Report are quite justified. *The World of Work Report 2014* presented last week shows the same situation. For migrant workers from Viet Nam or Bangladesh there are commissions that amount to 3.5 times the revenue per head.

The ILO should play a central role protecting jobseekers from the abuse of private agencies. It is to this end that Convention No. 181 was adopted. Multiple abuses call for more investment in labour inspections, with the specific aim of organizing international collaboration between the services in-

volved. The experience of the EU demonstrates the difficulty that is inherent in this collaboration. The new directive on posted workers has not covered enough ground and it will be even more difficult to organize ourselves on an international level. Nonetheless, this is the path that we must take. The ILO, therefore, needs to give thought as to how we can be more actively involved in promoting international collaboration. The Report is right to promote a rights-based approach by drawing an immediate link with the ILO Conventions.

I wholeheartedly welcome the suggestion to have an in-depth debate and to conduct a new General Survey with a view to strengthening the Conventions and improving their implementation. At the same time, in the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Committee of Experts we need to continue to condemn strongly the abuse of migrant workers and discrimination against them. This year we are dealing with such cases in Qatar, Dominican Republic, Saudi Arabia, Korea and Malaysia. Our role is to go through the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Committee on Freedom of Association in order to ensure that migrant workers are not deprived of their trade union rights – in particular, the right to strike.

In his letter to the Director-General on the occasion of this session of the Conference, Pope Francis talked about the spread of indifference with regard to mass migration. Let this be an invitation to all of us to ensure that migrant workers are not met with indifference and to restore justice for those who have been robbed of their rights.

Mr THAILUAN (Worker, Thailand)

As a Thai Workers' delegate, I have been making reports to this Conference for 20 years. This year, I would like to report that Thailand is now facing a major problem of migrant workers from the nearby countries. It is estimated that there are approximately 3 million migrant workers in Thailand. More than 1.5 million are estimated to be illegal immigrants and these comprise various nationalities. These workers, however, are well treated by the Thai Government. All those who have legally immigrated and have work permits are properly treated according to Thai law. They are entitled to become members of the Thai social security system and enjoy the same rights as Thai workers.

As for those who are illegal immigrants, they are also treated well by the Thai Government, especially in the areas of fair wages and medical welfare, including protection from occupational injuries. One of the problems posed by these illegal migrant workers, however, is that they often bring their families with them, including children aged 15 or younger. These children are usually smuggled in to help their parents work for greater income in such areas as construction work or peeling shrimps. This practice has a serious negative consequence for Thailand, as it is sometimes accused of the abuse of child labour.

Regarding the use of child labour in Thailand, which is accused of this practice by certain developed countries, I would like to report to you that the Thai Government, through the Ministry of Labour, has adopted various preventive and corrective measures on this matter and has applied such measures strictly. If any enterprise is found to be using child labour, it will be severely punished immediately.

In Thailand, however, we have our own culture, which is unique and distinct from that of other countries. We uphold the concept of helping one another and thus we do all help one another within our families and in our society, especially in lower income families, where children normally help their parents by working for two hours in the evening after school to gain more income for family support. They often work during their school vacations in order to offset their school expenses. This is only short-time work, however, such as light construction work and peeling shrimps, as I have mentioned earlier. This applies to many South-East Asian countries, including Thailand, where these practices have been in place for a long time.

I would like to confirm that, in Thailand, we have various well-established measures for the welfare of migrant workers. They receive the same treatment as Thai workers, including in the area of child labour.

Thailand, however, is not only an importing country but also an exporting country where labour is concerned. A large number of Thai workers migrate temporarily to work in many countries. It is our expectation that Thai workers should receive at least the same treatment that the Thai Government provides to workers from other countries who have migrated to work in Thailand, and this includes the abolition of child labour.

Mr POTTER (*Employer, United States*)

The Director-General is right to focus on migrant labour in his Report to the Conference this year. Migrants frequently are second-class citizens, or immigrants, in many countries. In this complex debate, I agree with the Director-General's view that, in discussing multiculturalism, there can be no tolerance for racism and xenophobia, in ensuring respect for diversity, quality and non-discrimination. For US business, valuing diversity is a critical factor for successful, sustainable, profitable business enterprises and, consequently, a key driver of economic growth.

Migration cannot be studied in a vacuum. It needs to be considered within the broader framework of labour markets. However, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to migration. The national contexts and national capacities of governments need to be developed in close coordination with both employers' and workers' organizations to create labour migration policies that meet the different labour market needs.

Two fundamental areas in which there are clear connections between migration and the broader labour market are forced labour and informality – both on the Conference's agenda for this session. Most forced labour today occurs in the private sector, both in informal and formal sector contexts. Although the negotiation of a binding instrument and Recommendation in a single discussion that straightforwardly addresses the implementation gaps of Convention No. 29 has been a challenging task, we will make every possible effort, as we did in 1998, with regard to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, to achieve a positive outcome.

Informality is pervasive in both developed and developing countries. The protection of workers in

the informal economy can only come through the enhancement of regulatory compliance and labour inspection capacity. This will require expanding the number of business enterprises in the formal economy that are paying taxes, along with their employees, with a consequent increase in national revenues.

The multilateral framework for migrant labour today is highly fragmented. This means that the ILO must closely collaborate and coordinate with existing governance regimes and organizations such as the IOM to avoid duplicative work. This will help the ILO focus on its strengths: producing cutting edge data and analysis, which are vital to the targeting of relevant and effective policy interventions, and capacity building. In particular, the ILO should focus on addressing migration through its fundamental Conventions, rather than through new standards.

In 1982, I came to the ILO Conference for the first time. It was more than a week longer than the Conference that we have today and was dominated by the verbal missiles of the Cold War in the Applications Committee, a standing Apartheid Committee, a volatile Resolutions Committee, a Structure Committee, and four technical standards subjects. It was a slower, more opaque time. We had no Internet and no laptop computers, and connectivity was only available via hard-wired phones and incredibly slow faxes. It seems hard to believe now, but in 1985 I participated in the very first Conference discussion related to women, even though the primary ILO standards on equality had been adopted by the ILO in the 1950s.

Notwithstanding the strum and drag of today's debates, a 33-year view makes it clear that the ILO today is a far different, better and more effective place in terms of having a tangible and meaningful impact. Is it perfect? Certainly not. Could it be better? Yes, for sure. Democracy is a messy process and the ILO is the personification of democracy. This is compounded by a world today that is increasingly more complex, fuelled by global transparency through social media.

The biggest challenge facing the ILO today, and for the foreseeable future, is to anticipate and find solutions to meet the rising and expanding expectations on an increasing number of issues from a greater number of civil society and private sector stakeholders in a global environment where speed and transparency are expected. The focus will be on labour standards in the rule of law – they will be assumed and there will be demand for the protection for all human rights, economic development, jobs, and raising labour standards and living standards for working people and their families. Rather than emphasizing the differences among us, this will mean finding common ground within the tripartite constituency in building effective and timely channels to civil society and private sector entrepreneurs.

The vast majority of participants at this Conference each year are people of goodwill. It is vital to capitalize on that goodwill and our collective common interest in a better world and that is how I have tried to approach the issues before us over the last 33 years.

(The Conference adjourned at 1 p.m.)

Sixth sitting

Thursday, 5 June 2014, 2.30 p.m.

President: Mr Sakurada

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

Ms PASSCHIER (*Worker, Netherlands*)

The Netherlands' Trade Union Confederation (FNV) very much welcomes the debate on the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. This Report places the ILO at the heart of the debate, highlighting that, more than anything else, it is – or should be – a debate on the provision of decent work opportunities for all.

We fully share the analysis presented in the Report with regard to decent work for all. No country operates a fully open-door policy to labour migration from all other countries, especially when the drivers of migration create increased external pressure. Restrictive migration policies lead to an increase of irregular migration. This in itself poses major challenges in terms of the vulnerability to exploitation of the workers concerned and unfair competition with nationals of the country of destination, especially in cases involving low-paid and low-skilled jobs.

But also, when it comes to legal migration, the increased emphasis on temporary migration, often in the context of the provision of services by private employment agencies and subcontractors, leads to a situation in which equal treatment for work of equal value is not guaranteed, posing similar unfair competition threats.

So, indeed, as the Report says, the future of migrant workers should not be as an internationally mobile, contingent, secondary workforce. Migration should not lead to a two-tier reality, with the benefits for the highly skilled and the rich, and disadvantages for the low-skilled and the poor. The alternative is an agenda for fair migration for all.

That being said, the question is how this can be achieved. We fully endorse the potential components of a proactive agenda as enumerated in the Report, starting with the acknowledgement that migration and human mobility are there to stay and should be addressed as key factors in the Decent Work Agenda and sustainable development.

It is indeed important to expand the ILO's knowledge base on migration to help rationalize the debate. We also underline the importance of fair recruitment processes, which is an area where the ILO can further develop its work.

In addition to the points mentioned in the Report, we suggest building further on the notion that there

needs to be a social dimension to globalization. In our view, focus must be placed on the conditions that need to be in place for fair migration.

In this context, therefore, there must be another dimension added to the discussion, namely the resilience of national migration management systems. Members, with the full participation of trade unions and employers' organizations, should endeavour to make their national systems mobility-proof rather than focus on restrictive and selective migration policies.

This is where the ILO can provide support and guidance and can also further develop the discussion on how, at the international level, a framework of firm and fair "rules of the game" can be developed to accompany the globalization of labour and labour markets.

These rules might take as a starting point the principle of equal wages and working conditions in the same territory and the recognition that national collective bargaining and industrial relations systems are indispensable and dynamic tools to manage change in a democratic way.

We strongly support the ILO in doing its utmost to put migration on the agenda as a social and employment issue. We call on all stakeholders in the ILO to recognize their joint interests in getting migration policies right.

Original Spanish: Mr FLURY (Employer, Peru)

Allow me to extend greetings from the employers of Peru to the President and to wish him, the other Vice-Presidents, the other Officers and all the delegates here at this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference every success in their work.

We would like to comment on some issues that we feel are particularly pertinent in the Director-General's Report. First, we commend him on his decision to highlight the importance of defining guidelines for labour migration, for the formulation of strategies to promote decent work in the workers' countries of origin, so that migration becomes an option rather than a necessity, and for the development of migration programmes that are aligned with global integration processes.

In Peru, we have provided scope for the achievement of consensus through the National Labour Council in the coordinated development of national policies on employment, the promotion of employment, job protection and job training for the purposes of development. Trade union organizations are participating in this dialogue, together with the country's most representative employers' associa-

tions and high-level government officials, in particular from the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion. Through this process of social dialogue we endeavour to ascertain the needs of the different sectors and to identify their short-, medium- and long-term challenges, with the aim of ensuring formal employment and decent work and promoting the country's competitiveness.

In Peru, more than 60 per cent of the country's economic activity takes place in the informal sector and it is ranked fourth in the world in terms of the strength of this sector as an obstacle to formal employment. This is a consequence of the high costs of formalization, ill-conceived regulation which penalizes growth and productivity rather than rewarding it, a complex system of red tape, a tax system designed to skim profits rather than promote the development of a business culture, and the existence of a multitude of tax authorities which do not apply the same criteria in their work and assume that all businesses are engaged in tax evasion. Our current system of fines serves as a kind of perverse incentive to shift to the informal economy, in that it generates funds to support the bureaucratic system and bonuses for the inspectors, distorting the purpose of their work and undermining their impartiality. All of this places unnecessary obligations on businesses and jeopardizes their legal stability, their investments, the general business climate and, consequently, the creation of formal employment.

The formalization of employment is a challenge which our country must face by taking a leading role in identifying the problems and finding agreed solutions. We will only succeed in this process if it is seen as something that will benefit the informal economy. This strategy means that the Government and all its institutions must commit themselves to the development of a fully integrated legal system with solutions that are easy to apply, and must undertake to sustain this system in the long term. By formalizing the greater part of this 60 per cent, it will be possible to ensure decent work and social security for workers.

In addition, our labour policy has become more rigid and this too encourages people to shift to the informal economy, since it leads to increased labour costs. From the political standpoint, labour flexibility is considered to be inconvenient for workers, a view which ignores the factor of competitiveness, a prerequisite for Peruvian companies to survive on the international market, particularly given the protection afforded by free trade agreements. We maintain that labour legislation must strike a balance between protecting the rights of workers and fostering the development of the country and of formal enterprises.

We would also like to express our concern about the concerted efforts to apply certain ILO Conventions in an inappropriate manner, in particular Convention No. 169, which is being used as the legal justification for blocking investment, with the result that jobs are not being created, costs are increasing and no value is being generated. We are convinced that it was never the intention of the ILO that this important Convention should be used to block investment; on the contrary, it was intended to forge consensus in securing decent work for these populations.

Labour policy in Peru should be supported in its efforts to modernize and should focus on becoming sufficiently flexible to promote the formalization of

employment, to generate jobs and to promote increased productivity, with a view to ensuring satisfactory wages, social protection and a decent future.

In search of solutions, the two major employers' organizations and more than 30 associations of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) from the various production sectors have formed a strategic alliance, to give greater impetus to business development and to create greater opportunities for employment. This demonstrates yet again the positive stance taken by the Peruvian employers' sector in its endeavour to find answers to the questions faced by all Peruvians.

Mr NGOR (*Minister of Labour, South Sudan*)

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Republic of South Sudan, to congratulate the President and his Vice-Presidents on their election to the helm of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. We are sure that their able leadership will guide us well in our aspiration to strengthen the ILO in all aspects.

Allow me to pay a word of thanks to the hard work and professionalism of Mr Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, for having organized this successful international gathering. We acknowledge with appreciation the technical assistance and capacity building which is being provided to the member States, in particular the Republic of South Sudan, and which has helped in the way we carry out our labour administration business.

With regard to the current situation in South Sudan, I would like to inform this gathering that the aborted coup, which took place in my country on 15 December 2013, was unfortunate. And it has set us back in many respects as we grapple with nation-building and issues of development. We were on the right track, with many investors in the region and beyond converging to take advantage of the opportunities provided by peace and independence in South Sudan. It has hindered opportunities for employment in the private sector. The Government is endlessly working to improve this situation through dialogue, and we are working with the AU, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Troika to end the conflict. Currently, are being taken towards concluding a lasting peace with the rebels. Therefore, we call upon those who have left the country to come back to resume their activities.

The presence of an ILO office in the country is very important. Therefore we call on the leadership of the ILO to re-open its office in Juba to facilitate coordination, include South Sudan in the ILO's special programmes and continue providing the country with technical support and capacity building. We look forward to a good working relationship.

*Original Spanish: Mr RAMOS CRISPIN
(Worker, Dominican Republic)*

With reference to the topic that we are gathered at this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference to discuss, informal work, I am afraid that, unfortunately, my country is a leader in that field.

A recent study on the labour market and unemployment in the Dominican Republic from 2000 to 2013, conducted by the Dominican Observatory for Work, Salaries and Social Security and sponsored by the Santo Domingo Institute of Technology, one of my country's most prestigious universities, illustrates that the Dominican Republic is one of the

countries with the highest levels of own-account workers. This situation, as we know, has a negative effect on the economy because it involves workers who do not pay taxes and who have no social security coverage.

The 2012 national labour force survey highlights the fact that 57 per cent of work is informal, and 43 per cent formal. Translating this into real numbers, 2.3 million jobs are informal, compared to 1.7 million formal-sector jobs. The problem of informal work is even more serious in view of the fact that 86 per cent of formal employers pay their employees 10,000 Dominican pesos (DOP) or less per month (approximately US\$200), a sum which does not enable workers to buy the products in the basic bread basket, which cost around DOP25,000, or US\$500 – and on top of which workers must pay for services and medicines.

Low, unpredictable salaries lead to further problems; they are insufficient to change the recipients' living standards, and workers' poverty becomes entrenched. Unpredictable salaries and unemployment make it difficult to improve workers' living conditions or to have a direct impact on the poverty that afflicts most of the Dominican population. We are currently discussing reforms to the Labour Code with employers and the Government, after waiting 21 years for the Code to be established. The employers have tried, I believe with a view to winning the public's favour, to convince people that the Labour Code prevents the creation of formal jobs – and in fact this is not at all the case. What really prevents the creation of decent jobs is an economic model that generates poverty, inequality and exclusion, despite sustained economic growth and levels of social spending that are among the lowest in Latin America.

This reality is the subject of a recent report by the World Bank, *Cuando la prosperidad no es compartida: Los vínculos débiles entre el crecimiento y la equidad en la República Dominicana* [When prosperity is not shared: The weak links between growth and equity in the Dominican Republic], which indicates that while poverty across countries in the region was reduced from 45 per cent to 33 per cent between 2000 and 2010, the converse was true in my country. It is not by reducing unemployment, increasing the length of the work day or reducing workers' victories – as the employers are trying to do – that we will formalize the economy. We need more than sectoral proposals to reinstate outdated legislation. We need, rather, to explore the realities which we face more deeply and to make concrete proposals.

We, the worker movement, have proposed on a number of occasions, at meetings sponsored by the Government, the ILO, the IMF and companies, that we need to expedite the establishment of a decent work pact. We have been canvassing different social groups in the Dominican Republic to gain their support for this proposal. It should be noted that on 3 September 2013 we signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding to commit the technical co-operation framework which the ILO has established. We have a DWCP for 2013–16 and its priority No. 2 is to create better opportunities for men and women with a view to increasing their salaries and improving their working conditions. Expected outcome 2.1 states that parties to the programme, with the support of the ILO, will, on a tripartite basis, propose and subscribe to a pact that contains a

regional vision for decent work and productivity, stressing the need for intensive job creation and the promotion of investment, as well as ensuring that workers' rights are respected and jobs and employment relationships do not become more precarious. We therefore have a commitment from employers, workers and the Government to drive forward the creation of decent jobs; a decent work pact has been signed; and we are committed to applying and implementing the DWCP. We have the ILO's assurance that it will strengthen and guide cooperation in the Programme's implementation.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress that decent jobs and the trade union movement at large are a pivotal part of development. The Government should be a guarantor of workers' rights and we hope that that will be the case.

Ms KHATTIYA (Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

On behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja on his election as President of the 103rd Session of the Conference. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to represent the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and to participate and deliver a statement to this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I appreciate the Report of the Director-General on fair migration, which provides good lessons learned from policy innovation in different countries. The ILO's role and its valuable interventions in promoting fundamental principles and benefits to all, as well as social justice and decent employment for all, should be commended.

I am pleased to note that the agenda of this year's Conference addresses important and current global issues and challenges. Employment strategy continues to be key to development, including with regard to the challenges of informality and the transition to formality, as does freedom from forced labour.

The year 2014 is an important one for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, because the country is focusing on the final two years of implementation of the Seventh National Social and Economic Development Plan, preparing for the next five-year plan and implementing the Labour and Social Welfare Strategy for 2010–20, the Third Plan on Labour and Social Welfare Development and the final term of the first DWCP.

I am pleased to share with the Conference the important progress made by the Lao Government since the last session of the Conference. In 2013, the Lao National Assembly adopted the Social Security Act, and reused the Labour Act 2006. The drafting and revision of these laws were conducted in close consultation through a tripartite mechanism and based on the fundamental principles and standards of the ILO Conventions that have been ratified by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as well as the Conventions that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has not yet ratified. This new development has made an important contribution to the regional and international integration efforts of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to provide protection for the rights and benefits of employers and workers, promote and support technical training and skills development to meet labour market demand, and be competitive in skilled labour. The new labour law has also clearly referred to the issue of migrants.

Moreover, the issue of gender has also been promoted to ensure that female workers enjoy equal benefits and equal employment to male workers. The Lao Government always takes into account the tripartite consultation mechanism and dialogue for the development of labour relationships, according to the actual situation in the country. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has also paid attention to the issue of child labour. On 8 April 2014, the Prime Minister's Decree on the National Action Plan for the Protection from and Elimination of all the Worst Forms of Child Labour was issued. The Decree covers all the responsibilities of related implementing agencies and sectors.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic will continue to formulate labour standards to reflect the real situation in the country. This year, it denounced the Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919 (No. 4), and ratified the Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171), aimed at protecting the rights, well-being and benefits of night workers.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the ILO for its continuous financial and technical support to the Lao People's Democratic Republic in its efforts to promote decent work in the country in different areas, such as rural employment promotion, social protection, social health insurance, child labour, skill development and the labour market. These interventions have significantly contributed to the realization of decent work for the Lao people and the socio-economic development of our country.

Finally, I wish that the 103rd Session (2014) of the International Labour Conference will find great success and a fruitful conclusion.

Original Spanish: Mr MARTÍNEZ (Worker, Argentina)

I would like to congratulate my friend, Mr Funes de Rioja, for his election as President of this Conference, which is due recognition for his illustrious national and international career as a competent promoter of sustainable development and decent work.

We concur with the Director-General on the need to raise the ILO's profile in these times of globalization. The trade union movement believes in an ILO design, which is streamlined through a coherent strategy developed alongside governments and employers. We need to provide a political solution for unemployment, precarious work, forced labour and violence in all its forms, to enable us to build a community with social and human values which will establish social justice as a universal principle.

We, as workers, believe in the validity of the fundamental standards and instruments of the ILO, and in the validity of its control and supervisory system. Jobs-based macroeconomic employment policies are essential if we are to encourage decent and productive work and facilitate the transition to the formal economy in the context of record levels of unemployment worldwide, particularly affecting young people. Globalization will have failed if we are unable to resolve this financial crisis. As Pope Francis observes, we must be decisive in tearing down the barriers of individualism, self-withdrawal, slavery and profit at all costs, and we must challenge all forms of injustice, and oppose the economy of exclusion and the culture of waste and death.

In the Americas, the trade union movement has adopted a four-pillar development platform with political, economic, social and environmental com-

ponents. This is a tool for the protection of labour rights built collectively by the workers, which will provide a significant contribution to the debate at the next ILO American Regional Meeting in Lima. This, then, is a proposal to construct a model which will bring an end to the scourges affecting us: violence; the absence of freedom of association and collective bargaining; unemployment; poverty; inequality; and the latent danger of precarious work in working conditions that run counter to the high economic growth rates in the region.

Governments must ensure the effective implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work that ensure decent social and working conditions and thereby make social peace attainable. We support the motto of the Summit of the Americas, which was held in Argentina in 2005, which called upon us to create jobs, to address poverty and strengthen democratic governance. We call upon the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to address signs of weakness and to step up to attacks on the productive and social model, in the same way as it reacts to events affecting democracy in our region. UNASUR should, moreover, establish a social and industrial branch.

Over the last decade: Argentina has implemented public policies with an employment component; we have carried out collective bargaining, which has led to an increase in workers' wages; child benefits and family allowances have been increased; the minimum wage is revised annually; and social protection coverage has been extended to achieve real inclusion.

We still need to resolve important problems: bring an end to poverty and marginalization; eradicate informality and unemployment by creating more decent employment; deduct taxes on labour; and consolidate contributory health systems, among others. We have new laws to protect and integrate domestic and agricultural workers, thereby guaranteeing the labour rights of both groups, and we also have a new law on employment formalization and the prevention of labour-related fraud.

Today, the crisis is battering the industrial and production sectors, affecting workers through job loss. We reject the employers' response to this situation because job loss and suspension should not be the variables used to deal with these problems. These are the same sectors that enjoy economic benefits and which should be retaining their workers.

We believe in the need to create a socio-economic development council, as an essential tool to discuss state policies, which will enable us to address our social debts. We are calling for a paradigm change for workers. We need a working environment, based on a productive economy and working populations, where employment is the driver of growth, through inclusion and equality, social dialogue and collective bargaining. We believe in a modernized trade union movement to act as the voice of workers and their families, in other words, the voice of the needs of society as whole.

Ms SEIP (Government, Norway)

The flow of migration will continue as long as there is war, conflict, poverty and inequality. Fair migration can only be achieved if it is targeted from many sides, in a holistic way. Fortunately, the ILO has already developed activities and strategies.

The efforts of the ILO have to be implemented together with other affected UN organizations and the efforts have to be stepped up.

The most significant impact on fair migration will be for the ILO to carry on efforts to promote and strengthen decent jobs, in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda. This has to be done worldwide through its presence and programmes in the countries of origin, and should contribute to the implementation of the four main objectives: employment, fundamental principles and rights, the social protection floor and social dialogue.

Migration ought to be an option, not an obligation, as rightfully pointed out in the Report.

In order for the ILO to be successful in achieving these endeavours, governments in the countries of origin must demonstrate a will and ability to put in place a democratic and solid foundation for development. This would include good governance, capacity building and the fight against corruption.

This is essential in order to be able to attract investment and financing and make use of remittances in a way that is profitable for all people in a country of origin.

We further agree that a fundamental achievement would be to weed out illegal private employment services in this field. In reality, they constitute a driving force behind child labour, forced labour and trafficking.

Norway has experienced both sides of the coin of migration. Today, our increase in population is among the highest in Europe, and migration represents 70 per cent of that increase.

Labour migration has contributed to alleviating mounting pressure in the economy by meeting demands for labour. At the same time, if migration is to contribute to value creation in the long run, we have to manage to integrate migrants into the labour market to the same extent as the rest of population.

In order to secure decent jobs, we have strengthened the labour inspectorate and its cooperation with the police and immigration authorities.

The measures we have implemented have, in good tradition, been undertaken in close cooperation with the social partners in Norway.

As a new member of the Governing Body of the ILO, Norway will closely follow and monitor the reform work of the Organization. We will focus in particular on the efforts and achievements of the ILO in member States. Within the framework of the Decent Work Agenda, the focus of our attention will be combating child labour and the elimination of forced labour, mainstreaming social dialogue and equal opportunities, and the ILO initiative to partner with private enterprise. I wish the Conference every success.

Mr VARELA (*Employer, Philippines*)

On behalf of the Philippine employers, allow me to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I am confident that this Conference will bear productive work under their able leadership. I should also like to congratulate the Director-General, Guy Ryder, for his comprehensive Report, *ILO programme implementation 2012–13*, which highlights pioneering initiatives to bring the ILO closer to the realization of its defining mission.

Without doubt, the 2012–13 period was marked by many institutional accomplishments, in close

partnership with other stakeholders at the global, regional and national levels, in pursuit of the ILO's cherished goals. What adds to the practical action or direction of getting things done is the description of the practical dimension of getting things done in the mechanics of implementation, the logistics required, the systems and the mechanics of the support staff, and the overall operational effectiveness of the structure in support of the staff and overall organizational effectiveness.

Worth noting and emulating was a mix of timely interventions to make the ILO more measured and effective in carrying out its strategic mandate. It is difficult to measure in precise terms the positive results of such initiatives as the rethinking of priorities on the capacity to upgrade and better levels, refining of tools to improve the institutional tripartite constituencies, the expanding of quality of support for services, to the delivery of technical, advisory, and knowledge base for a more efficient performance of mechanisms according to capacity-building parameters, expanding institutional linkages in order to accomplish more services and institutional services and modifying systems to achieve more with less.

I would also like to particularly highlight the significant assistance of the ILO in its work particularly in this region, right here in Asia, particularly in the Philippines, such as measures to promote green jobs, green business, and quite important, raising awareness and concern on the effect of climate change.

You may be aware that late last year the strongest typhoon – international name Haiyan, local name Yolanda – ever to hit landfall struck the central Philippines, leaving in its wake destruction both in infrastructure and also the death of more than 6,000 people. Immediately after the disaster, the international community, including the ILO, responded with generous aid in cash and employment and other technical assistance like cash-for-work initiatives, emergency employment and livelihood restoration, as well as other rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Very recently, the World Economic Forum on East Asia was held in Manila to indicate the relative strength and position of the Philippines, especially in its economy. The improvement of the country's performance, especially in international ratings, made the Philippines emerge as one of the fastest growing economies in Asia. In 2013, the GDP growth rate was 7.2 per cent. Good governance policies, the growth in tourism, inward remittances from overseas Filipinos and a number of world-class land development projects are keeping the Philippine economy dynamic and strong.

From a broad socio-economic perspective, however, economic growth in itself is not enough. The impact must be felt and enjoyed by the majority of the poor. Growth in the Philippines is inclusive and this is the philosophy of the Philippines Government and President Aquino. Come 31 December 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community will be fully integrated. The ASEAN region consists of ten diverse economies with a significant consumer market of 620 million people, which is one of the biggest regional markets in the world. Towards this end, the ILO has already spearheaded a number of programmes that will ease the transition of employers in a bigger ASEAN market.

In conclusion, a corollary to the freer flow of human resources against the backdrop of increasing market integration is the importance of ensuring effective, fair and humane immigration policies. In this connection, we note with appreciation that the Report of the Director-General discussed the issue of fair migration. The Philippines, as a labour-sending country, considers the observance of fair migration practices by both sending and receiving countries to be of prime importance, especially in the light of the fact that the one tenth of the population of the Philippines works abroad. Indeed, the journey towards inclusive growth is long and winding. It is comforting to know that we have taken the first step.

Original French: Mr GUIRO (Worker, Senegal)

I would first of all like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to the Employer and Worker Vice-Presidents, and to all the other Officers of the Conference, and I wish them every success in the stewardship of our deliberations.

We are proud and confident in the work that is being done in our prestigious institution under the guidance of the Director-General, Guy Ryder, only one year after his nomination to that position, and I would like to assure him of our full support.

The topicality of the subjects addressed in our current session and contained in the Report of the ILO Director-General clearly shows that, in the current global economic climate, we have a number of challenges to address.

The job crisis affects all nations. More than 75 million young people are unemployed. The policies implemented by governments to boost the economy are constrained by the requirements of the IMF and the World Bank.

Inequalities between and within nations are being exacerbated despite the fact that great wealth exists, which is unfortunately concentrated in the hands of 1 per cent of the world's population.

It is high time that together, with all forces of progress, we act to change the situation and to permit millions of young people and women to access decent and sustainable work. We must encourage investment in health-care infrastructure, education and housing. We must guarantee social security and ensure social protection for all workers.

The ILO must continue its efforts to achieve a globalization which will be more human in nature and reflect greater solidarity.

How can we still accept that, in this twenty-first century, forced labour continues in certain countries?

We must denounce these practices and campaign against such countries so that throughout the world each worker may enjoy liberty and dignity. To do this, the ILO must monitor the application of Convention No. 29.

It is also important to fight child labour, which is assuming an ever more alarming scale in a number of countries. Governments should take legislative and judicial measures to put an end to these scourges.

Multiple successive crises and the restrictive budgetary measures that have been implemented in some countries, such as ours, have not furthered the

creation of decent formal jobs. Quite the contrary, the informal sector remains the only source of work for thousands of young people and women in search of hypothetical jobs. To them are added the victims of business restructuring. This is the receptacle for young people from rural areas, who have no food and so leave the countryside for cities. The informal sector also remains the tunnel which leads to clandestine immigration.

In Senegal, to try to reverse these trends, the Government, workers and employers have engaged in a frank and constructive responsible social dialogue to establish measures which will improve the situation of workers and the people, and which will thus contribute to reducing inequalities and constructing a social environment propitious to the socio-economic development of the country.

The Government has thus sent strong signals to the social partners with the reduction of taxes on salaries of some XAF41 billion and reductions in rents ranging from 29 per cent for low-quality housing, to 14 per cent for medium-quality and 4 per cent for high-quality housing.

The introduction of a retirement age of 60 years, the extension of social protection to other categories such as the informal sector, the introduction of universal sickness insurance and the provision of grants to families to combat poverty are among the measures taken by the Government to ensure a social protection floor.

The organization and formalization of the informal sector is a priority for unions and is high on their plan of action. This is why we are taking the opportunity to ask ACTRAV again to assist in putting an end to clandestine emigration and child labour, and in strengthening the social dialogue which is a fundamental condition for creating decent jobs for young people.

We cannot pass over in silence the kidnapping of young schoolgirls by terrorist groups in Nigeria and I would like to invite the international community and the ILO to act to find them, and to work to bring peace to the occupied Arab territories, Congo, Mali, the Central African Republic and everywhere else, and to allow workers and their families to live happy and free lives.

We cherish the hope that the ILO will respond to the needs of workers throughout the world.

Mr ENDRIS (Employer, Ethiopia)

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the President and honourable delegates on behalf of the Ethiopian Employers' Federation and on my own behalf. Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his competent leadership and comprehensive Report. The Ethiopian Employers' Federation promotes the interests of employers by engaging, understanding and advising national policy-makers on issues like green jobs, health and safety at work, social security, youth employment and others.

On this important occasion, I intend to share best practices and experiences with sister organizations on the issues of decent work for all workers and employers, which is the priority agenda of our organization.

The Ethiopian Employers' Federation for its part has formed extensive international relations with global and regional business communities through employers' organizations like the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO). I want to

acknowledge the NHO's unreserved support in financial and technical terms. The support provided by the NHO and the ILO has enabled us to strengthen our membership base in Addis Ababa and around regional States, where almost all local and foreign companies are our members and potential members.

Changes in the structure of the international economy have led to sudden changes in the organization of industrial relations. The financial crisis in developed countries and the transfer from an agricultural to an industrial economy in developing nations has brought about qualitative changes in industrial relations. The dynamics of labour relations need to be harmonized through capacity-building and knowledge-sharing programmes to cope with the international financial crisis.

The Ethiopian Employers' Federation is engaging, and pledges its readiness to continue its effort, in the formation and implementation of national, social and economic policies.

Today, Ethiopian business people perform their duties within the context of a business-friendly environment. Government institutions are efficiently serving the private sector, which is believed to be the engine of growth of nations. Tripartite relations between the Government, workers and employers as well as the pact between employers and workers have created a fertile ground for the realization of industrial peace. Today, the number of trained and skilled workers and the development of the working culture among workers have contributed to the enhancement of productivity and efficiency of enterprises. Therefore, we would like to invite all international companies to invest in Ethiopia and become members of our organization.

The Ethiopian Employers' Federation has an ongoing commitment to work in partnership with sister employer organizations for their mutual benefit and to bring about growth and development.

Finally, I wish to thank the ILO and the social partners for their continuous support, and I hope this will continue in the future.

Original French: Mr SOUNTON (Minister of Labour, Public Services, Administrative and Institutional Reform, in charge of Social Dialogue, Benin)

First, allow me to commend the enlightened leadership of this Organization. Building a future with decent work, when an employment crisis is one of the principal risks of our age, as it will be if current trends continue, is a serious concern for the Government of Benin.

Our world is in danger of becoming more divided and unstable, and this will hinder the achievement of the MDGs.

The Benin delegation firmly believes that the formulation and determined implementation, in a harmonious and coordinated manner, of sector-specific employment programmes, particularly aimed at generating employment for young people and women, is the best way to build the future.

Moreover, I would like to share with this august assembly some recent experiences from the Republic of Benin that are relevant to a number of items on our Conference's agenda.

With regard to the promotion of employment, the Government of Benin, for some years now, has been successfully implementing its national programme to promote employment for young people and women and a microcredit programme for the poorest.

The year 2014 is one of promoting employment for young people and women. This is why Songhai Centres have multiplied in all the departments of Benin. Business Promotion Centres have been set up, activities have recommenced under the National Fund for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment, the business climate has improved and the amount of credit given to the poorest has increased. There has been a synergy of all the programmes and agencies that focus on employment.

Besides its efforts to generate employment by promoting entrepreneurship, on 27 May 2014, the Government of Benin recruited, as a matter of urgency and en masse for 2014, 10,000 public administration workers. This is a first in the history of the country.

With regard to our minimum wage system, the minimum wage has recently been increased in the Republic of Benin by 25 per cent, effective 1 May 2014.

With regard to measures to ensure compliance with Convention No. 29, we need to underscore the fact that in ratifying Conventions Nos 29 and 105 Benin undertook to put an end to all forms of forced labour. I would like to reassure you that my country fully respects this commitment and at this time there is no forced labour of any kind in our national territory.

My country welcomes the new ILO initiative aiming to definitively eradicate the phenomenon by strengthening standards to reinforce victims' rights, in order to address the subtlest forms of forced labour. This is why we provided responses, in good time, to the ILO questionnaire following the consultation held in Cotonou in December 2013.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge the international community to support the Benin Government in its efforts to promote decent work. I certainly hope that our efforts will meet with every success.

Mr WOJCIK (*Worker, Poland*)

On behalf of the Polish workers' delegation, I congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to such important positions.

The ILO has existed and acted for nearly a century. Its achievements in creating and implementing labour standards are unquestionable. Despite this, the world continues to struggle with serious problems: poverty, unemployment, child labour, discrimination at work and injustice. The present world looks at bad economic, financial and legislative decisions to find the reasons for these problems. We do not seek to establish why these wrong decisions were taken. Explaining these decisions is of course neither straightforward nor easy, however, we can point to the main problem underlying them.

The international community has recognized that labour is not a commodity, but this principle is not applied in the public space in practice. The Declaration of Philadelphia's statement was nothing new. For a long time, it has been accepted that a human being is a unique creature, able to work, and that labour is necessary for everyone to survive.

These two evident facts show that labour is an inseparable element of a human being. Dignity of labour therefore derives directly from human dignity, and everyone has an inherent right to decide, or to actively participate in decisions on their conditions of work, as well as how its benefits are distributed.

Nobody has the right to deprive a working man or woman of this entitlement or to restrict it.

The right to create workers' organizations, called trade unions, is deeply rooted in these fundamental rights. International Conventions on freedom of association and national legislation do not create such rights. They are enacted to protect them; to ensure adequate conditions for their observance. It is also evident that workers have the right to refuse to work in justified cases; this stems directly from the inherent right of everybody to decide on the conditions of their work. Thus, the right to strike does not come either from international Conventions or other rules adopted by national authorities.

Since, in some of the recent sessions of the Conference, distinguished employers have questioned the right of workers to strike, specifically pointing out its lack of a foundation in Convention No. 87, we must strongly emphasize that the right to strike is not based on any established law; the inherent workers' right to take decisions regarding their own work is the natural source of the right to strike.

Due to the development of civilization and technology and changes in patterns of work, workers can now agree to transfer some of their inherent rights to others, but only through properly observed democratic procedures. A lack of local or national regulations on strikes should never be interpreted as a ban on strikes. It is quite the opposite: the right to strike exists without any limitations.

Analogously, mandating that a minimum wage be set in a specific area is not a demand for an extraordinary privilege. It is rather a fulfilment of the fundamental right of a worker to decide on the distribution of wealth generated by his or her work.

Lack of knowledge and poor awareness regarding fundamental, inherent workers' rights result in very poor protection of the right to organize (more than half of the world's working population is deprived of such protection), enormous exploitation of children (some 170 million of them), various widespread forms of discrimination at work and new forms of slavery at work. In addition, "social dialogue" very often seems to be an empty slogan or is distorted.

We, Members of the ILO, have to resist the pressures of pure economic arguments and should not refer only to economic principles. We have to base our activity on inherent, fundamental workers' rights. Only in this way can we effectively recognize and apply the fundamental principle that labour is not a commodity, and consequently take the right economic decisions.

Original Arabic: Mr TAMTAM (Government, Libya)

I would like, first of all, to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on having been elected to lead the work of this session of the Conference and I wish them every success in their task.

We would like to thank the Director-General for his excellent Report entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. This is a pivotal issue for all peoples and all countries, be they countries of origin or of destination for workers, given that all States are faced with the issues arising from migration and, in particular, irregular migration. Such migration is driven by a number of factors, including, in particular: poverty; unemployment; armed conflict; and dictatorships. Libya attracts a large number of citizens of neighbouring and sub-Saharan States. Indeed, the country occupies an important strategic

location, acting as a link between East and West and between the countries of the North and those of South.

Libya is currently going through a very delicate transitional phase in terms of its democratic development and the building of institutions on the basis of the supremacy of the law. However, for humanitarian and ethical reasons, we have made considerable efforts to tackle the issue of migration. Migrants and their families are welcomed and attempts are made to offer them every assistance in returning to their countries. These individuals have been forced to leave their countries and are not treated like criminals. However, a number of organized groups exist which smuggle irregular immigrants into European countries in return for a fee. We hope, therefore, that the international community will recognize that there is a need to coordinate efforts at the regional and international levels, in order to find solutions to this issue, while focusing in particular on investment and vocational training that reflect the needs of the labour market.

The Government of Libya has taken steps to modernize national legislation in order to establish the rule of law and social justice. One example of such efforts is the Labour Code. A draft Labour Code, that takes into account Arab and international labour Conventions, as well as the comments of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, has been drawn up with the aim of establishing good labour relations. The new provisions focus, in particular, on collective bargaining, collective agreements, social dialogue and advisory labour councils.

A bill on trade unions has been drafted, taking into account Conventions Nos 87 and 98.

Workshops have been held involving the participation of the tripartite partners (the Government, workers and employers) and labour experts. As to human resource development, we have addressed the issues of training and the improvement of jobseekers' skills through the signing of training agreements with a number of international training bodies. The aim here is to provide 10,000 jobseekers with training in a number of professions. Contracts have also been signed with local companies in order to provide training for 25,000 jobseekers in Libya. We hope to be able to benefit from ILO technical assistance programmes.

Furthermore, the Government of Libya has met its constitutional commitments concerning the drafting of the reports required on the application of the Conventions ratified and replies to the comments of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations concerning reports submitted to the International Labour Office.

The Appendix to the Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories* throws light on the violations to which the workers are subjected by the occupying authorities, in particular, the denial of trade union rights and the violation of political, civil and human rights. The violation of international labour standards by the occupying authorities requires that the Organization set up a special commission responsible for the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and in the other occupied Arab territories. The mandate of said commission should follow the example of the committee set up to combat racial seg-

regation in South Africa, and should only expire once the occupation has been ended.

Original Azeri: Mr MOHBALIYEV (Worker, Azerbaijan)

Allow me, on behalf of the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation, to wish the Conference a full and productive session. The topics of employment and the informal economy, which have been included in the agenda of the session, are of particular relevance in the context of today's world.

Currently, there are 200 million unemployed persons around the world. The rise of this indicator is alarming. Over the last five years, the number of jobless persons has grown by 30 million. At the same time, experience has shown that focused efforts by social partners working in concert can foster economic growth, while also enhancing social welfare and thereby reducing tensions on the labour market.

After gaining independence some 20 years ago, the Republic of Azerbaijan has worked to strengthen the legal underpinnings of employment in its Constitution. Ratification of the Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention (Revised), 1937 (No. 60), together with the revised European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security, has significantly helped in surmounting employment challenges in our country.

The main pillars of Azerbaijan's social and economic policy are the protection of labour rights, the implementation of effective job-creation and social protection measures, the improvement of our labour legislation and efforts to meet the financial, social, cultural and other needs of citizens. Thanks to its focused and determined work in these spheres, Azerbaijan has become one of the world's most progressive countries in terms of human capital development.

The main objective of the state employment strategy for 2011–15 is to provide effective employment for all through the creation of a propitious political, economic, social and institutional environment. The state employment strategy, together with state programmes to support SMEs, to boost economic growth, to reduce poverty and to promote regional development, and also other legislation prepared with the participation of the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation, have laid a strong foundation for work to ease tension in the labour market.

All this, together with the political will of the country's leader, has helped us over the course of the last ten years to create more than 12 million jobs, 77 per cent of which are permanent. Work in this area is continuing. New enterprises and buildings are under construction; levels of unemployment are constantly dropping and now stand at some 5 per cent, which allows for a normal level of competition among jobseekers.

As a result of structural changes, positive changes may be observed in the distribution of labour resources. The share of public sector employment has dropped significantly, from 54 per cent in 1995 to 20 per cent in 2013, while that of the private sector has risen from 44 per cent to some 76 per cent.

It is with great pride that I would like now to note the active role played by our Confederation in tackling the problems of employment in the country. While working to protect the labour interests of its member trade unions, the Confederation participates in drafting legislative instruments on labour, eco-

nomic and social issues, and helps with the design and implementation of employment policy.

When tackling such problems, including employment issues, an important place should undeniably be given to social partnership and dialogue. Thanks to the collaborative basis on which it stands, Azerbaijan's General Collective Agreement includes a separate chapter on the responsibilities for addressing employment problems. On the initiative of the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation, work is currently in progress to create a tripartite commission on social and economic issues and to set in place a national coordination committee to deal with unemployment. I believe that these bodies will make a positive contribution to the work of solving employment challenges.

As may be seen from the figures that we have cited, the population of Azerbaijan is not facing any particularly severe problem in the area of employment, but we must acknowledge that the main problem today is providing decent work – in other words, decent wages, decent working conditions and social protection.

Ms RANTS'O (Minister of Labour and Employment, Lesotho)

It gives me great honour to attend the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Lesotho looks to the International Labour Conference to serve as a platform to renew our commitments and obligations with regard to all international labour issues. Thus we hold this Conference in high esteem.

Lesotho appreciates the Report of the Director-General. The Report highlights pertinent issues being dealt with at national and regional levels. Tripartism and social dialogue remain the cornerstones that drive ILO objectives and programmes.

The Government of Lesotho regards tripartism and social dialogue as issues of paramount importance and therefore supports measures to strengthen workers' and employers' organizations, and government institutions, as they are essential tools for effective social dialogue, without which the Decent Work Agenda cannot be realized.

Since colonial rule, the mining industry has been prevalent in Lesotho, and the migrant labour system has thus been part of Lesotho's socio-economic landscape. It is gratifying therefore to see that labour migration features strongly on the ILO agenda. It plays a critical role in economic development and hence cannot be ignored in the world of work. However, in the last two decades, the number of migrant workers from Lesotho to our only neighbour, the Republic of South Africa, has declined. The profile of migrant workers has also changed significantly and Lesotho shall continue to take a keen interest in this matter.

Within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), efforts are being made to develop a labour migration policy framework that would be a guiding tool for SADC member States when dealing with migration in the region and would address issues such as trafficking and exploitation of migrant workers.

The crisis of unemployment, particularly among young people, is one of the greatest challenges in our country. Lesotho has undertaken various measures to address this issue. For example, later this year, the Government will hold a job summit, the objective of which is to meet the different stakeholders to explore ways of tackling unem-

ployment, with an emphasis on women and young people. The Cabinet has approved the drafting of a bill on national social security, which will be passed by Parliament in the near future, and is in line with the National Strategic Development Plan of 2012.

Allow me to express appreciation for the support extended to the Government of Lesotho by the ILO Regional Office in Pretoria, South Africa. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the Government's commitment to nurture the strong relationship with this institution.

It is a pleasure to report, in conclusion, that Lesotho was elected a deputy member in the Governing Body and we have accepted with humility the trust given to us. We will strive to add value to the work of the ILO with the support and guidance of previous members of the Governing Body.

Original Hungarian: Mr VARGA (Worker, Hungary)

Allow me to express my congratulations to the ILO on the important achievements mentioned in the Report of the Director-General. Among the successes, we wish to highlight the overhaul of management and structures at ILO headquarters, while achievements thus far within the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15 point us in the right direction in the long term and also highlight the main targets for 2014 and 2015.

The last two years have been a period of reform and consolidation, during which, through the use of significant financial resources, the ILO has actively and successfully taken part in UN and other international meetings on labour-related issues, and has continued to fight against poverty and to campaign for social protection and basic human rights. The ILO has made relevant Recommendations concerning the improvement and increased efficiency of those activities, has drafted international labour standards and has worked on other important directives.

These activities bear witness to a strong affirmation of the ILO and to a strengthening of its activities aimed at, and serving, the democratization of the world of labour. We also see it becoming more practice-oriented in its role. I would like to express my full appreciation for the Report and also the underlying efforts that may ensure, in the twenty-first century, the ILO's determining role in the international world of labour according to the principles of the Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation (Declaration of Philadelphia). Henceforward, the ILO should strive for the emergence of real, fundamental social rights and for their realization in practice and in the fight against poverty. This is of great importance for us because, regarding social rights, we also have a lot to do in Hungary, especially with regard to the fact that, in the process of elaborating the new Basic Law of Hungary, the constitutional protection of social security rights has been eliminated and both the income gap and poverty have been rising significantly.

In my view, the report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations is key. The General Survey on the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), and the Minimum Wage Fixing Recommendation, 1970 (No. 135), based on national reports, also includes references to Hungary. In Hungary, as my colleagues have reported to previous sessions of the Conference, tripartite consultation

among the social partners does not work properly, including with regard to negotiations on the minimum wage.

Moreover, according to the Committee of Experts, the conditions for labour inspection, as a core element in respect of the establishment and maintenance of a minimum wage, have also deteriorated.

During the spring of 2014, parliamentary elections were held in Hungary, with voters renewing their trust in the parliamentary majority of the previous four years. Hungarian trade unions would prefer it if, under the new Government, real tripartite negotiations were to take place on the economic and socio-political conditions that are necessary for economic growth and increasing employment, on closing the pay and income gap and on lifting the position of the so-called working poor.

The report *Employment policies for sustainable recovery and development* states: "Six years into the financial and economic crisis, labour markets are in a state of disarray ... and the world faces the prospect of weak and uneven economic recovery in 2014 and probably beyond." That point is true for Hungary as well. There is no real employment growth and the changes that do appear in the statistics have been generated by the new system of public works, a situation that may contravene Convention No. 29, since the law makes provision for penalties for people refusing to undertake public works. A significant number of employees have had no pay rise for years, while wage rates in public sector pay systems have been frozen since the onset of the crisis, six years ago now; a situation which is already jeopardizing the functioning of public services.

Hungarian trade unions believe that it is essential that, under the new Government, negotiations should start on: the employment act; the various laws on the legal status of public employees; changes in the regulation of the labour law; and the amendment of the provisions adopted in recent years that prohibit the collective enforcement of the interests and the functioning of trade unions.

The majority of Hungarian trade unions infer that these changes, that have wantonly and unnecessarily worsened conditions of work, are also in conflict with the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation. We have sent in various submissions on these issues and have also informed ILO representatives on the occasions of personal meetings with them.

The Hungarian economic and social situation, and thus, that of Hungarian employees, is not easy.

I also take this opportunity to express my thanks to Mr Ryder, who recently visited Budapest.

Mr VELIAJ (Government, Albania)

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to speak before you today to highlight the efforts of the Government of Albania to promote the values of social dialogue and the principles on which the ILO's activity is grounded.

Let me start my remarks by first of all expressing my Government's and my own personal appreciation for the very important assistance that the ILO has provided to promote social dialogue, social protection and the right to decent work and the efforts made to ease the transition from an informal to a formal economy, especially given the impact of the informal economy on the decency of jobs in Albania.

In this framework, I would like to inform you that, in Albania, the informal economy and informal work unfortunately continue to be two factors that hinder economic growth and affect the foundations of our welfare state. Although this is a pity, we need to accept that due to the non-visionary policies implemented during the transition process over the last 23 years, since the fall of communism, Albania has had unusually high activity in the informal economy and high levels of informal work. This can be seen in the unemployment rate which, according to new ILO measurement standards, was around 22 per cent in 2013 (27 per cent if underemployment is to be considered as well).

The young generation is suffering more, with youth unemployment measuring roughly 40 per cent. The stable economic growth of the period 2000–08 was not accompanied by an increase in the employment rate or a decrease in the informal economy. Therefore, the only solution for this economic stagnation is a change to our economic model, moving from a consumption-driven economy towards an economy based on employment and output growth. Output growth is crucial, especially in the agriculture sector, which has remained highly unproductive even though it accounts for 55 per cent of employment in Albania.

The political programme of my Government is deeply rooted in social issues and the creation of new jobs is considered to be the number one priority. To reach this goal, we developed, in our first 100 days, the National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014–20. The strategy integrates economic policies with educational and entrepreneurship policies, its main goal being to increase employment and move from passive to active labour market policies. This is the first strategy approved by our new Government and it has been widely discussed with interest groups and social partners. The action plan for the strategy has already begun to be implemented, with the opening of new job centres that provide a new service to jobseekers and employers. The European Union's Instrument of Pre-Accession project on Human Resources Development in Albania, implemented by the ILO, has made a valuable contribution in terms of the establishment of the new job offices.

In order to launch a national campaign to promote this new service, we organized a national jobs fair in Tirana, our capital, where more than 6,000 jobs were on offer. In our first six months in office, labour statistics showed an increase of over 30,000 in the number of new jobs and roughly an 8 per cent increase in the number of employed persons; a tangible result of our Government's productive cooperation with the ILO.

With regard to vocational education and training, we are undertaking another important reform which aims to give young Albanians the right skills to increase their employability. The reform will unify vocational schools and vocational training centres under the administration of our new Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth.

During this transition period, we have had a problem with our education system; we have been producing students with diplomas but none with the right skills to get a job in real markets. That is why with this new strategy we aim to bridge the gap between the demands of the labour market and the skills that we offer to our young people.

We are committed to strengthening our social protection schemes and therefore we decided, from the first days of our Government's term of office, to implement a new pension reform. Our existing pension scheme suffers from far too many problems which have made it financially unsustainable. First of all, the scheme provides very low benefits to some participants today and, what is more important, those benefits will be even lower in the future if the scheme is not reformed right now. Second, the scheme has elements of unfairness where some groups of contributors receive much better benefits and pay much less than others. Third, although all current pensioners are covered by the scheme due to guaranteed employment during times of communism, a large part of the current working-age population, which has recently become unemployed, risks having a future without a decent pension. This has worsened the reliability of the system and also suggests that in the future many elderly people will not be eligible for a pension.

The new reform, which is under way, aims at solving these problems. We are removing the maximum pension ceiling and strengthening the earning-related component of our scheme, which will allow individuals to have higher pensions in accordance with their contributory wage.

Social dialogue – the basic principle in which ILO proceedings are grounded – suffered during the second mandate of the previous right-wing Government to the degree that relations between Albania and the ILO are seriously threatened. The National Labour Council was not functional at all. We reconstituted this Council in December 2013, having been in office for less than 100 days. We changed the membership criteria, ensuring new and transparent criteria. In the first two meetings of the Council, we discussed employment policies, working conditions and safety at work, active labour market policies and other reforms.

At its next meeting, on 13 June – next week – the National Labour Council will discuss pension reform options and amendments to the reduction of the retirement age for miners, which was a political commitment of our incoming Government. We will also discuss the creation, for the first time in Albania, of a national employment fund.

The dialogue between the Government and the employers' association has reached impressive levels, with private companies under the auspices of Business Albania directly financing the establishment of new jobcentres. In the belief that I have presented a summary of the situation in Albania and the reforms being taken, I want to conclude by expressing the commitment of the Government that I represent here today to move towards a new employment-friendly economic model and to strengthen the social protection system.

Lastly, I would like to express our highest consideration and appreciation of this ILO assembly for the trust and appreciation it has shown towards my country by making it a member of the Governing Body of the ILO. This is a great responsibility for us and we take it very seriously.

Ms RIDDERVOLD (*Employer, Norway*)

I am making this intervention on behalf of the employers' confederations of all the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

First, I would like to make some general comments on the Report of the Director-General *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, and to highlight some important elements of the ILO's future work on migration. This will be followed by some points seen from a Nordic perspective on what our countries see as the main advantages and challenges relating to the concept of labour migration.

We agree with the Director-General that migration is one of the key features of today's world of work and one which raises complex policy challenges. One of these is to promote the principle of equal treatment and fair work for migrant workers, which we all agree with. In this context, it is needless to say that the labour laws of a country should apply to all people working in the country. We also agree that migration should be dealt with in a regular and proper way and that action should be taken to discourage and prevent the irregular and undocumented movement of workers.

Moreover, the role of private employment agencies working on a formal and legal basis must not be underestimated. But it goes without saying that we do not support abusive or unfair recruitment practices. As for ILO instruments, the relevant instruments on migration have low ratification rates. We would like to see established the modalities for the approved standards review mechanism. This is a key element to ensure that the ILO's body of standards are kept relevant and up to date, and I would, in this connection, mention especially Convention No. 97 and Convention No. 143.

For the ILO to succeed in its future work on migration, there is a need to work with governments and with employers' and workers' organizations to develop labour migration policies and practices that meet labour market needs. This is not least important in developing countries. Furthermore, it is important to cooperate with, and support the work of, other organizations, particularly the IOM, in order not to duplicate work and waste resources. It is also important to involve employers in practical solutions to challenges. However, we would underline that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to migration. Different kinds of migration require different responses, which again may differ between countries.

The Nordic countries have all been populated by migrants for a lengthy period of 10,000 years. However, migration to the Nordic countries in the more modern context started about 50 years ago, with labour migration from Europe and Asia, as well as from Latin America. Since 2004, with the opening of the European labour market, where workers can move freely across borders, we have experienced a substantial flow of labour migration, especially from central parts of Europe. The migrant population of the Nordic countries counts for about 10 per cent of the total population: for example, Sweden and Norway have a migrant influx rate per year that represents 1 per cent of the total population.

It is essential to underline that labour migration, both permanent and temporary, is a vital requirement for economic growth and development in our countries, as it is in most other countries. This relates to highly competent workers, as well as to low-skilled workers and it applies to both sending and receiving countries. Migrant workers therefore, contribute to increasing the competitiveness of companies and thus stimulate more employment.

Nordic countries definitely benefit from the labour force that migrant workers represent.

The future needs of companies, including the skills required, should therefore be in focus when formulating labour migration policies. It is also essential that we have tax and wage policies which stimulate high-skilled workers, in particular, to come to the Nordic countries. A high labour force participation rate is a central precondition to keep up and develop the welfare society which has been developed in the Nordic countries over the last 50 years. In this connection, migrant workers contribute considerably, but there are of course other challenges linked to this situation.

The Nordic labour market is, to a high degree, based on high effectiveness, high productivity, co-operation, coordination and a substantial demand for the skills and competence of workers. Many migrants have a low or insufficient level of education and are therefore automatically not employable in our labour market. Adequate rules must therefore be in place to accept the formal education and degrees of migrant workers to allow them easier access to jobs.

Our challenge in the Nordic countries will be to take care of the Nordic welfare model and at the same time to help by being open to a globalized world and reality, which we all depend on.

In conclusion, we would like to underline that the benefits of good migration must indeed overlook some negative aspects. Migration is an advantage for companies, enabling them to increase employment and create growth instead of being forced to outsource or shut down activities. It gives increasing opportunities for migrants to acquire new skills and experience, to contribute to the economic and social development of host countries as employees, entrepreneurs and consumers, and also help develop home countries through remittances and return migration.

Original German: Ms PRELICZ-HUBER (Worker, Switzerland)

I am speaking as President of the Swiss Public Service Trade Union (VPOD/SSP). I come from a country where the ILO was founded almost a century ago, where it still has its headquarters today and where many agreements have been concluded.

However, social justice and equal opportunities do not exist for everybody in Switzerland. They need to be fought hard for. Pressure on workers has also increased here, while, at the same time, the redistribution of wealth to the benefit of the wealthiest, despite and perhaps because of the crisis, has gained steam. Greed for maximizing profits has driven managers to engage in risky financial activities, which led to a massive crisis, and in order to prevent the worst from happening, States have had to keep the banks, in particular, afloat by paying out billions. This has meant for many States empty state coffers, massive austerity programmes, and public service cuts, for example, cuts in the education and health sector, and the further impoverishment of people. In other words, the losses are nationalized.

To take Switzerland as an example, the Confederation paid out a CHF68 billion bailout to the UBS bank alone, whereas the Swiss federal annual budget is CHF64 billion. Moreover, the top managers continued to receive huge bonuses as if nothing had happened. Profits, therefore, are distributed privately. The Swiss Federation of Trade Unions wage study has demonstrated that, in the last 20 years,

wages for the lower and middle income bracket have stagnated or even dropped, while the top 10 per cent of earners have been given a 20 per cent rise. For example, in 2013, UBS paid out CHF3.2 billion and Credit Suisse CHF8.49 billion in bonuses just to their top managers. At the same time, these banks pay no taxes because, supposedly, they are experiencing difficulties.

So it goes without saying, and it is only right, that workers are protesting. Their rights have been and continue to be undermined. We have a responsibility to change these unfair conditions. Of course, Switzerland has ratified a number of ILO Conventions such as Conventions Nos 87 and 98, guaranteeing trade union rights. The right to strike, therefore, is enshrined in the Swiss Federal Constitution. Nonetheless, our trade union has had to lodge a complaint because Switzerland is not shouldering its responsibilities. In Switzerland, employers are within their rights to dismiss their workers in the case of a strike. We have taken legal action in a number of areas and it is clear that Swiss legislation needs to be amended in this regard.

In March 2014, an unsatisfactory report was published following the complaint we lodged with the ILO regarding the fact Switzerland is, unfortunately, not able to provide a clear response, and apparently requires more information and an expert assessment. Of course, we are not against such an assessment; however, it is quite clear that our legislation needs to be amended because abusive dismissal is not enshrined in our legislation today. I certainly hope that with your support Switzerland will assume its responsibilities and change its legislation and then when we come to mark the ILO's centenary celebrations, Switzerland will be able to present itself as a worthy host country, respecting the Conventions that it has signed up to.

Ms ROMCHATTHONG (Employer, Thailand)

Let me first congratulate the President on having been elected to preside over this session of the Conference and convey to the President, the Secretary-General and delegates, the good wishes of the employers of Thailand.

This is the sixth time I have attended a session of the Conference and I am more than proud to be among all the dignitaries, honourable guests and professional experts once again. I bring with me the firm commitment of the Employers' Confederation of Thailand to be a strong partner of the ILO for progress and to ensure continuing work in all of the ILO's endeavours.

Based on the ILO's notable mission of promoting jobs and protecting people, it is timely to bring the issue of fair migration into the limelight and consider how decent jobs can be promoted at home so that people seek migration only as an inevitable last resort.

I have observed the reasons why people migrate and they fall into different categories, namely, the contingent needs for quantity and quality skills in the host country, and personal or independent career choices. Since Thailand shares a border with Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, workforce migration has been induced by all of the abovementioned reasons. Political unrest and disputes have caused periodic influxes of migrants who have sought not only shelter and refuge, but also a possible settlement afterwards. Manpower shortage also comes under the demand-

supply concept. The recent estimate of migrant labour in Thailand totals approximately 3 million persons, mostly low-skilled, and 60 per cent of whom are officially registered. It should be noted that the increasing number of non-registered and unskilled migrants may be associated with an increase in unacceptable human trafficking, human rights abuses, labour exploitation, social prejudice and crime.

Once again, I am personally glad that the issue of fair migration has been properly raised in this forum in order that the most appropriate measures at both the bilateral and multilateral levels can be fully discussed and agreed upon, so that the inevitable negative impact of migration will be minimized and turned into job mobility, whereby people enjoy the freedom to work in dignity and decency.

Original Lao: Mr DOUANGPHACHANH (Worker, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

On behalf of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), I would like to express our appreciation for the efforts and support of the Director-General reflected in his Report to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. The reports presented to the Conference highlight the ILO's work to promote the principles of social justice and address the issues of transitioning from the informal to the formal economy, fair migration, international labour standards and the harmonization of labour management laws.

The LFTU plays an important role in protecting and promoting the legitimate rights and interests of all workers and participates in national socioeconomic development. Moreover, the LFTU encourages the development and promotion of decent work in the formal and informal sectors. The LFTU continues to expand trade union membership within both state and private enterprises. The LFTU has negotiated and signed collective bargaining agreements in 400 workplaces across the country.

The economic growth of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has provided more opportunities for domestic and foreign investment and cooperation. The LFTU promotes skilled-labour training to enable Lao workers to handle modern technological equipment and to acquire the necessary knowledge to manage higher-skilled jobs.

The LFTU supports the Lao Government's determination to denounce Convention No. 4, and agrees to the ratification of Convention No. 171.

The LFTU is further prepared to cooperate with other tripartite organizations. It will engage in this cooperation as a means of studying the potential ratification of ILO fundamental and priority Conventions, and this will be with the aim of providing decent working conditions for all workers.

The LFTU would like to take this opportunity to thank the ILO and international trade union organizations in general for their assistance, solidarity and financial support. It is our hope that further technical assistance and cooperation will be continued in the coming years.

Finally, we wish you all solidarity for a successful 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Original Persian: Mr YAR AHMADIAN (Worker, Islamic Republic of Iran)

On behalf of millions of diligent workers in my country, I would like to convey a message of peace and friendship from the ancient nation of Iran. As

the target date for the United Nations MDGs approaches, the major concern of workers in my country, as in other countries of the world, is how the MDGs are being achieved by the UN member States, with particular reference to the evaluation of decent work as an important part of the MDG indicators.

This key component of the ILO's work is reflected in the development plans of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It constitutes a roadmap and an action plan for change and reform in Iranian labour relations and forms the basis for the work undertaken by the social partners. It is the ideal to which the Iranian workers aspire in making their specific demands.

Within this historic trend, the only way forward is to pursue the goals set for the third millennium, in particular the objective of decent work. To do this, it will be necessary to transform ways of thinking and adopt legislative measures on the basis of tripartism. The Iranian workers and their unions have done their utmost and appreciate the exchange of views in the ILO Governing Body with other workers' organizations.

The imposition of unjust, illegal and discriminatory sanctions violates the human rights of the Iranian workers and conflicts not only with the MDGs in terms of decent work but also with the objectives of the ILO.

On behalf of the workers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to recall the historic proposal made recently to the UN General Assembly by Dr Rouhani, the honourable President of our country, for a World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE). This proposal was approved by a vote of the General Assembly. It emphasized the importance of urgent action to stop the suffering of the innocent workers of Syria and their families, who are exposed to the tyranny of various terrorist groups. I also appeal to all delegates here present, in particular the representatives of the Workers, to adopt consensus-based decisions in the interests of the people of that country in order to bring a quick end to the violence and bloodshed.

In conclusion, we would like to express our condolences to our brothers and sisters in Turkey in the aftermath of the catastrophic explosion at the Soma mine. We deplore the deaths of so many workers and call on the ILO to reinforce systems for monitoring safety in the workplace all over the world.

May commitment, sincerity, peace, security and justice flourish.

Original French: Mr PAPALY (Employer, Togo)

On behalf of the Employer members of the delegation of Togo, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our Organization, the ILO, and all of its leaders on their efforts to promote employment at the national and international levels in recent years.

The 103rd Session of the Conference, which has gathered us together over the last few days, coincides with the anniversaries of two major milestones in the life of our Organization and which are at the heart of the philosophy which underlies its cross-cutting action and policy on employment.

It was 70 years ago that the Declaration of Philadelphia was unanimously adopted, establishing the aims and purposes of the ILO and also the principles forming the basis for the policies formulated by its Members. In addition, this year sees the

50th anniversary of the adoption of Convention No. 122.

These two instruments are the vehicles that drive the actions led by the ILO Director-General for the eradication of poverty, which constitutes a danger anywhere it exists.

In its unceasing quest to find solutions for the dispossessed, particularly young unemployed persons, the employers and the Government of Togo, with the support of the World Bank, have committed to a pilot programme on employability for some 3,000 first-time jobseekers in internships in different businesses covering the 2011–14 period. Moreover, a public-private partnership giving a central role to employers in Togo has enabled the establishment of a training centre for industrial occupations. The private sector is also committed under the banner of social responsibility to a coalition for youth employment.

However, I must mention here that the formulation of employment policies is an essential requirement but it is not sufficient in itself. Policies must be implemented in a coherent and efficient manner and must be integrated into a national strategy for macroeconomic development. To do this, this Organization must sharpen the focus of its actions in four ways.

First, by providing technical support to countries of the south to establish macroeconomic frameworks which are more favourable to employment and optimize the contribution made by sectoral policies. Second, by establishing social protection mechanisms, including for employment in agriculture. Third, by supporting the implementation of policies creating added value for mining and agricultural products, enabling their transformation into finished products before export. Fourth, by mobilizing – now more than ever – all of its resources for standard-setting action, technical cooperation and research in all of its spheres of expertise, particularly employment, vocational training and conditions of work, in order to ensure that under a global economic and social development strategy, economic and social policies become mutually reinforcing and lead to wide-ranging, sustainable development.

The Employers of Togo offer these thoughts as a contribution to our work at the Conference.

Mr RAY (*Worker, Mauritius*)

I am glad Mauritius deposited with the ILO the instrument for ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), on 30 May 2014. I am confident that Mauritius will domesticate the international obligation prior to its coming into force on 30 May 2015. This will enable the rights and obligations contained therein to become applicable and enforceable, with a view to providing improved work conditions and a safer and more conducive work environment for our seafarers. The ILO is invited to provide continued support for effective implementation thereof. That said, domestication of international obligations into our local laws do not necessarily mean that the rights of workers are automatically safeguarded. Similarly, ratification of the eight core ILO Conventions does not guarantee that workers' rights are respected in the country. Government must continuously ensure that the law is observed so that workers' rights are not infringed. Unfriendly labour laws are giving way to precarious employment, not only in the pri-

vate sector but in the state-owned companies as well.

The Employment Relations Act and Employment Rights Act still do not reconcile the social partners today. For example, there has been no consultation with the trade union movement regarding the non-proclamation of the provision concerning shift work. I take this opportunity to urge the Government to proclaim in the law the provisions concerning shift work at the soonest. I strongly believe that under the Decent Work Agenda reflected in the DWCP for Mauritius, the tripartite constituents must be able to discuss the issues in a constructive manner with a view to reaching an agreement. Nevertheless, I welcome the initiative of the Government to open discussions with the trade union movement on the establishment of a mechanism leading towards a decent national minimum wage.

Unemployment for the young is again on my agenda this year. Mauritius was able to contain unemployment at 8 per cent last year. The Government is making a remarkable effort to contain unemployment and create jobs. The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment is the ministry dealing with employment. However, creation of jobs is not only the affair of government but also the private sector. I invite the private sector to become more proactive in taking initiatives to create more sustainable decent employment for our workers.

Presently, different ministries are operating different employment schemes. Programmes such as the Youth Employment Programme, placement and training schemes and work placement programmes, among others, are creating confusion among the population. Operating independently from each other, at times competing with each other and placed under the aegis of different ministries is not helping young people who want a “one-stop shop” service. To help these young people take full advantage of such schemes, I make an appeal to the Government to bring in all these schemes under one umbrella. In the absence of proper information and in the quest to find a job, young people find themselves trapped against their will in the informal system, which not only exploits the innocence of the workers but leads them to a system of work that can be qualified as forced labour within the definition of Convention No. 29. The 2014 ILO Report IV *Strengthening action to end forced labour* clearly enumerates the different types and forms of forced labour. I am particularly referring here to the incapacity of certain workers, who are not organized and are unable to defend and protect themselves. While the means of coercion used may be overt, in the form of physical restrictions or violations, they are often more subtle, involving deception and threats. This is the reality in sectors such as ICT, call centres, tourism and manufacturing. This situation prevents workers from organizing themselves in their trade unions and from defending their rights, contrary to Convention No. 87. Last year I made an appeal to the Minister to provide an appropriate legal framework for the ICT sector. I am making an appeal again this year.

I end by quoting Mr Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States, who beautifully summed it all up at the 87th Session of the Conference, as follows: “Globalization is not a proposal or a policy choice, it is a fact. But how we respond to it will make all the difference. We cannot dam up the tides

of economic change any more than King Canute could still the waters. Nor can we tell our people to sink or swim on their own. We must find a third way – a new and democratic way – to maximize market potential and social justice, competition and community. We must put a human face on the global economy, giving working people everywhere a stake in its success, equipping them all to reap its rewards, providing for their families the basic conditions of a just society. All nations must embrace this vision, and all the great economic institutions of the world must devote their creativity and energy to this end.”

And so goes my humble prayer to both the Government and employers of my beautiful country, Mauritius, and to international organizations that they be encouraged to put a human face on the global economy, giving working people everywhere a stake in its success, equipping them all to reap its rewards providing for their families the basic conditions of a just society.

Mr KALILANGWE (*Government, Malawi*)

I would like to congratulate the President and Officers on their election to lead the deliberations of this year’s session of the Conference. My delegation has confidence in you and has no doubt that you will steer the Conference to its successful conclusion.

Malawi has good news to share with this Conference. On 20 May 2014, we went to the polls for the presidential, parliamentary and local government elections. The elections were peaceful and I am pleased to inform this august house that His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika is the new President of the Republic of Malawi after his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) emerged the winner in the presidential polls. Professor Peter Mutharika, an expert on international economic law, international law and comparative constitutional law, is not new in Malawian politics as he has held several ministerial positions, in the previous DPP Government between 2004 and 2012, among them justice, education and foreign affairs. He was sworn in as President of the Republic of Malawi on Saturday, 31 May 2014.

His Excellency Professor Peter Mutharika has singled out the Ministry of Labour along with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, and the Ministry of Industry and Trade as the four strategic ministries to drive the country’s development agenda. The Ministry of Labour is expected to play an active role to ensure creation of decent jobs for all, including the youth and the vulnerable, addressing labour market inequalities and bridging the gap between skills and labour market needs. This stance has brought a lot of excitement to the labour fraternity including the social partners, mainly because this will be the first time in the history of our country for the Ministry of Labour to feature as a priority ministry.

Coming to the issues under discussion, my delegation would like to congratulate and commend the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General, Mr Ryder, for coming up with very clear and informative Reports.

My delegation would like to applaud the Director-General for his well-thought reforms to overhaul the top management functions and structures. We believe these processes will bring about efficiency in

delivery of services not only at ILO offices but in the constituencies as well.

We welcome the active participation of the ILO in the global consultations on the post-2015 UN development agenda. As a country, we would like to see clear visibility of the ILO's role and its agenda to shape employment and social protection policy in the future poverty reduction goals.

In Malawi, with the assistance of the ILO Office in Lusaka, we developed our DWCP aiming at addressing decent work deficits, focusing on the creation of more and better employment and income-generating opportunities, particularly for the vulnerable groups, including young people, women and people with disabilities, as well as ensuring the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

In this endeavour, we have so far made some strides in creating jobs including investing in labour-intensive industries, especially agriculture, making a shift in the structure of employment to higher productivity occupations and sectors, and upgrading job quality in the informal economy. In addition, we have rolled out programmes to provide poor people with the necessary skills and assets that will enable them to take full advantage of any expansion in employment potential. These include: the Youth Enterprise Development Fund; Public Works Programmes; and the Farm Input Subsidy Programme.

As part of the DWCP, more recently the ILO Office in Lusaka helped us to develop our draft National Employment and Labour Policy, which will soon be taken to Cabinet for approval. The policy seeks to place employment at the centre of national development by vigorously pursuing employment creation in all sectors of the economy. It offers a real opportunity for the Government to take a more holistic and focused approach in addressing the challenge of unemployment and underemployment as part of the national strategy to fight widespread poverty among the population. It has identified ten priority areas on which to focus action in order to achieve the desired results. These include: economic growth and employment; labour market information; skills development and labour productivity; private sector development and job creation; MSME development; and labour administration and labour standards.

Regarding migration, we agree that this is a very complex subject and we are delighted that it has been tabled here for global tripartite debate. In Malawi, we have started the process to deal with both regular and irregular migration.

Malawi's economy does not have the capacity to generate sufficient jobs for its labour force in the short and medium term. As a possible solution and through bilateral agreements, we have started exporting excess labour to other countries where it may be needed. We envisage a lot of benefits such as remittances from abroad to mitigate foreign exchange shortages. We also foresee gains in skills which will be utilized upon return and help in accelerating the economic development of our country. In order to ensure humane migration, we believe that the best route is to promote regular migration. However, our position is challenged by the participation of private employment agencies, while enabling legislation has not yet been promulgated to regulate their operations.

This is a serious challenge that we have to address as a matter of urgency to avoid abuses, trafficking

and promoting irregular migration. ILO assistance in this area is necessary to supplement the assistance we are getting from the IOM.

Lastly, I would like to thank the International Labour Office for the financial and technical assistance that it renders to our country.

Mr AMENU (*Worker, Ethiopia*)

First of all, I would like to express my grateful thanks on behalf of the Ethiopian workers organized under the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) and on my own behalf for having this opportunity to make a speech at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, which has been serving as a grand rendezvous for key social partners from all corners of the world for almost 100 years.

We do appreciate and fully support the Report of the Director-General on the issue of migration, and also the reports on forced labour, promoting employment creation and the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

As is the case in any trade union organization, the CETU is functioning in an ever-changing domestic and global situation which is part and parcel of an international system where globalization is beginning to define the future. In my country, Ethiopia, I witness that societal transformation is occurring; the Government, collaborating with partners and stakeholders, is making the effort to transform the Ethiopian economy from agriculture to industry in order to reach middle-income status.

In effect, the economy, justified by the IMF, is one of the fastest growing world economies, experiencing strong and broad-based growth during the past decade, averaging 10.6 per cent a year from 2004 to 2012, compared to the regional average of 4.9 per cent. The economic growth brought positive trends, reducing poverty in both urban and rural areas. The increase in foreign direct investment is unprecedented in any nation's history and Ethiopia is becoming one of the world's foreign direct investment destinations.

Currently, Ethiopia creates substantial employment as a result of the nation's endeavour to implement "home-grown" and carefully selected policies and strategies. The Five-Year Plan and the Growth and Transformation Plan can be cited as good examples in this respect.

We all know that trade unions are organizations established to safeguard the rights and the benefits of workers to advance their interests, and that will turn their dreams into reality. The CETU, the sole national trade union centre for Ethiopia's working community with the objective of representing and advancing their collective interest for more than half a century, is working hard to ensure that Ethiopian workers get their fair share from the economic growth.

The CETU is also working closely with social partners so as to emphasize the need for ensuring decent work and OSH, and the protection of workers' rights to organize and to engage in collective bargaining. In this regard, the CETU has unionized thousands of workers in the last couple of years, thereby strengthening the bargaining position of the Ethiopian working community as a strong social class. It is worth noting that the remarkable success we have achieved in this regard resulted from the concerted effort of our Confederation in collaboration with a number of partners, including the ILO

Regional Office, the Ethiopian Employers' Federation, the ITUC and its African affiliate ITUC-Africa. The CETU is now making the necessary arrangements to continue this unionization drive.

I am confident that the support we received from our partners and our unionization campaign will continue in the years to come.

*Original Spanish: Mr QUESADA FERNÁNDEZ
(Worker, Costa Rica)*

As the official delegate of the Costa Rican trade union movement, I would like to express my deep concern with regard to the situation in terms of trade union freedoms and the protection of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, in particular concerning Conventions Nos 87 and 98 of the ILO, ratified by Costa Rica in 1960. I would like here to give you an overview of the situation in Costa Rica concerning trade union freedoms and the ILO.

A few years ago, the ILO identified the following issues relating to the application of freedom of association: slowness and ineffectiveness of proceedings regarding sanctions and compensation in the event of anti-union acts; restrictions to the right to bargain collectively in the public sector in the light of the ruling issued by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court; and the subjection of collective bargaining to criteria of proportionality and rationality in the light of the case law of the Constitutional Chamber. Moreover, with regard to Convention No. 87, the ILO highlighted issues arising from the highly restrictive regulation of the right to strike. Finally, there are a number of problems linked to the ban on foreign workers holding positions of management in trade unions, raising the question of the need for reform of article 60 of the Constitution of Costa Rica.

The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations observed that, despite the fact that these problems have persisted for several years and that this case has been discussed on a number of occasions, no significant progress has been made concerning the application of the Convention as regards both the legislation and practice.

The Committee of Experts noted the Government's undertaking to create a joint congressional committee, with participation of all of the state powers and the social partners, to promote the adoption of relevant bills, but nothing has yet been done in this regard, with participation being limited to a subcommittee responsible for examining the bill on labour procedure reform.

The Committee observes that the Government refers to the statements made in its previous report, according to which the Government's efforts (many of them supported by tripartite agreements) to resolve these problems have included the submission of legislative proposals to the Legislative Assembly and their reactivation. However, the reality is as follows: despite enjoying unanimous support, the reform of article 192 of the Political Constitution to guarantee collective bargaining in the public sector was rejected; the bill on the reform of the general law on public administration (File No. 14.730) was shelved definitively on 18 May 2006; despite the fact that the relevant legislative procedures were completed on 9 October 2000, the previous Government failed to put the bill on the reform of various articles of the Labour Code (File No. 13.475) to

the vote; with regard to the ratification of ILO Conventions, the files concerning Conventions Nos 151 and 154 were submitted to the Legislative Assembly on 31 August 1984, and shelved 18 years later, on 24 May 2002; the constitutional reform allowing foreigners to hold management positions in trade unions has been permanently shelved; and with regard to labour procedure reform (File No. 15.990), despite the fact that a tripartite commitment had been made to form a joint parliamentary legislative committee, involving the employers, trade unions, the Government and the judiciary, to examine and approve said reform, the Government never set up the committee, failing to hold extraordinary sessions concerning the bill in question. Thus, no progress was made in this regard for a significant period of time, the Government not deeming the bill to be a matter of priority.

Faced with this situation, the trade union organizations sought an agreement with the employers' sector, succeeding in that regard on 24 May 2012. Under that agreement, the serious issue of direct agreements with standing committees of workers remained pending. The agreement made possible successful bipartite efforts yet again to promote the bill in the Legislative Assembly, despite the fact that, as a result of the agreement, instruments such as direct agreements with standing committees of workers will continue to form the basis of anti-union practices in Costa Rica, as reported by ILO consultant Mr Adrian Goldin. Moreover, the bill did not cover strike action against public, economic and social policies affecting workers and their interests, a fact repeatedly highlighted by the ILO as being a violation of the freedom of association.

As a result of this bipartite agreement, the bill was reviewed by the Legislative Committee on 19 July 2012, and approved before the plenary of the Legislative Assembly in a first debate on 31 July 2012 and in a second debate on 13 September 2012. Consequently, the bill only needed to be signed by the President of the Republic for it, finally, after more than 12 years of negotiations, to become a law of the Republic. However, the former President of the Republic vetoed the bill on 9 October 2012. The issue is now in the hands of the current Government, which took up office on 8 May 2014, and which negotiated the suspension of the bill on labour procedure reform for a further year before the Legislative Assembly, citing as grounds the need to reach an agreement. In our view, this situation is completely unacceptable.

Finally, we call upon the ILO to urge the new Government of Costa Rica, which took up office on 8 May 2014, to lift the veto on the labour procedure reform, as stated by Mr Víctor Morales, the Minister of Labour and Social Security. The current President of the Republic, Mr Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, has the power to take this step and should, therefore, proceed in this regard without awaiting the outcome of any processes pending before the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica.

Original Arabic: Mr GHOSN (Worker, Lebanon)

First and foremost, it is a pleasure for me to greet the Governing Body, the Director-General and all the staff members and to thank them for their efforts in preparing the Reports. I am referring here to the reports *Strengthening action to end forced labour* and *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy*, important issues that affect not only our

States and our region, but all developing countries. Mention should also be made of the Reports *Employment policies for sustainable recovery and development* and *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*.

Without wishing to question the importance of the other Reports, we would like, in particular, to focus on the report on *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy*. The informal sector makes up 8–16 per cent of the economy in developed countries but represents more than 50 per cent of the economy in the least-developed and developing countries.

Clearly, we need to develop the production sector in the countries concerned, along with technologies and modern science. However, this approach, in itself, is not enough. The policies of the governments of the developing countries must also be taken into account, together with the fact that said policies depend on the capitalist countries, the World Bank and the IMF, who give out orders to the governments concerned.

Globalization, which had its heyday at the beginning of the 1980s, has given rise to crises, and has undermined the gradual transition from the informal to the formal economy. Over the past two decades, rather than seeking to resolve the issue of the informal economy, a phenomenon that has undermined guarantees, benefits and job stability, and has reduced productivity, the governments of our countries have implemented policies involving public sector cuts that have encouraged informal employment, even at the level of public administration. As a part of this process, tens of thousands of workers have been recruited on a contractual or daily basis. Consequently, the situation in terms of informal work has worsened, as has its consequences for both the workers and the economy.

Looking at the report *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy*, we agree that the informal economy is essentially negative in character. Such an economy is capable of trapping individuals and enterprises in a spiral of low productivity and poverty. Any coherent national strategy designed to facilitate the transition to the formal economy must recognize that the costs of informal work are high for enterprises, workers and society as a whole. For unprotected workers, the disadvantages of work in the informal economy far outweigh the advantages. Such workers are not recognized or registered and are not covered by any regulations or labour or social protection legislation. As a consequence, these workers can neither exercise nor assert their fundamental rights. As they are generally non-unionized, unprotected workers are rarely, if ever, represented on a collective basis in discussions with employers and public authorities, and, furthermore, they work in conditions closely resembling slavery.

There are three obstacles to prosperity, progress at the level of society and development in our region.

First, there is the existence of an aggressive, colonizing Israeli entity, which occupies the land of Palestine, committing acts of aggression against its people, suppressing its economy and occupying the Arab territories in the Syrian Golan, as well as the shab'a farms and the Kfar Shouba hills in our country, Lebanon. None of this is mentioned in the Report of the Director-General.

The second factor involves extremism, a phenomenon alien to all the teachings of our holy faiths, our

civilization and our values. Extremists are waging a worldwide campaign of terrorism against our societies, with the aim of plunging us back in time to an era of obscurantism and tribal warfare, while dividing our societies along tribal and sectarian lines.

The third factor involves our countries' submission to the demands of the World Bank and the IMF, forcing States to abandon their role in terms of social protection. This trend has resulted in a rise in unemployment rates, worsening poverty and an explosive outbreak of social tensions in a number of Arab countries.

In the absence of a Palestinian State, with Al-Quds as its capital, the region will continue to be subjected to interminable warfare. The Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, is very clear in that regard.

The answer to the situation in Syria lies neither in foreign-backed military action nor in global terrorism, but rather in a national political solution based on the unity of Syria and the freedom of the Syrian people to choose. The same could be said of any of the Arab countries currently experiencing social unrest and divisions.

Original French: Mr SALIM (Worker, Comoros)

First, allow me to congratulate all the Officers of the 103rd Session of the Conference representing the Workers, Employers and Governments.

It is a great honour for me to speak to this august assembly on behalf of the workers of Comoros. We welcome the Director-General's Report, which addressed a number of issues, in particular the issue of labour migration.

There are two sides to labour migration. On the one hand, there are men and women who want to make their skills available to various enterprises outside their country of origin. But there are also people who fall into this ordeal without wanting to. They are quite simply victims of the economic crisis which is ravaging the planet and has been followed by poor governance and misguided forecasts on the part of international financial institutions which have brought our States to their knees by dictating measures that are notorious for their complete disregard for any social dimension.

Workers of the Union of Comoros, like those of other African States, are victims three times over of this situation resulting from the failure of the structural adjustment programme in our country. It should be noted that, having made a number of sacrifices, Comoros concluded the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Programme in December 2012. However, workers in Comoros are far from having reached the end of the road since no measures have been taken to improve their living or working conditions.

Comorian workers still suffer from the consequence of new measures imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. Let me give you three examples of this: first, Comorian civil servants are owed wage back payments of 18–30 months for the period 1995–2008; second, many women and men have left the country looking for work in neighbouring countries, or in the Arabian Gulf, without any legal protection, which quite simply means that they are easy prey in those host countries; third, the sea which separates the Comorian Islands of Anjouan and Mayotte has become a massive cemetery where many women, young people and children die in dis-

turbing and suspicious circumstances, and in the context of the illegal occupation of that part of the Comoros by the French authorities since 1975 when the Comoros became independent.

Even though we still have a long road ahead, improvements have been seen with regard to social dialogue in the Comoros. Tripartism has enabled constituents to undertake a number of actions, such as the establishment of the Advisory Council of Labour and Employment; the ratification of the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144); the adoption and midterm assessment of the DWCP; the revision of the Labour Code; and the establishment of an employment agency.

Finally, we call on the ILO to support Comorian constituents to make our achievements thus far sustainable. We would also like to take the opportunity to recall that the Comoros does not currently have a minimum wage. We issue an urgent appeal to the AU to spare no efforts to work in partnership with the Comorian authorities in order to put an end to the occupation of the Comorian Island of Mayotte and to the disappearance of tens of thousands of Comorian workers.

Original Spanish: Mr MEDINA TORRES (Worker, Mexico)

On behalf of the Workers' delegation from Mexico, we would like to express our congratulations and our gratitude to the ILO and to the Director-General for putting the formalization of employment on the Organization's agenda, given that it is a matter of great priority and an essential issue for the development of our countries. Half the world's labour force makes their living from the informal economy, which is characterized by its decent work deficits, low-quality jobs, low productivity and low wages, with workers and their families living in poverty, misery, insecurity and in vulnerable situations. Many studies and analyses have indicated the destabilizing effects of informality, on workers, enterprises, public income, the effective operation of institutions, and the effectiveness of labour and employment policies. Understanding and designing solutions for the formalization of the informal economy requires clarity about the different factors involved in its maintenance, and which interact and change in a context of real and objective circumstances arising from the contradictions and injustices of the formal economy, and its legal, fiscal, and administrative regulations and tax regimes. These mean that many producers with low incomes and resources cannot comply with the formal standards to develop small or micro-enterprises, engage in self-employment or set themselves up independently within the legal, fiscal and tax regimes of the formal economy.

The links between the informal and formal economy should not be underestimated and it is one of the factors that has to be transformed to make the transition possible in various sectors. While it is true that informality threatens global stability, there are cases in which informal activity subsidizes or maintains the formal economy. Therefore, depending on the nature of each country's production system, there are sectors that do use certain goods, products and services, at the lower costs and higher profit margins, provided by the informal sector. The formal economy thus often promotes informal production networks and unregistered labour.

The division of labour in society, which is the basis of our social fabric, is essential for community stability and development, but it has become the source of all sorts of problems and makes frequent inroads into the formal economy, where it is increasingly difficult to achieve basic levels of adhesion and social integration. As a result, it is an even greater source of destruction, marginality and social vulnerability in the informal economy.

Therefore, formalization strategies should not reproduce, either in employment or in enterprises, the production or industrial relations models that prejudice workers in the formal economy, such as precariousness and uncertainty, which can push companies towards informality.

The formalization of companies and workplans should also be considered with a view to creating sustainable enterprise. A viable and solvent transition will only be possible if the goal is the creation of efficient and profitable enterprises which provide decent work, rights and social security. Precarious work should not be the means of securing the sustainability of enterprises. Formalization for sustainability should make economic profitability compatible with the social profitability of production, and the legal security of companies compatible with the legal security and labour rights of workers. Heterogeneity and the broad range of professions, work situations and ways of producing goods and services in the informal economy indicates that the transition to formality will require strategies capable of providing the conditions and opportunities to bring unstable or unsustainable businesses and activities into the formal economy.

We need to create a framework for transition, leading to a gradual process for the recovery of companies and informal employment through appropriate and coordinated employment, income and social security policies, labour standards, and tripartite dialogue. This framework should also act as a kind of safety net to provide companies in the formal economy that have lost their dynamism or capacity to remain in the formal sector with a way back before they fall over the edge. This is also going to require strong governance and institutions, with sufficient programmes and resources to provide the basic requirements of formalization and mechanisms to initiate and make progress towards transition in the different sectors and niches of informal production.

Formalization requires a strategy for economic growth based on a combination of policies, understanding that growth alone cannot reduce informality. Trade unions play an important role in the design and enforcement of formalization processes to ensure a proper democratic balance between the different participants in the transformation.

Ms SHATHI (Worker, Bangladesh)

First of all, on behalf of the trade union movement of Bangladesh, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the President. I believe that this session of the International Labour Conference will bring a substantial outcome in promoting worker-friendly industrial relations, and job-led and socially inclusive economic growth, which is environmentally sound and ensures equitable distribution of resources among all citizens living in either developed or developing countries, in all the corners of the world.

We are happy that, after the last session of the Conference, the amendment of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, in line with ILO standards, was passed by Parliament. Through our active participation in the tripartite forum, the registration of trade unions has been simplified and assistance from experts in the collective bargaining process is now allowed. Specific new provisions have been added to the Labour Act to ensure improved labour welfare, workplace safety and transparency in the payment of wages. We asked the Government to finalize the rules contained in the Act immediately and to take the necessary steps for the Act's enforcement at factory level. As a result of our continuous pressure, the Government has finally allocated additional manpower to the Department of Inspection. However, without sufficient resources, logistics and proper training, the inspectors will not be able to perform their duties effectively. We ask the Government to take immediate and positive steps on these issues. We are also waiting for accessible publicity on labour rights and labour inspection in Bangladesh.

Following the simplification of the trade union registration process, there has been a surge in momentum in trade union registration. We also want to see progress in terms of the formation of participation committees in all factories. We strongly believe that there is no alternative to a responsible trade union movement for ensuring sustainable industrial development, increasing productivity and maintaining industrial integrity. To ensure improved living standards for workers in the ready-made garments sector, the minimum wage declared by the Government for 2013 increased by about 77 per cent in comparison to the previous one declared in 2010. However, we want to reiterate that, according to the experts, the lion's share of the profit generated by poor workers in the ready-made garments sector is going into the pockets of international buyers. We urge international buyers to be realistic and to consider the benefits for workers.

We appreciate the Government's immediate response and rehabilitation programme after the last incidents in the ready-made garments sector in Bangladesh. We appreciate the brands and buyers for coming forward to assist the assessment of fire and building safety in Bangladesh. We ask the Government that, based on the findings of the assessment of ready-made garments factories, the future course of action be developed on a tripartite basis. We believe that technical assistance from the international community and development partners will be very effective in this regard.

Although informality in employment is found in almost all developing countries, the scale of informality has been very high in Bangladesh. We acknowledge the ILO initiative to work on the informal sector in Bangladesh. We want to work together to ensure that workers' rights are established in all informal sectors.

Last, but not the least, I would like to thank the Government for ratifying the MLC, 2006, and Convention No. 185 this year. I believe that this will ensure decent working conditions and improved welfare for the seafarers of our country.

Mr BINGHAM (*Representative, International Catholic Migration Commission*)

I am speaking as a representative of an NGO and a coordinator of global civil society activities in the

High-level Dialogue at the GFMD which convened in Stockholm two weeks ago.

I am happy to work closely with five global trade unions and three private sector organizations on our International Steering Committee.

At the GFMD, 41 trade union representatives made up around 20 per cent of the civil society delegates from around the world. We were pleased that the ILO Director-General spoke at the Forum's plenary sitting on Friday.

We welcome the focus at this Conference on *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. The Director-General's Report asks the right question: "How well equipped is the multilateral system to meet the challenges posed by migration, and what should be the particular role of the ILO within the system?"

The answer is blunt but clear to us in civil society. The multilateral system will only be well-equipped if the ILO fully takes up its role within the system. What is that role? Leadership.

ILO leadership on fair migration is so desperately needed. The ILO must demonstrate leadership itself, especially with regard to standards. It must also participate more actively in processes like the Global Forum in its own name.

The ILO has been the one organization within the UN system which civil society has consistently looked towards to participate in the Civil Society Programme of the Global Forum.

At the same time, the ILO should not lead alone where collaboration is essential. This is especially true where multi-actor mechanisms are needed. In order to reform recruitment systems, such mechanisms are required that recognize basic principles and standards, but also work to implement and monitor them.

We are glad to see both the ILO and the IOM working to this end, together with civil society, we hope. We need the IOM to lead groups without getting lost in the crowd. It is important to ask who in which groups, including the GMG, has recognized the urgency of these matters and lead with them. For example, the Office of the UNHCR could be involved in helping refugees gain access to channels and legal doors for labour migration.

Lastly, as a leader, it is vital to collaborate with tripartite social partners, of course, but also with civil society more broadly. NGOs as well as faith-based migrant and diaspora organizations are partners for fair migration.

To conclude, specific areas of ILO leadership on fair migration should include several recommendations put forward by civil society representatives made at the GFMD. First, continue to advance decent work as a stand-alone goal and also social protection in the post-2015 development agenda; mobilize serious campaigns to increase ratification and implementation of key Conventions protecting migrant workers; seize the tenth anniversary in 2016 of the adoption of the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration to update this remarkable tool; approve the proposal of an annual ILO labour migration meeting; reinforce efforts to improve labour rights and working conditions, especially in countries that currently deny migrants the right to join or form unions; vigorously support efforts to abolish the *kafala* sponsorship systems and others like it and, once they are abolished monitor the situation.

Finally, take a strong tripartite lead in changing the paradigm in political exploitation and negative political perception of migrants. This does not re-

quire political will first; it first requires personal leadership and commitment, one leader and institution at a time.

With regard to ILO tripartism, employers can be key. We need a tripartite strategy with the participation of many migrant and diaspora workers and business owners in every region of the world. Civil society has a wealth of experience and great appreciation of the ILO. We also have high hopes and expectations.

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

At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Director-General on selecting a topic that enables us to return to the discussion of the pressing issue of labour migration and the rights of migrant workers.

In recent decades, migration for work has reached unprecedented dimensions and now occurs on a global scale, constituting a major element of the globalized labour market. The global community and especially those involved in the labour market are faced with the major challenge of harmonizing international approaches, principles and rules which will enable us to manage this process.

The Report of the Director-General, in our view, contains a full and objective analysis of current labour migration issues and offers potential ways of resolving them. We agree with the conclusion that elimination of the negative aspects of migration should be part of a global movement towards decent work for all. We do not have any objections in principle to the proposed eight points in the agenda for fair migration.

At the same time, however, we regret that the examination of regional situations in the Report did not mention the post-Soviet area. After all, this is an area with intensive cross-border movement of labour. In Russia alone, according to UN data, there are 11 million migrants: that is 7.7 per cent of the population (75 per cent of these are from countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States). This makes Russia the country with the second highest migrant population, after the United States. The use of migrant labour in the Republic of Kazakhstan is very high. Thus, in the region where the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) is active, we are dealing with migratory flows of many millions of people. A significant number of them are illegal migrants and illegal migration is difficult to manage. In many countries of destination in the region, this situation has led to a chronic surplus of cheap labour, thus worsening the exploitation of migrant workers with all the consequences of such exploitation. This involves corrupt and fraudulent recruitment practices, including through all sorts of private employment agencies, unacceptably low wages, the absence of basic social and legal protection, and ruthless exploitation – in other words, flagrant violations of human rights. The result is a breeding ground for ethnic crime, cultural conflicts and the resulting hostility of the local population to the migrant workers, together with xenophobia and other social vices. I believe that other regions are also experiencing situations of this kind.

We cannot reconcile ourselves to such a situation. The GCTU and its affiliates see it as their mission, first, to campaign for fair migration policies in the region; second, to protect migrant workers from exploitation, discrimination, arbitrary and social exclusion; third, to stem prejudice against migrants

in the field of labour and in the community; and, fourth, to seek social integration for migrants, in particular, by involving them in trade unions in the country of destination.

Today, at government level, work is under way in the region to prepare a common outline for migration policy and its legal framework. The GCTU is participating actively in this work. On the initiative of our Confederation and with its direct participation, a number of key instruments have been prepared and adopted. Recent such instruments include the outline on a common migration space for the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In conclusion, I should like to mention the importance of upholding the authoritative force and ensuring the effectiveness of the labour standards governing migration, more specifically: Conventions Nos 97, 143 and 181. We believe that the time has come for an international campaign to promote their broadest possible ratification, first and foremost, by host countries for migrants. Perhaps it would be worth thinking about modernizing and updating these Conventions, taking into account the new realities of the modern world, through amendments, supplements and the adoption of independent recommendations, or by replacing them all with a consolidated single Convention, such as the one that was adopted for seafarers.

I am sure that the current discussion will lend new impetus to international efforts to give specific content to the agenda for fair migration proposed by the International Labour Office. We hope that its principles will take into account, in equal measure, the interests of migrant workers and representatives of the national labour force, and of countries of both origin and destination. Given the wide range of situations in different countries and regions, it is crucial that the global community is able to agree on common principles, aims and approaches to migration policy.

Ms PAVANELLI (Representative, Public Services International)

Public Services International (PSI) welcomes the Report of the Director-General: *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. The rights-based approach and the principle that labour is not a commodity, as set out in the Declaration of Philadelphia, are the cornerstones of that ILO agenda.

International migration is essentially about people leaving their homes in search of work and a better life. Today, we face not only an economic crisis but also a global jobs crisis, characterized by high youth unemployment and an alarming rise in precarious work. A large proportion of precarious workers are migrants, women and young workers with low wages and without access to social benefits. Austerity measures and global competition continue to affect jobs and public services. Among the millions who have lost their jobs, many are workers in public services, especially women. Poor funding and lack of access to quality public services are perpetuating poverty and provoking migration. Meanwhile, cuts in public services in destination countries are disproportionately affecting migrants, depriving them of access to social protection, health, education and social services. Scapegoating and the rise of racism and xenophobia are exacerbating migrants' conditions. Inclusive policies are needed to improve working and living conditions of workers, regardless of their migration status.

We need to guarantee trade union rights, regularize and document workers, fight precarious work, and empower women, migrants and young workers. The impact of skilled migration is a particular challenge, as evident in the health and care sectors. Migrant workers cannot be seen as a panacea for the problem of labour shortages or the effects of demographic changes. The remittances sent by migrants are neither the answer to development, nor an appropriate poverty reduction policy. Free circulation of workers is best determined through social and tripartite dialogue and governed by rights-based multilateral agreements covering recruitment, rights at work, recognition of qualifications, portability of social security, and integration and reintegration policies.

We want to see the ILO take an assertive and proactive role in ensuring that migrant workers, regardless of their status, have access to justice and redress. The ILO should take a leading role in incorporating migration into the post-2015 agenda within the goals of decent and full employment, universal social protection, and gender equality and empowerment of women.

We welcome the conclusion of the recurrent discussions on employment that underline the need for complementarity and coherence between public policies and services and the private sector in the promotion of decent employment, while acknowledging the important role of public sector employment. The discussions in the Committee on the Application of Standards reflect the full-scale attack on trade unions in the public sector. We are concerned that Guatemala and Turkey were not included in this list.

Many governments are aligning themselves with international financial institutions in their efforts to dismantle labour relations in areas which will cause the most damage to future generations, that is, the public services. While some countries are exporting their anti-social and anti-workers models, global supply chains and secret trade agreements are also rendering workers' rights unattainable for millions of workers. This race to the bottom has to stop; people's lives are worth more than profits. It is not by reducing workers' rights that the crisis will be overcome. We strongly refute the suggestion that limitations to collective bargaining are acceptable in any circumstances, and we call on governments and employers to act in good faith.

Indeed, some countries have recovered from the crisis with less inequality and represent examples of how collective bargaining and income distribution policy can work to overcome the crisis. Let us work together for this alternative, built on trust and dialogue. As public service unions, we are very much committed to protecting citizens and users by ensuring their access to quality public services, including through regulating essential services. However, when a conflict persists, the only democratic means of being heard remains the strike: for public service institutions, the right to strike is not negotiable.

Original French: Mr ZOUNNADJALA (Representative, World Organization of Workers)

On behalf of the World Organization of Workers, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to this Conference, and the Governing Body on placing one of its most important concerns on the Conference agenda, namely the transition from the informal to the formal economy. The prev-

alence of the informal economy constitutes a significant obstacle to inclusive development and the rule of law, and has a negative effect on the growth and sustainability of enterprises, social security and working conditions, public income, the robustness of institutions and fair competition on national and international markets.

Although some workers and enterprises operate within the informal economy in order to hide from the law, most of those involved are not there by choice but because of a lack of opportunities provided by the formal economy and of other ways to earn a living. Informality has many different causes but is essentially an issue of governance and social security, including social protection. Social protection coverage should extend to all workers in the informal economy through social assistance and social insurance mechanisms. It should include rights relating to: housing; education; health; food safety and security; water; sanitation services; and social protection for illness; disability; old age and death; and against workplace hazards. Given the over-representation of women in the informal economy, maternity and childcare need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

The formalization of informal labour includes: legal recognition and protection for self-employed and independent workers; a lack of discrimination; a guaranteed minimum wage; OSH measures; state and employer contributions to health insurance and pensions; the right to organize and to collective bargaining; and membership of workers' organizations, including unions.

The advantages for self-employed workers of operating in the formal economy include: simplified procedures for registration; a progressive taxation system; protection against harassment; access to resources and services; exercise of workers' rights; an appropriate legal and regulatory framework, including binding contracts; the right to land and property; use of public spaces; and regulation of OSH.

Further advantages of working in the formal sector consist in access to finance and market advice; access to infrastructure and public services; binding commercial contracts; limited liability, default rules and discharge from bankruptcy; access to government initiatives and subsidies; membership of occupational associations; access to a formal social security system; and registration and tax assessment.

In conclusion, "Nothing for us without us!" is the cry of informal sector workers. They are looking forward to the adoption by the ILO of the Recommendation concerning the informal economy and to a change in the situation. It must be borne in mind, however, that the transition should take place progressively to make it possible for this significant sector to maintain its attractiveness, and its traditional and economic dynamism.

Original French: Mr THIRY (Representative, World Union of Professions)

First, I should like to congratulate Daniel Funes de Rioja on his election to the presidency of the International Labour Conference and I should also like to extend my congratulations to the Director-General of the International Labour Office, Guy Ryder.

The World Union of Professions deems it an honour to participate in this Conference and to be able to speak in this august Organization, which during

its 94 years has achieved major progress in social dialogue and in making all stakeholders aware of the need for satisfactory working conditions for all as an agent of progress for humanity.

Such attributes as its long and impressive history, the large number of international standards adopted, and the participation of impressive delegations from governments and employers' and workers' organizations all lead us to feel great respect for the work accomplished and results achieved. Nevertheless, we are all aware that, unfortunately, much still remains to be done.

Despite the challenges which the ILO itself has clearly identified, the World Union of Professions believes that NGOs invited to the Conference also have a key role to play in the process of seeking tangible solutions to new challenges identified by the Conference. The liberal professions within the World Union come from various continents and can bear witness to different working conditions.

We are active as workers and as employers, and the liberal professionals are also working together with various categories of employers and workers in many different areas, including health care, legal advice services, technical advice, accountancy and environmental issues.

Some commentators have stressed the extent to which the liberal professionals represent and amplify the aspirations of the world of work – in other words, they provide a safe haven for the expression of demands – both collective and individual – for the improvement of general well-being, living conditions of citizens, respect for human dignity, or more precisely, minimum standards to be achieved for fulfilling work.

The implementation of the Decent Work Agenda set before the international community by the ILO involves pursuit of the four strategic objectives of gender equality, job creation, guarantee of rights at work and the extension of social protection with promotion of social dialogue. It surely stands to reason that the liberal professions, everywhere throughout the world, and whatever their specific features, have a very constructive role to play in achieving these four strategic objectives.

The World Union of Professions also notes that many members of the liberal professions are organized in small enterprises. The ILO itself has acknowledged that micro- or small enterprises today provide a very large number of men and women with an opportunity to earn their living and has stated that it is in this sector that policies, regulations, vocational training, market development and union organization may be most critical.

The World Union of Professions is very happy that the issue of SMEs and the creation of decent and productive jobs has been selected as proposed topics for the general discussion at the 104th Session (2015) of the Conference. The liberal professionals, both as enterprises and as consultants at various levels of these enterprises, play an important role in this area too. We all firmly believe that the creation of more jobs in this sector will constitute one of the remedies for social exclusion in our globalized economy today.

The World Union of Professions unreservedly agrees with the statement of the Director-General that: "Formalization brings protection and improved working conditions to workers; it brings fair competition and improved sustainability to enterprises;

and it brings revenues and strengthened authority to governments."

The Union which I represent here believes that members of the liberal professions in their various areas of competence can help to achieve this objective. Therefore, we are looking to the future and following the work of the ILO very closely and we wish to contribute to this work as effectively as possible.

The World Union of Professions believes that, in the various areas of concern of ILO, we can help generate insights into ways of improving labour conditions. For instance, through the promotion of South-South partnerships, a process in which countries represented in the World Union are very much involved. Millions of liberal professionals throughout the world and in the various areas in which they work, help and consult, contribute, through their behaviour, to the social, technical, scientific and legal development of their communities.

As already stated by the previous speaker, we are committed to participating in building the fourth pillar in this world of work.

I would like to reaffirm that the World Union of Professions wishes to continue to work with the International Labour Office in joint efforts to improve labour working conditions in order to achieve a fairer society in a world of respect and peace.

Original French: Ms BAH (Representative, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations)

My name is Asmaou Bah: I am the Secretary-General of the national union of domestic workers in Guinea (SYNTRAD), President of the African network of domestic workers (RADEM), member of the Executive Bureau of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), and a member of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations. My colleagues and I are registered in two committees because it often turns out that domestic work is in part joined to forced labour and is also seen as informal work. That is why we would like to understand properly the concept of forced labour and of the informal economy in order to tackle the difficulties confronting domestic workers.

The definition of forced labour implies that someone is made to do work that they would not wish to do of their own free will. At the first and founding conference of the IDWF in Montevideo, it was noted that of the 17 million domestic workers in Latin America, nearly 95 per cent are women, a large proportion of whom come from rural areas. They are caught in a vicious circle because, when they try to flee from informality and the difficult working conditions and low salaries in the farming sector, they find themselves lapsing once again, after moving to the city, into informality and low wages, and remain far from any improvement in their situation.

In my childhood I worked as a domestic worker for 12 years and I am in a good position to state that there is indeed forced labour in domestic work. Any work performed without the consent of the person performing it is forced labour. This is the situation of children who work as domestic workers.

If we take the example of Africa and, in particular, that of Guinea, which I know myself, you can see that poverty is rampant. In Guinea, 95 per cent of domestic workers are women and 75 per cent are

young girls who leave their villages to go to cities. When they arrive in large towns or cities they lose their traditions and their customs, and often their income is negotiated directly by their parents and their employers. It is their parents who end up reaping the benefits of their sweat and toil.

In households they are subject to all kinds of violence: verbal, moral, physical and sexual. Sometimes they suffer injury and trauma. In these inhumane working conditions, they are the first to rise in the morning and the last to go to bed at night. They have no rest, they do not have proper working hours, they cannot choose what they eat, they have to work in the rain and under the burning sun, they have no minimum wage and no possibility of getting an education, training or starting a family.

To conclude, what is the difference between forced labour and the child labour that we are denouncing here? What can we do to ensure that this forced labour disappears forever from the life of domestic workers and from all other sectors? For us it is important to have a protective Protocol which will be implemented and respected by all member States of the ILO. I have been bearing open witness for three years now to put an end to this forced or compulsory labour. These examples will also help us to give substance to some of our convictions.

Ms BROWN-AFARI (*Representative, StreetNet International*)

StreetNet is an international federation of 52 organizations of street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers in 46 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Eastern Europe, representing 588,709 members. Owing to a lack of appropriate policies and regulations at local, national and cross-border levels, workers in this sector of the informal economy face the problem of being seen as illegal, while earning their living by means of entirely lawful economic activities. StreetNet participated in the discussion under the topic, "Towards a fair deal for migrant workers in the global economy", at the 92nd Session of the Conference in 2004.

StreetNet represents a particular group of migrant workers consisting of informal cross-border traders, the majority of whom are women and who experience a high level of marginalization and criminalization on a daily basis. These workers face the following challenges: lack of accessible information on trade protocols; lack of facilities at border posts for traders in transit; harassment of women in transit at border posts; corruption by officials at border posts; language barriers, which mean that traders are unable to understand the legal trade requirements in other States; high customs tariffs and double taxation due to complicated processes; lack of market infrastructure for informal cross-border traders; lack of recognition of the role of women in cross-border trade; lack of policies that address the challenges faced by women; complicated registration processes for associations of informal cross-border traders; impediments to the movement of goods by informal cross-border traders; and complicated customs and immigration requirements.

StreetNet wishes to highlight the role that governments need to embrace in order to establish an enabling environment for smooth cross-border trade and guarantees for sustainability, livelihood and poverty eradication. This includes: stopping the harassment of informal traders by police and authorities; simplifying customs documents and translating them into the national languages; establishing

trade information desks at border posts; establishing facilities at border posts for traders in transit; simplifying customs tariffs and eliminating double taxation; reforming legislation to provide married women with access to credit facilities; creating market infrastructure for informal cross-border traders at the national level; and enhancing safety and security measures for women at border posts.

StreetNet urges governments to engage in extensive and effective social dialogue with a view to: being fully accountable to civil society; improving levels of transparency regarding trade and development decisions; and including the most vulnerable workers in solutions at all levels. Social dialogue should be a component of collective bargaining, be it bipartite, tripartite, multipartite, local, national or international, and should include all social partners, including organized informal economy workers. StreetNet's participation in this discussion is undertaken in response to the strong message of members who have been excluded for so long from inclusive policies and processes: "Nothing for us without us!"

Mr KRAMPONA (*International Young Christian Workers*)

We cannot build a world with decent work while ignoring young workers' participation. No integral development can be achieved without respecting workers' rights. Therefore, each of us at this Conference should strategically bring young workers on board to develop the roadmap towards decent work for all. We need fair migration, not forced migration. Through his Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, the ILO Director-General has opened the door to discussion and reflection so as to gain collective wisdom and progress towards the fair migration to which we aspire.

It is an essential task of ILO member States and international organizations to act on the commitment to make migration fair and dignified for all. I would like to highlight two cases needing our attention: the recent violent case of Ervina and other domestic workers in Hong Kong; and the situation of young Guatemalan women who are working in precarious conditions across Europe. Such cases have opened the world's eyes to the need to pay serious attention to, and to reinforce, the protection of migrant workers everywhere. The world agrees, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that such violence must not occur now or in the future. We therefore urgently need policies that provide for the full protection of migrant workers' rights at the national and international level.

We agree with the Report of the Director-General with regard to the cost of migrants. Unemployment, job security and all forms of precariousness are substantial causes of migration. Two fundamental rights on migration need to be protected. The first is the right not to migrate, which requires governments to provide decent and formal jobs for all. In the event that a person has to migrate for their own or their family's survival, both the sending and receiving governments should agree on a strategy to guarantee protection for all, without any form of discrimination, including the protection of undocumented migrant workers before, during and after migration. We regard this as an obligation. The second important right is to be equal before the law, without discrimination on any basis, including social class, gender, ethnic group or religion. This right should encompass the right to work, to social protection, to join unions and engage in collective

bargaining, and to participate in political activities towards a better life for all.

The International Young Christian Workers, together with international Catholic-inspired organizations, which are committed to decent work and the post-2015 development agenda, urge the ILO and its member States, employers and workers to formulate and implement more comprehensive policies protecting migrant workers, focusing on young people, women and families. We propose that, as a tangible political step, the tripartite members discuss migration issues and related aspects at the next session of the International Labour Conference.

We call upon the international community to strengthen its efforts to renew the commitment of the entire human family to eradicate poverty through promoting decent work, good quality jobs and social protection for all workers and all economic units and sectors. We call for an end to any kind of act weakening trade unions, such as intimidation, layoffs and union busting, as we move towards the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, ensuring fair migration and better working and living conditions for all.

Original Spanish: Mr BUISEL (Representative, Latin American Union of Workers of Monitoring Bodies)

First, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on the agenda for fair migration set out in his Report to the Conference at this session, which highlights a key problem facing workers throughout the world.

I am speaking to you on behalf of the Latin American Union of Workers of Monitoring Bodies (ULATOC) and of the recently created network of workers in public monitoring, justice, tax and customs. We reaffirm that our people need active and efficient States, with the proper tools to ensure the common good and eradicate once and for all the corruption that leads to delays, equity and poverty. The mission of the workers is not only to monitor but to serve the public interest, drawing attention to, and warning about, possible anomalies in public administration in good time and in an appropriate manner in order to recommend remedial action, promoting transparency and efficiency in the management of public policies.

We would argue that the more efficient public monitoring is the better the quality of institutional services. Therefore, more public monitoring means better governance and better democracy. We stress that the challenge of the twenty-first century is to monitor those who govern us.

In many countries in the world, corruption in public and private life causes serious harm to sustainable development and is like an illness that is progressively destroying trust in institutions and in democracy itself, undermining the quality and efficiency of the State and affecting basic services and even the life of its citizens.

At a time when the traditional neoliberal recipes call for adjustments, privatization and job reductions, it is only by ensuring greater transparency and attacking corrupt practices that States will be able to operate more efficiently, balancing their deficits through more efficient and transparent spending. We are calling for those adjustments to be made by reducing the excessive costs of corruption.

The problem of workers in monitoring bodies is no different to that of all other workers in the ILO seeking decent work. Nevertheless, our work has

particular characteristics that require different approaches and solutions. Workers in the judicial system and in tax and customs administration are in a similar situation. Our members face the conflict every day of having to carry out their duties and jeopardize their jobs, and even their lives, by confronting corrupt officials trying to silence, discipline or corrupt our workers.

The failure to act firmly against the harassment or violation of the rights of a single worker sends a clear message to other workers and is enough to prevent them complying with their institutional duty of drawing attention to, and monitoring, corruption. Ensuring the proper administration of justice will guarantee fair and efficient tax administration.

If we really mean to combat corruption, it is essential that workers and their union representatives in public oversight bodies, the judicial system and tax administration enjoy labour protection and independence. Then not only will our members benefit from decent work, but society as a whole will be benefit. We therefore call on the ILO to carry out an analysis of this particular challenge, which will serve as a basis for the development of standards to protect and guarantee the independence of the workers whom we represent, ensuring good governance through decent, efficient and high-quality work.

As set forth in the ILO Constitution, we are seeking to promote decent work for men and women, free from violence and with the satisfaction and pride of using our own skills and knowledge to contribute to the general welfare without being subject to any outside pressure or influence. We will ensure the quality of institutions and the fight against corruption.

Mr NUR (Worker, Somalia)

The delegation of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions joins other delegations in congratulating the President on being elected to preside over the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Report of the ILO Director-General, Mr Ryder, to the Conference at this session specified that the past biennium has been one of reform and consolidation. In the past year or so, the ILO and its constituencies carried out their mandate in the context of a global economic and unemployment crisis. Trade unions witnessed employment, labour and social institutions in our respective countries being altered by the lingering effects of the global economic crisis.

We now have an unemployment crisis and inequality that are crippling economies and communities. Economic and social policies and programmes in individual countries, as well as regionally and globally, will be dominated by the need to respond to the global crisis. The resultant frictions have led to greater prominence being given to social justice, including in the areas of youth employment, creating quality employment, social protection coverage, incorporating international labour standards into domestic legislation, eliminating child labour and forced labour and engaging in national social dialogue.

A number of reforms were initiated and spearheaded by the ILO Director-General. We believe that these reforms are also important for ILO work related to conflict prevention, reconstruction and recovery. This is why we appreciate and welcome

this new engagement and the reforms by the Director-General.

Somalia is still emerging from a dark history of tyranny and civil war and has become a country associated with pity and hopelessness. Our country has been regarded by some as a failed State, but workers and unionists refuse to accept that our cause or struggle has been lost, with no prospect of victory in the end, however difficult and complex today's battle might be.

As you know, Somalia is a great country with a great history, but it is still suffering from the brutal and endless wars and political crises that have caused untold hardship to millions of Somalis. It has long been a place where the way in which the country is being ruled at a given time passes for the rule of law, but our people deserve better. Somali workers deserve a life of dignified working and living conditions, free from war, murder, abuse, extremism, political persecution, exploitation and dehumanization.

What Somalia needs today is to recognize that levels of development, peace and stability are not uniform across the country, to support the emerging peace, social cohesion and stability and to begin in earnest to deliver tangible support to ensure sustained economic development and poverty alleviation, founded on responsible macroeconomic management, infrastructure rehabilitation and equitable access to services.

There is a particularly severe unemployment crisis among Somali youth, who, while constituting the majority of the working population, are also the population group with the highest number of unemployed. If the ILO-Somali constituency and wider international partners fail to provide these young people with work and income prospects, we will continue to have a time bomb on our hands.

Somali people are yearning for jobs, decent lives and social justice in a society free from inequality and suffering, and unified in delivering peace and prosperity to its people. Conflicting factors of unemployment, underemployment, abuses of human and trade union rights, and social instability must be addressed with conviction. We call for large-scale and non-bureaucratic solutions to the tasks of rebuilding the nation, promoting reconciliation, ensuring a peaceful transition to democratic governance before the 2016 national elections and relaunching the economy on the basis of social justice.

Somalia has successfully ratified the ILO core Conventions, including Conventions Nos 87 and 98, and the DWCP. We are very thankful to our Prime Minister, His Excellency Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed, for supporting Somali workers and standing up for trade union rights, in his determination to have a pro-worker Government. We regard him as a great statesman of his day.

Despite the ratification of these Conventions, many challenges remain in implementing the rights and obligations enshrined in them. National policies are geared towards reflecting international labour standards, but serious violations of freedom of association persist and have even increased.

Those working in the media in Somalia continue to be exposed to unparalleled levels of insecurity and a serious lack of personal safety. We will not stand by and watch forces seeking to destabilize the fledgling independent trade unions and support the fragmentation and weakening of the Somali working class. Our unions are responding to these threats with increasing militancy, enhanced ideology, and a heightened focus on the strategic issues of contesting working class power and building alternatives.

We are calling for efforts to ensure the effective observance of the ILO core Conventions in law and in practice. Should violations continue, we would be obliged to lodge a complaint under article 26 of the ILO Constitution.

The discussions about migrant workers are timely. Millions of men and women leave their homes and cross national borders each year in search of decent work and better opportunities for themselves and their families. Migration has emerged as an important issue of our times, with far-reaching implications for our workers and societies. The challenge confronting the global community, including the ILO constituency, is to make emigration work for all and direct it in a way that serves the economic well-being and social justice of the workers.

The issues on the agenda of the International Labour Conference this year address the challenges that we are facing in trying to make real and measurable progress. Our workers and their families will have a better life, not because of our rhetoric on what should be done, but thanks to what we are able to do together.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

Seventh sitting

Friday, 6 June 2014, 10.05 a.m.

President: Ms Mugo

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

Mr KAMBI (*Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Labour,
Social Security and Services, Kenya*)

Allow me to first congratulate the President and the two Vice-Presidents for taking up their posts. My delegation commends the Director-General for his Report, which aptly responds to the current challenges of our time.

The Report is a timely reminder that we are not yet out of the woods and that, to effectively mitigate the consequences of globalization and return the global economy to the path of stable and sustainable growth, we have to address the current challenges of migration.

We say this because the available evidence tends to indicate a positive correlation between the expansion of globalization and the movement of labour; a scenario that appears to deprecate labour as a commodity that can be deployed where returns are highest.

The Report clearly acknowledges that most countries are aware of the unsustainable direction in which migration is moving, resulting in various measures being taken at national, regional and international levels to address the problem. The question that remains unanswered is why these initiatives do not seem to contain the problem.

The increase in irregular migration patterns that have been riddled with abusive employment relationships devoid of decent working conditions, including the disguised trafficking of labour, calls for a balanced, comprehensive, consensus-based response from all.

We therefore concur that a rights-based approach to migration should inform many of the frameworks being developed, but hasten to add that security considerations remain central to their formulation.

Kenya supports the proposal for effective regulation of employment agencies to weed out unscrupulous and unethical agencies responsible for linking desperate migrants to exploitative employment relationships and, at times, extorting money from them.

In our case, a number of Kenyans are trapped in slave-like jobs abroad, a situation that we are now addressing by negotiating bilateral agreements with destination countries to ensure fair labour conditions and facilitate the smooth and productive investment of diaspora remittances. We are also

screening the employment agencies to weed out those that are not fit for the purpose.

Kenya is keen to reinforce the legal framework to anchor the Decent Work Agenda. This will include the full enjoyment and practice of freedom of association, as enshrined in our Constitution. Further, we will ratify and domesticate Convention No. 87 in order to democratize the labour market.

These rights were established by our judiciary in 2011 when they upheld workers' democratic rights to associate and organize by ordering the registration of a new national trade union centre to represent hitherto unrepresented sectors of workers and thereby enrich the social dialogue process and its outcome.

Consequently, and noting our obligations under Convention No. 144, we are consulting with all social partners, with a view to reconstituting all our tripartite institutions and structures to reflect these new dynamics so as to ensure inclusivity.

The above notwithstanding, we wish to affirm that existing social dialogue mechanisms and consultancy structures are fully operational through the National Labour Board and the various sectoral wages councils.

Other ongoing initiatives include the creation of 750,000 jobs, the development of a Wages and Remuneration Policy and the creation of the Uwezo Fund to enable women and youth to access start-up capital for entrepreneurship.

We welcome the ILO's readiness to offer technical assistance in negotiating a framework to manage migration and renew our request for the same.

The Kenyan delegation is of the view that, in the field of migration, a robust role for the ILO needs to be carved out of the existing multilateral arrangements, spearheaded by the Global Forum for Migration and Development. In this respect, the ILO's unique tripartism and standards components are key ingredients that will help to focus the agenda of the migration debate.

In conclusion, Kenya believes that an inclusive approach offers the best opportunity to address the identified migration issues in a comprehensive and sustainable way, including giving it due significance and space in the post-2015 development framework.

Finally, Kenya wishes to thank all ILO member States for electing it as a titular member of the ILO Governing Body. We will continue to serve diligently during our time in office.

The Director-General's Report on fair migration strikes a chord with the Singaporean labour movement. As of December 2013, we have 1.3 million foreigners working in Singapore. The Singapore National Trades Union Congress (SNTUC) recognizes the need for migrant workers to complement our limited human resources due to our small population, declining birth rates and ageing workforce. We greatly appreciate their contribution to Singapore's development and growth.

Union membership is open to migrant workers; they enjoy the same protection, services and benefits as local members. Our union leaders in workplaces constantly watch for any violation of workers' rights and will promptly raise any issues of concern with the appropriate management and authorities.

In addition, the SNTUC and the Singapore National Employers' Federation formed the Migrant Workers Forum in 2009 to provide a platform for discussing the views of migrant workers and their employers. We then jointly set up two Migrant Workers' Centres, that we call MWC, in 2009 and 2013. This allows our migrant workers to access assistance regardless of union membership status.

The MWC operates on "FAIR" principles. FAIR stands for fairness, assistance, integration and representation. Since its inception, the MWC has had an impact on more than 400,000 migrant workers through outreach and engagement activities on fair employment and social integration. It has also provided emergency humanitarian assistance, such as housing, subsistence and other relief, to over 10,000 aggrieved and needy migrant workers.

Most of our migrant workers secure their employment through employment agencies. We fully agree with the Director-General that there is a clear need for governments to ensure that there are adequate regulations for such agencies, and to offer victims of malpractice access to remedies. In 2010, the SNTUC, together with other NGOs, participated in a closed-door consultation session organized by the Singaporean Ministry of Manpower (MOM), regarding its proposed enhancement of the Employment Agency Regulatory Framework. We were heartened to see several legislative changes. First, more stringent penalties to deter violators from profiting from malpractices; second, employment agency personnel need to attain certification and be registered; and third, the use of a standard service agreement is a requirement in the licence conditions for employment agencies placing foreign domestic workers.

Since the revised Employment Agencies Act came into effect in April 2011, at least one employer has been charged in court for using the services of an unlicensed employment agency. The MOM also introduced an online Employment Agency Directory, listing all employment agencies that are licenced, under surveillance or have had their licence revoked.

We are also heartened to know that the number of complaints received by the MOM has decreased over the last three years, despite an increase in the migrant workforce. In 2013, the MOM assisted about 7,000 non-domestic work permit workers with issues relating to claims for salaries, overtime payments, the provision of acceptable accommodation and the non-payment of compensation for work

injuries. It assisted some 500 foreign domestic workers in disputes about salaries and illegal deployment. Altogether, this figure is less than 1 per cent of the total migrant workforce in Singapore.

This year, we will continue to advocate fair treatment for all workers and further enhancements to relevant legislation, such as the Employment Act and the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act. One thing that the labour movement has long advocated for is the retention of skilled foreigners over the inflow of untrained migrant workers. We will push for a structured skills framework to be introduced this year, whereby employers must ensure that their workers have obtained the necessary certification and are able to show proof of their skills before their work permit renewal is approved. Migrant workers will therefore benefit from higher skills and productivity and, more importantly, their skills will command a premium, which makes them valuable to employers.

Mr LEVANIČ (*State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Slovenia*)

First of all, I would like to thank the Director-General for his Report, which offers the unique opportunity for tripartite discussion on migration at the international level.

Migration is, of course, an important feature of today's globalized economy, which poses complex policy challenges at national, regional and global levels. Its key drivers are income differentials and demographic trends. Migration is recognized as a key dimension of global population dynamics and an enabler of inclusive economic and social development. Effective migration governance at all levels is essential to maximizing the positive and minimizing the negative impact of migration on sustainable development.

Slovenia, therefore, strongly supports the ILO's efforts to improve multilateral migration governance and develop an effective and inclusive ILO agenda on international migration that recognizes the labour and social complexities involved. In our opinion, the ILO's agenda on migration should be focused on: decent work promotion; a rights-based approach; developing migration schemes as part of regional integration processes; and promoting bilateral agreements between countries and/or regions on fair migration.

In defining its role in multilateral work on migration, we encourage the ILO to enhance cooperation with other relevant organizations and agencies towards a fully integrated and, of course, coordinated international migration agenda.

Slovenia, as a Member State of the EU, has advanced policy on protecting migrants' rights. Protection of the human rights of migrants in Slovenia is ensured by implementation of the EU migration rules.

The EU is strongly committed to legal and safe migration. It fosters routes for legal migration and aims to combat illegal migration by different means. It is of the utmost importance that the EU also takes action to sanction those who abuse migrants. The Employer Sanctions Directive of 2009 is a key instrument that prevents the exploitation of illegal migrants. The directive does not provide for any sanctions against migrant workers but focuses on employers who abuse migrants in vulnerable situations.

Besides this, a series of directives aimed at ensuring the equal treatment of migrants have been adopted in the last decade by the EU, which cover the areas of employment, education and training. Social security rights in cases of internal migration have been well coordinated for more than 40 years in the EU. Since 2004, the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents in the EU has also been formally improved with regard to social security rights.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has been following the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment of migrants. In 2010, the Government adopted the Strategy on Economic Migration for the period 2010–20, with the aim of ensuring a coherent approach towards migration, based on the EU migration policy framework.

It has to be emphasized that, in Slovenia, equal treatment in respect of social security rights is assured to all migrants from EU Member States and to nationals of the countries with which Slovenia has concluded bilateral agreements on social insurance. Bilateral agreements have been concluded with all the former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where the majority of migrant workers are from. In 2013, we started the procedure to conclude such agreements with another two countries. Migration from other countries is very limited.

Although the EU as a whole has a most advanced migration policy, statistics show that migrant workers too frequently find themselves in less favourable situations than natives. This means there is still room for improvement, taking into account the benefits of migration for sustainable development.

To conclude, I share the view the Director-General expressed at the opening of this Conference that the affirmation central to the Declaration of Philadelphia – “all human beings ... have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity” – must constitute the central aim of national and international policies.

*Original Spanish: Mr GONZÁLEZ HERNÁNDEZ
(Employer, Dominican Republic)*

The Employers' delegation of the Dominican Republic, as represented by the Employers' Confederation of the Dominican Republic (COPARDOM), welcomes all of the delegations attending this session of the International Labour Conference. We acknowledge the input of the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Ryder, and reaffirm the importance of the ILO as the sole international body with a mandate focusing on the world of work and tripartism as a means of seeking equitable social agreements.

Over the past two decades, economies have been liberalized and markets have been opened up by technological progress. This has led, among others things, to changes in labour relations and to the establishment of enterprises and formal jobs. As a result, the ILO and, indeed, all multilateral organizations, find themselves facing new challenges.

Moreover, since the end of the first decade of the new millennium, the world has undergone major changes. The crisis affecting the international financial markets has placed countries such as the Dominican Republic in a difficult situation, whereby there has been a slowdown in private investment, a rise in unemployment, an increase in informal work

and a decline in activity in sectors which are major contributors in terms of our GDP. In this regard, work has been carried out to identify the economic and social means and provisions required in order for us to break out of the difficult situation in which we find ourselves. At the same time, we recognize the need for more flexible labour conditions that are in line with progress made in terms of technology, enterprises and the social needs of workers. In other words, we are seeking, within a framework of social justice, to ensure that capital generates increases in productivity, thereby promoting fresh investment and sustainable enterprises.

We at the Employers' Federation of the Dominican Republic firmly believe that labour regulations should not be an obstacle to the enjoyment of the right to work. We recognize that, nowadays, tension in this field is greater than before, given the scars left by the economic crisis, the increase in informality, the rise in youth unemployment, the lack of social coverage for a broad segment of the population and the loss of competitiveness at the national level.

The maturity of the national social partners, combined with the abovementioned scenario, has led us to review our labour regulations on a tripartite basis, in an attempt realistically to address a number of issues, including: effective conciliation as an alternative individual labour dispute resolution mechanism; procedural mechanisms which have a negative impact on the sustainability and proper functioning of enterprises; working hours; and, finally, the costs inherent in our labour regulations and the rights of all those involved in the productive process in the Dominican Republic.

We are not seeking to weaken rights and thereby gain a competitive edge by violating the provisions of the trade agreements which we have already signed. On the contrary, we are attempting to tackle the issue of job creation and, above and beyond this, to combat poverty, while ensuring complete respect for the responsible exercise of freedom of association and the promotion of decent work.

As socially responsible employers, we are promoting and ensuring compliance with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and those Conventions which govern freedom of association, collective bargaining, forced labour, child labour and discrimination.

As employers of the Dominican Republic, we support the criteria put forward by the IOE and we see the ILO as a flexible and effective body for assisting governments, workers and employers.

We hope that the ILO and its supervisory bodies will take up the challenge of internal reform, with a view effectively to fulfil their mandates in the delicate process of dealing with the external shocks currently affecting us. We are counting on an ILO that is capable of driving change and that respects national sovereignty; a strong, modern and, above all, balanced ILO.

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

It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the Government of Japan at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to the strong leadership of the Director-General, Mr Ryder, concerning the reform of the ILO and the centenary initiatives. Since his inauguration in October

2012, the Director-General has implemented a series of major reforms, such as the reform of the organization of the ILO's headquarters, regional organization and the reform of the personnel management system. Japan considers these reforms to be highly important if the ILO is to continue to be relevant for all the tripartite constituents, addressing the needs of the new era.

Japan strongly expects that, in the near future, the ILO will develop into an Organization which can increasingly take the initiative within the international community.

Japan has been improving its employment system through the use of the development strategy known as Abenomics. While the Japanese economy is now on its way to recovery, it is extremely important to provide support for employment and to maintain a strong working environment, both of these elements constituting drivers in terms of recovery. In particular, the Government of Japan is making great efforts to promote the advancement of women, one of the ILO centenary initiatives set by Mr Ryder.

Firstly, the Government has decided that childcare leave benefits should be raised from 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the wages of the mother or father for the first six months of the leave.

Secondly, the Government is implementing a programme to ensure nurseries for 200,000 children by the end of the 2014 fiscal year and for 400,000 by the end of the 2017 school year.

Lastly, concerning the percentage of women in leadership roles in all areas of our society, the Government has set a target of at least 30 per cent by 2020. We aim to create a society in which all people, including women, can make the most of their abilities through these efforts.

We hold regular tripartite discussions prior to deciding on, and implementing, our labour policies, including the abovementioned ones. We aim to improve our employment system, bearing in mind the importance of social dialogue, which is at the heart of the ILO.

With regard to world peace and regional stability, Japan recognizes the importance of the achievement of decent work, especially through the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. In particular, concerning workers in the informal economy, which is one of the agenda items of this session of the International Labour Conference, Japan has been implementing the way out of informality, facilitating the formalization of the informal economy in South Asia in order to support the transition to employment with the protection of workers. Japan is also supporting the establishment of social insurance systems, or social safety nets, in various countries.

I sincerely hope that, through our technical cooperation, the knowledge and experience gained from Japanese employment policies can be shared in many countries and can contribute to the achievement of the ILO's ultimate goal, the realization of social justice.

With the international community in the midst of worldwide financial and employment crises, the presence of the ILO, which aims to realize social justice, has been growing ever greater.

I would like to end my speech by confirming that the Government of Japan extends its support to the activities of the ILO, a body which has an important task to accomplish. We support the Director-General's initiatives in various areas.

Original Arabic: Mr HAMADEH (Employer, Lebanon)

On my own behalf and on behalf of the President of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists and of all Lebanese employers, I bring our greetings and wish you every success in your work during this session of the Conference.

I would also like to congratulate the President on his election at this session of the Conference.

Having listened to the presentation of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, we wish to commend the efforts of its members to address various difficult issues, while continuing to shoulder their other responsibilities. We agree that, as the representative of the world of work, the Organization should have a supervisory role. We agree with, and support the request made by, the Governing Body to reduce the length of Conference sessions while maintaining its effectiveness. We congratulate the newly elected Governing Body and request it to examine the issue of limiting membership to two consecutive sessions, after which candidates would have to wait until the end of another session before reapplying, thereby giving all those wishing to present themselves for membership a chance to apply. This would help identify new skills, especially among young people, and thereby generate renewed dynamism and energy, which would benefit the Organization. We hope that this request will be included in the modernization project to be presented by the Director-General in 2015.

We wish to thank the Director-General, Mr Ryder, for all his efforts since taking office at the head of the Organization. We commend the Report which he has presented during this session and which speaks of a brighter future. We also appreciate the way in which he has followed the work of the Conference. We have noticed him visiting the various committees to follow their work. He arrives unaccompanied and discretely, without pomp and circumstance. This sets a new tone, demonstrating a sense of responsibility and modesty and a wish to follow the work that is being carried out at first hand. We hope that this worthy behaviour will be emulated at all levels of the Organization.

We would also like to thank the Director-General for the precise information contained in the Appendix to his Report *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. We hope that at the next session, the scope of the Appendix will be broader and will refer to the situation of workers in the occupied Syrian Golan, in the Kfar Shouba hills and in the shab'a farms in Lebanon, in the hope of achieving just and global peace in all occupied Arab territories.

We undertake to cooperate with the Director-General to achieve the objectives set out in his Report, in particular with regard to the adoption of a new post-2015 framework to enable the Organization to become a centre for technical excellence in labour matters, in relation to: statistics; research; improved internal and external communication; new effective spending policies, particularly in support of technical cooperation for the development of SMEs and sustainable enterprises promoting decent jobs; and promoting tripartism and social dialogue between the tripartite partners.

I have a few technical comments regarding certain passages in the Report of the Director-General:

First, regarding forced labour, the definition set out Convention No. 29 leaves no doubt that human

trafficking is indeed forced labour. For this reason, the content of the instrument to be adopted during this session needs to be clear, precise, complete and consistent with Convention No. 29, as well as providing a certain added value. With regard to migrant workers, they should not be treated as criminals but should be granted temporary residence, in accordance with national law and practice. This would make them subject to the legislation and to the justice system of the country in question. It should be noted that there is no one model for all countries and the specificities of each country need to be taken into consideration.

Second, regarding the promotion of employment, it is very important to encourage training on, and assimilation of, new technologies, to enable workers to adapt to the new labour market requirements. Research should also be carried out on systems that could help develop targeted skills, promoting a culture of productivity in schools and higher education institutions, and supporting SMEs, while promoting employment.

Third, regarding the transition from the informal to the formal economy, States should be given assistance, in their statistical and research work, to access the information needed in order to establish programmes and policies enabling the transfer to the formal economy. In this regard, the relevant instruments, in particular the Convention No. 189, should be taken into account.

Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy which respects trade union rights and freedom of association, and protects individual property, freedom of expression, political action, trade and industry, and banking secrecy. It supports initiatives on investments and funding for innovative projects aimed at young people. Lebanon therefore has the capacity to assist the Organization in launching initiatives to promote a culture of social dialogue in order to guarantee decent work at a national and regional level.

Social dialogue, first and foremost, is one of the fundamental principles of democracy which, we hope, will one day reign in our region and throughout the world, with a view to achieving justice and equality.

*Original Spanish: Mr COLMENARES GOYO
(Government, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)*

I am addressing this plenary on behalf of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. I welcome the Report of the ILO Director-General on equitable migration. Equality of rights for migrant workers is one of the main guarantees of our labour legislation. The main aims of the ILO are to promote working rights and opportunities for decent work, improve social protection, and strengthen dialogue by taking up work-related issues. Promoting labour rights cannot run counter to dialogue, but dialogue cannot be an excuse for preventing the progressive nature of our labour rights.

Dialogue is a tool for recognizing the diversity of positions of various actors, such as employers and workers. Dialogue must be an opportunity for meeting, for seeking joint solutions, but must always be aimed at promoting labour rights. Dialogue is broad not because of the quantity of actors, but rather because of its ability to understand the positions of others, with mutual recognition and non-punishment. When dialogue is aimed at destroying labour rights and reducing social protection this is

not in harmony with the ILO's principles. This is not social dialogue; really this is anti-social dialogue.

Our Government has been concerned by hearing at recent Conferences more and more complaints from Workers who say that dialogue bodies are failing to recognize their rights and are a hindrance to the most elementary of requests. There are a great many forums where we are seeing a lack of labour standards designed to protect or promote dialogue and labour rights because closed positions have been taken in dialogue that are preventing us from moving ahead in harmony. We could think that the problem lies in the dialogue itself, yet no, the real problem is the actors who are intervening in dialogue without really participating in it. They are undermining dialogue and turning it into an anti-dialogue, an anti-social dialogue. This is a virus that can shatter the real principles of dialogue promoted by the ILO.

The need for consensus cannot be substituted by blackmail, by a market where rights are undermined. Debates cannot be replaced by distorted conclusions to suit special interests. In the Committee on the Application of Standards Workers are calling for countries not on the list to revise their individual cases, but it is becoming increasingly clear that some countries are being included on the list not for any valid reason, but simply on a whim.

Dialogue cannot be imposed to destroy labour rights. If the monitoring bodies are used to satisfy whims, if they deviate from the goal of promoting labour rights to focus on political interests, if the conclusions are prewritten to favour a given position, then we are breaking the very backbone of the credibility of the ILO.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, over the past 14 years, has been affected by attempted coups, economic sabotage, media campaigns, economic closure and terrorist attacks, which have impacted our economy. However, they have never managed to destroy working rights or, in particular, undermine social security. We have been able to safeguard for all workers a minimum living wage. This minimum wage is also paid to 2.5 million pensioners. We have reduced the unemployment rate to 7.2 per cent, extreme poverty to under 5 per cent, and we have met the MDGs in advance.

Our unforgettable President Chavez did his utmost to safeguard social security and protect labour rights. He was instrumental in the adoption of a Constitution which enshrined trade union freedom, the right to collective bargaining, and the right to strike, and he left us a working-class President – Nicolas Maduro – who will continue to protect labour rights.

But we are being pressed to hold dialogue with those who in the past have destroyed labour rights and the social security of our people. Even worse, some countries are calling for a dialogue designed to destroy labour rights and undermine social security and are doing so in the name of the ILO. This is completely absurd.

We make an emphatic appeal to the Director-General of the ILO, as has been reflected on by the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC), to ensure that we focus on the ILO governance bodies that lack objectivity and transparency. They are used for political ends against progressive governments that are already guaranteeing their workers' rights.

Indeed, the Committee on Freedom of Association and the Committee of Experts, under the same ILO department, have been losing credibility because they are functioning without objectivity or transparency. This sorely damages the ILO and tarnishes its good name, leading to a loss of credibility and respect.

The Director-General took up the challenge of improving the ILO supervisory system. My Government is hoping for him to see it through and here he can count on our help. We are prepared to engage in a real social dialogue. We know how to listen, we know how to coordinate and revise our positions when necessary, but we are not going to undermine the promotion of labour rights or social security, because these are our main goals as a Government and they should be those of the ILO.

Original Chinese: Mr QIU (Government, China)

The Chinese Government delegation welcomes the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. It is very meaningful to discuss this issue in the Conference.

Given the various causes, addressing infringements of workers' rights in labour migration calls for an integrated approach. The most important step in this regard is to boost economic growth and create more and better jobs.

The Chinese Government places great importance on expanding employment through multiple channels. Over the past few years, confronted with volatile economic situations at home and abroad, we have, on the one hand, upheld the "employment first" strategy and worked hard to achieve sound interactions between economic development and job creation. A rational range of China's economic performance has been set, and growth maintenance and employment security have been identified as the bottom line, aiming to create more and better jobs based on economic development.

On the other hand, we have implemented and improved more proactive employment policies, strengthening vocational training, employment services and entrepreneurship support, and dedicated our efforts to addressing youth employment targeting in particular university graduates, and to creating jobs for migrant surplus labour from rural areas.

Thanks to our unremitting efforts, employment stability has been maintained over the past years. In 2013, 13.1 million jobs were created in urban areas and the urban registered unemployment rate was at a relatively low level at 4.1 per cent. The total number of rural migrant workers in China reached 268 million.

While vigorously expanding employment, the Government of China has paid particular attention to labour protection for the working people. The Government works closely with the trade unions and employers' organizations, faithfully implementing labour and social security laws and regulations, adjusting minimum wages in a timely manner, encouraging enterprises to exercise collective bargaining, improving the social insurance system and constantly expanding the insurance coverage, and reinforcing institutional capacities for labour dispute resolution and law enforcement through labour inspection. All rights of workers are defended. Moreover, the Chinese Government encourages its nationals to undertake labour cooperation projects overseas, and enhances, in accordance with the law, the administration of, and services to, foreign na-

tionals working in China, with a view to safeguarding the rights and interests both of Chinese nationals working overseas and foreigners working in China.

So we have made our contributions to the orderly development of international labour migration.

It is our common responsibility to create a better future for over 230 million migrant workers and achieve fair labour migration. We endorse the ILO's agenda for fair migration and would like to highlight actions in the following three areas.

First, more and better job opportunities need to be created in the countries of origin. Assistance should be provided to developing countries, the least developed countries in particular, to enable the countries to follow a sustainable development path and protect a large number of the population from being forced into irregular migration.

Second, countries of origin and destination should share responsibilities. Countries of destination should strengthen the protection of migrant workers in accordance with the law, and countries of origin need to enhance migration administration and services. More importantly, international cooperation between sending and receiving countries needs to be reinforced and the signing of bilateral labour cooperation agreements should be promoted to ensure migrants' fundamental rights.

Third, regulation and supervision need to be tightened up for private recruitment agencies that operate in the cross-border migration business. The intermediary agencies should be deterred from exploiting migrant workers through misinformation and deception, and such criminal activities as human trafficking should be vigorously cracked down upon.

Original German: Mr HUNDSTORFER (Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria)

I welcome the fact that we are dealing with the subject of fair migration, a major and challenging objective. How can the different views of countries of origin and countries of destination be reconciled in order to provide effective protection for migrant workers? And how can a small receiving country like Austria make a contribution?

The Report proposes eight potential components for an ILO agenda for fair migration. The key points include promoting a rights-based approach and seeking to balance the interests of the different countries involved. I feel that the strategy proposed to expand and optimize ILO activities relating to migration is essentially positive. However, I would like to express a few concerns and contribute some ideas on the subject.

Regarding point 1, I support the objective of promoting decent work in countries of origin in order to turn migration into an option rather than a necessity. Concerning point 2, I feel that the knowledge of ILO experts and their support for the development of regional integration processes can be useful. However, it must be left up to the ILO member States and the regions to determine the scope of such regional processes according to their needs and specific circumstances.

As regards the bilateral concept for well-regulated migration referred to in point 3, Austria is somewhat critical about this; we feel that national rules on labour migration should not make any distinctions according to national origin but take account of objective admission criteria determined by law. For example, all migrant workers in Austria, regard-

less of nationality, receive equal treatment under the law in terms of labour and social insurance.

With respect to points 6 and 7, which focus on a rights-based approach and international labour standards, the rights of migrants within the EU, including Austria, receive considerable attention and are already well protected. Countries of destination must have the possibility of requiring migrants to meet certain obligations, such as readiness to integrate. A multilateral approach obviously makes sense but will only succeed if we can find and pursue a middle way that is acceptable to sending and receiving countries, developing countries and developed countries.

Point 8 rightly points out that when it comes to labour migration, the tripartite structure of the ILO is needed to cover all angles, and this should be taken into account in reinforcement of the knowledge base and capacity building.

Austria fully supports points 4 and 5 concerning the setting up of fair recruitment processes and countering unacceptable situations faced by migrant workers, both men and women. In this context, Austria is particularly active in combating human trafficking, for which it is a country of both transit and destination. Since 2004, we have had a human trafficking taskforce which unites ministries, executive authorities, social partners and NGOs

in action against human trafficking and efforts to improve the situation of victims. The third National Action Plan is currently under way, with the participation of the Ministry of Social Affairs through its working group on human trafficking for labour exploitation.

We have formulated national indicators to detect exploitation of labour, with leaflets and guidelines to help the supervisory authorities. The ILO indicators served as a very useful starting point for this work. Furthermore, Austria has been facilitating labour market access for victims and witnesses of human trafficking. In order to ensure that all workers, particularly migrants, are paid the basic wage in their respective sectors, Austria adopted a law in 2011 to combat wage dumping and social dumping, with special wage controls.

The human rights of all migrant workers must be upheld. Austria has always been willing to participate constructively in international initiatives for fair labour migration. Accordingly, I would like to wish the ILO – the Conference, its Officers and the Director-General – every success for its current chairmanship of the United Nations Global Migration Group.

Ms DALLI (Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Malta)

Migration has always been a human reality. Closer to our time, the regular movement of millions of persons between countries and continents over the past few decades has reached unprecedented levels. This global phenomenon is stoked by various factors. These include the allure of perceived opportunities for decent work, better paid jobs, and escape from person-made or natural disasters or repressive societies.

At the same time, developed countries with ageing populations need to attract workers if their society is to continue to sustain acquired living and social protection standards. Obviously this is a welcome movement.

Complex challenges cannot be solved piecemeal. The work of the United Nations and the ILO for global respect of human rights, coupled with decent work for all, is acknowledged and ongoing. It is the basis for any just solution. It is unrealistic to expect the waves of migration to stop or dwindle in the absence of these two major pillars.

It is also inconceivable that human beings will not attempt to improve their lot through migration, when images of what is perceived as a better life are ubiquitous in today's media. Migration should be an option for an individual and not a necessity, or worse still, an issue of survival. Both migrant and host countries can benefit from this rapport if it is managed well.

Crucial to this is a respect for the individuality of the migrant, as well as respect by the migrant for the rules and way of life of the society where he or she has chosen to work and live.

Migrants face considerable difficulties in their quest for better opportunities including the possibility of exploitation or abuse while en route to their destination. Arrival in a new country brings with it exposure to different cultures, languages, religions, norms and laws which may be difficult to get used to, at least initially.

If such transitions are to be facilitated, migrants need to be prepared, prior to embarking on their journey, about what to expect on arrival at their destination. Orientation sessions and language training tailor-made to specific needs have to be available in the host country. Frustration, resentment or new inequalities may otherwise result.

The Maltese Government offers various courses to migrants through its publicly funded employment agency, as do local NGOs. Any prejudices in the host society also need addressing. These issues may be more pronounced where irregular migrants or asylum seekers are involved, requiring greater resources and effort.

As Members of the EU, where one of the founding principles is freedom of movement of workers, Maltese legislation does not make any distinction between the employment rights of workers of different nationalities, whether coming from an EU Member State or not.

The legal framework exists for access to health and security systems, equal treatment and prevention of discrimination at the place of work. My Government remains committed to working with NGOs and unions to ensure that migrants get a fair deal. We have also increased the capacity of the labour inspectorate to be in a better position to ensure universal compliance with legal requirements.

If managed well, migration can be a win-win situation where the host country is enriched by different cultures and ideas and immigrants can grow to contribute to, and feel part of, a new society. Immigrants will also have gained new experiences and skills and this knowledge transfer would prove useful should they return to their country of origin.

However, the resources of the destination country may not keep up with the demands placed on it, especially with regard to catering for the needs of irregular immigrants or asylum seekers.

Malta has in this regard been sorely tested over the past decade due to the arrival of unprecedented numbers of irregular immigrants to our shores, which on a per capita basis represents a big influx.

These developments require international cooperation and action. Malta has been insisting on re-

gional policies and a sharing of responsibilities for some time now. We congratulate the Director-General for highlighting the real situation faced by millions of migrants across the globe and for preparing a factual Report that provides a good basis for further discussion and action.

Ms RASMUSSEN (*Worker, Norway*)

We thank the ILO and Guy Ryder for addressing fair migration. This is an increasingly important topic, as migration and the migrant population have been increasing substantially in the last decades, and it is an important political issue in very many countries. The trade union movement plays a very important role in facilitating decent work for immigrants. Unions are colour-blind, and assuring equal wages for equal work for immigrants is both in the interest of the immigrants and the domestic workers.

We very much agree with the point made in the ILO Report (paragraph 42) that migrant workers must enjoy equal pay for work of equal value and be able to exercise their fundamental rights, including their union rights.

In Norway, the size of annual net immigration is almost 1 per cent of the population and we are facing challenges coping with this quite new situation. We work hard to organize migrant workers in the unions and the Government has initiated strong measures against social dumping and economic crime in business and labour markets.

The main drivers of migration are economic: differences in standards of living and in unemployment. The distinction between labour migration, migration by political asylum seekers and family reunion is not clear. They all want to enter the labour force in the host country. It is thus important to have a comprehensive policy.

High population growth and a rapid increase in the labour supply in poor countries contribute to pressure on global wage levels and also to future migration. Governments should step up the work for economic growth and decent pay. They should encourage, and contribute to, better population development in areas such as education for women. Rich countries should increase their support for development and unions should intensify the work for decent pay in the supply chain.

In most cases migration benefits the migrants, their home country and also the host country. However, migration affects different parts of the population differently. There is tougher competition for low-skilled jobs, especially for young people, and many of them are driven out of the labour market, never to enter it again.

There is little difference between new migrants and former migrants in the labour market. Migrants typically have higher unemployment rates than the rest of the population. High migration can make it more difficult to reduce this unemployment, to integrate immigrants into society and to obtain a high level of social cohesion.

Benefits and costs of immigration also depend on the level of unemployment in the receiving countries. In Europe, the rate of unemployment is at least 10 per cent. This makes immigration a challenging question. The lack of policies that can create sufficient economic growth and reduce unemployment contributes to the problem.

Fair migration is a central issue. We thank the ILO for organizing this important discussion.

Mr SANTOSO (*Employer, Indonesia*)

First of all, on behalf of the National Board of the Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO), I would like to congratulate Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja on his election as President of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

APINDO shares the spirit of the report entitled *World of Work 2014: Developing with jobs*. In fact, it is APINDO's vision as an organization to be actively involved in the creation and maintenance of a good business environment as the basis for Indonesia's national development.

APINDO has also been actively involved in the effort to create, nurture and maintain the harmonious and fair dynamics of industrial relations in Indonesia since the day of its establishment. We have been actively involved in social dialogue to pursue employees' welfare and productivity. It is not an easy task. However, APINDO keeps on taking great measures to create conducive and fair industrial relations through its involvement in minimum wage stipulation, compensation and social security policies for employees based on workers' productivity and competence through tripartite dialogue. It is believed that conflicts in industrial relations will be reduced to a minimum level, and will be peacefully solved for the benefit of all when all parties concerned are committed to pursuing dialogue among the social partners and all stakeholders.

APINDO has been consistently committed to the development of workers' skills. It is believed that the development of workers' competence is a treasure for all parties concerned in employment and Indonesia's economic development, particularly with a view to establishing the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015 and thus liberalizing the flow of skilled labour in the region.

APINDO has been giving competence-based training through the APINDO Training Centre (ATC), and the establishment of the Professional Certification Agency focusing on youth empowerment programmes.

APINDO also believes that recognition for the competence of Indonesian overseas workers is essential. In particular through its members in the outsourcing business, we have been continuously pursuing recognition from our foreign partners for Indonesian workers employed in various service sectors through the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA).

APINDO believes that a safe working environment for workers will bring out their best productivity and competence into businesses. We are actively promoting the realization of workers' social security as provided for under Indonesian Law No. 24 of 2011 concerning the Social Security Executive Board, which has been effective since the beginning of this year. APINDO strongly supports the continuous improvement of employees' welfare, particularly the provision of compensation and benefit schemes according to employee performance and productive capacity.

APINDO supports Indonesia's Better Work programme with a view not only to creating better working conditions but also to providing incentives for participating businesses, thereby inspiring other businesses to join in the programme. In addition, APINDO is promoting the policy relating to the protection, rights, obligations and social welfare of

migrant workers with a view to ensuring conformity with international Conventions.

For more than a decade, the promotion of job creation through domestic entrepreneurship, the creation of decent work and the establishment of productive and competitive business for Indonesia's vast labour force have been APINDO's major concerns. We have conducted training and workshops to empower Indonesian SMEs, which contribute up to 58.5 per cent of the country's GDP and, as of this year, employ more than 110 million workers. While most of these businesses are informal in nature, the sector promotes youth employment, green jobs, gender mainstreaming in business and empowerment for workers with disabilities, and addresses many more social issues through employment. It is APINDO's sincere hope that the entrepreneurship and commercial sustainability of such businesses are maintained and developed through the transition from the informal to the formal economy, as addressed by the Conference this year.

We sincerely hope that this year's session of the Conference will not only result in a commitment to improving workers' welfare but will also support business sustainability, business development and investment in the creation of decent work and better employment conditions. Together with the Government, the trade unions, the ILO and other related parties, APINDO will continuously promote conducive industrial relations, the development of workers' competence and productivity, and better working conditions and job creation as a form of active involvement in Indonesia's development.

Mr DAHAL (*Worker, Nepal*)

At the outset I would like to extend warm greetings to all delegates on behalf of the Nepali Trade Union Movement consisting of 11.8 million workers. I join my hands with you all to promote decent work through social dialogue and to address socio-economic issues that the workers of the world are facing.

Nepal is undergoing a transitional phase. We have brought about transformation from a unitary to federal state structure, from monarchy to a democratic republican order and from a feudal to an inclusive democratic electoral system. The country has been declared a secular State. However, due to the transitional phase, employment generation in Nepal is very low and more than 3.5 million Nepalese workers, including 100,000 women, are currently working abroad. Remittances sent by them constitute around 450 billion Nepali rupees (NPR), nearly 25 per cent of GDP. However, they do not get minimum wage, and their working conditions in destination countries are the worst. Some are compelled to undertake bonded labour. Around three dead bodies of workers are received each day from abroad. Such problems cannot be resolved without the co-operation of the destination countries. It is in this respect that we consider that the highly pertinent issues raised by the Director-General regarding migration need to be addressed in respective country contexts. International labour standards must be implemented and social security strengthened for workers in all situations.

Although the minimum wage in the formal sector is around US\$85 per month in our country, workers are compelled to work for below this amount. The greatest challenge, however, is the minimum wage for workers in the informal economy, who consti-

tute around 90 per cent of the total workforce. As the local authorities have no proper record of such workers, they do not get minimum wage. Hence, bringing about positive changes in the lives of workers both in the formal and informal economy has been our priority agenda and an important issue in our activism.

Social security is another major issue affecting workers. Following sustained pressure from trade unions, the Government of Nepal has established a contributory social security fund to cover health insurance, workplace accidents, maternity benefit and unemployment benefit. However, in the absence of a social security law, the fund is not functioning effectively.

In order to ensure political space for the working masses, we have demanded 10 per cent representation of workers in every representative body of the State. The issue of the right to organize is our major concern and we are continuing our joint campaign, through the Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee, for the ratification of Convention No. 87. Other important Conventions, like Conventions Nos 189, 102, and the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), are also on our priority list. Putting an end to forced labour and bondage in addition to child labour, ensuring one third representation of women, creating new jobs for Nepalese youth within the country and providing appropriate skills with modern technology based on local needs also feature among the Trade Union Movement's areas of work. We also advocate the need to address the issue of climate change and its negative impacts on workers as well as human life. It is only through the protection of the environment that we can control global warming and create green jobs.

It is encouraging to note that since the end of the decade-long armed conflict in Nepal, we have set important milestones. Drafting of a new Constitution within a year is the topmost priority of the country, which has received renewed impetus after the November 2013 elections to the second Constituent Assembly. All political parties are engaged in the process of early conclusion of the peace process, with the promulgation of a new Constitution, thereby ending the transition.

Nepal has striven to create an enabling environment for decent work, particularly by developing a labour policy and amending some legislation. However, these efforts are lagging behind due to the transitional situation of the country. We hope that the new Constitution will guarantee our fundamental principles and rights at work. Various political parties mentioned workers' issues in their manifestos for the Constituent Assembly election and provided assurances that those would be addressed in the new Constitution. The new Government has promised that it will initiate actions following our demands for ratification of ILO Conventions and introduce at least four social protection schemes in the new fiscal budget. We are highly enthusiastic about the implementation of the DWCP in collaboration with the ILO in Nepal.

The International Labour Conference plays an important role in addressing contemporary labour issues effectively. People from the world of work are observing us and our decisions that will affect them in their work. Therefore, I urge all to consider seriously the issues arising during the opening ad-

dress by the Director-General and contribute to obtaining good outcomes.

To conclude, I would like to state that we need to develop and implement coherent labour policies and labour laws in order to create a conducive working environment as Nepal is set to enter into a phase of fast economic growth. We recognize that it will be challenging to address many issues including unemployment, underemployment and migration, but we are confident that our continuous dialogue will lead us to attain the objectives that we have set together with the Government and employers.

Original Arabic: Mr GHARIANI (Employer, Tunisia)

I am pleased, personally and on behalf of Tunisian employers, to offer my warmest congratulations to the President and the Vice-President on being elected to preside over this session of the Conference. I am also honoured to thank Mr Ryder, ILO Director-General, and Ms Velásquez Avilés, Chairperson of the Governing Body, for the Organization's activities over the past year and particularly for the support provided to my country, Tunisia, be that from Geneva, the Cairo Regional Office, or from ACT/EMP in collaboration with the Tunisian Union for Industry, Trade and Handicrafts.

The decisions taken by the Governing Body point the Organization in the right direction to enable economic enterprises to improve their structures and expertise and thus promote growth, thereby ensuring implementation and accomplishment of the Decent Work Agenda.

The report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body addresses the issue of the partnership between the private sector and the public sector, and states that the Governing Body considers this partnership to be a source of added value for all parties, and that it responds to the priorities set in ILO programmes. We thank and support the Governing Body for this approach and urge it to implement technical cooperation and assistance programmes over the coming year in countries such as Tunisia, through committees of experts, to enable them to set up partnerships in their development work.

I would also like to thank ACT/EMP and the Cairo Office for the support extended to employers in the Maghreb region, thanks to the establishment of a series of seminars on employers' social affairs for the Maghreb region. Four meetings have been held, the latest focusing on the right to strike, which were organized in collaboration with the IOE. We are also planning to organize a forum for dialogue with trade unions, in collaboration with our colleagues from Morocco and Algeria.

Social dialogue in Tunisia is improving. Indeed, following the conclusion of a tripartite social agreement in early 2013, we are currently working on the establishment of a national tripartite social dialogue council in Tunisia, with ILO support, which would be responsible for organizing social dialogue based on its three pillars – negotiation, consultation and exchange of information – and for playing an advisory role on legislation covered by the economic and social councils.

We also plan to introduce a legal framework for trade union pluralism in respect of employers and workers, with a view to setting the requisite criteria for trade union representation. This week, we launched a fresh round of collective bargaining negotiations in a new form. In fact, they no longer focus exclusively on considering pay increases and

reviewing collective agreements, but must also address important and fundamental issues through two tripartite committees. Once established, one will be responsible for dealing with output and productivity, and the other for looking at purchasing power and its components, namely prices, taxation, output, sectoral policies and seeking ways to curb inflation.

The critical situation that we experienced in Tunisia after the 2011 revolution was only overcome by strengthening dialogue between the social partners. This national dialogue, which went beyond the social aspect to extend to political and economic dialogue, at the beginning of this year led to political stability and a peaceful transition to democracy, despite the economic difficulties that affected public finances and the impact of the global situation.

National dialogue on the political situation was organized for a group of four, consisting of workers' and employers' organizations, the Bar Council and human rights organizations. This group was behind the success of the dialogue, which helped diffuse the political crisis.

Employers played a key role in bringing together the various points of views and in resolving the conflicts between the different political parties, thanks to their credibility and neutrality.

The Director-General's Report addresses the issue of migrant workers. Tunisia was for many years a labour-exporting country. Today, a large number of strategic sectors need labour. That is why we are becoming a host country for foreign labour. We believe that this change must take place within a framework of respect for fundamental labour rights and our country's obligations concerning social justice and non-discrimination.

Over the past year, we have witnessed human rights violations globally, which amount to crimes, expressing racial discrimination and breaching the fundamental rights of workers. Such crimes have occurred in different parts of the world, and particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where there are ongoing physical assaults, as well as shameful occupation and unfair settlement. For this reason, the ILO is called upon, more than ever, to ensure that its interventions are more in-depth and that the other UN agencies and tripartite partners from member States exert greater pressure in this connection.

Original Spanish: Mr CONTRERAS (Government, Guatemala)

Guatemalans look to the future with optimism. Today, we have many opportunities and spaces at our disposal which we did not have in the past, thanks to the support of the ILO, our friendly neighbouring countries and partners.

Over the past 28 months, we have been involved in a veritable race in order to meet with our international obligations; in order to express our intentions and commit to acting on them, to build institutions and make them function in a way that benefits both workers and employers in Guatemala.

In June 2012, a dispute was brought regarding failure to meet commitments under the labour chapter of the Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR–CAFTA) with the United States. That very same month at the International Labour Conference, a group of trade union confederations requested of the ILO that it apply article 26 of its Constitution and set up a commission of inquiry to evaluate the situation regarding the application of Convention No. 87. Ten months

later, in March and April, the Government of Guatemala signed two international commitments: a Memorandum of Understanding with the Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO, and an agreement of good faith between the Governments of Guatemala and the United States to resolve the dispute that had been brought by the United States. The two documents signed by the Government of Guatemala include 21 specific commitments, the fulfilment of which should ensure the physical integrity of Guatemalan workers who belong to trade unions, their leaders and those who intend to organize. These commitments are essentially to guarantee respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining, and they were compiled and presented to the Governing Body in October 2013, in the form of a roadmap and a time frame. The fulfilment of these commitments is a vital priority for the Government of Guatemala, for a fundamental reason. The roadmap will lead to respect for the integrity of Guatemalan workers, respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining, and the promotion of decent work, with all its implications, in Guatemala; these are all constitutional obligations of the Government and political priorities of the President, Otto Pérez Molina. When, out of an economically active population of 6 million, only 1.2 million people are covered by the social security system, that is, only one in six workers, then it is the responsibility of the Government of the Republic to act, and to do so efficiently, in all areas necessary to change this.

We have carried out a number of results-oriented actions. We have strengthened the labour inspection services: from 8,000 inspections in 2011, we moved to inspecting 36,000 companies in 2013, and more than 1,500 sanctions have been applied in response to labour-related allegations. We have made the procedure for registering trade unions shorter and easier. We have established two working groups as violence-prevention mechanisms and, with the invaluable support of the ILO, we have strengthened the Labour Market Observatory and made the national employment system a more effective intermediary between the supply and demand sides of the labour market. Our priority is to make sure that Guatemalans have decent work. We have also made an effort, led by the Minister of Labour himself, to promote meaningful consultation and dialogue with the indigenous Mayan people of Guatemala, to find out about their internal consultation processes and to reproduce these at a national level within the framework of Convention No. 169.

We are now starting to focus on our migrant workers – we are endeavouring to create a proper labour market, and we have developed a migration policy based on a deeply human concept of immigration as a right and an inherent freedom for men and women workers. Here we had the valuable support of the Director-General's conception of migration, and his proposals on this relevant topic. We have worked on all possible areas, and we will continue to work with a holistic vision of our problems and our obligations. It is with humility but determination that we promise, today, in this Conference, that, inspired by a profound sense of duty, we will honour our commitments to the ILO and to our trading partners. We are going to comply with our commitments not as a Government, but as a nation, a unity of all the national sectors that together give us a decent homeland.

Mr PATIL (*Employer, India*)

We are meeting at a time when the global economic scenario is not very satisfactory. The global leaders are all aware of the situation and hopefully, with their efforts, things are changing for the better.

On the home front, after a significant increase in GDP over the past few years, growth has slowed down. There are, however, signs on the horizon that things will change for the better. For one, governance is likely to improve significantly, and the policy paralysis which has impacted the country in recent times is set to be a thing of the past. The mood in the country is buoyant and hopefully this will help accelerate the pace of change.

India in recent years has launched a series of poverty alleviation and social security measures. Unfortunately, the implementation of these measures and schemes leaves a lot to be desired and we hope that, with the new political dispensation, things will improve going forward.

India now needs to move from poverty alleviation to poverty reduction measures. Given the size and complexity of the issues, it is indeed a daunting task. Generating meaningful employment to reduce poverty needs to be our national priority number one.

Several measures need to be put in place, on a war footing, to generate employment and improve employability. Generating self-employment and income-generation measures can provide major relief.

Economic growth, not just purely focused on GDP but based on growth with a human face, is the need of the hour. This also calls for massive growth in infrastructure, skills building and other measures to improve employability. What can also help is a better linkage of education with employability, improvements in health through provision of basic health amenities such as clean drinking water and sanitation, preventive and positive health-care measures. In addition, one cannot afford to lose sight of a whole host of diversity issues, mainly relating to gender, the socially and economically disadvantaged, and differently-abled people. The country would be ill-advised to neglect these. MSMEs are engines of economic growth as well as employment. They need to be nurtured and supported.

Active labour market promotion initiatives need to significantly improve and be jobseeker friendly. There are excellent examples of such schemes in the region, and these should be adapted and scaled up to our needs.

India is uniquely positioned to be a global manufacturing hub. Manufacturing also has great potential to create jobs across sectors and geographic locations. Global leadership in manufacturing can potentially be achieved through the concerted efforts of the social partners.

Some adaptation of labour laws may, however, be necessary to accomplish this. The move from informality to formality is happening but needs to be encouraged. Here also, the adaptation of labour laws can be a great help.

Decent work is a dream and an aspirational goal. Efforts to achieve decent work, work which protects and promotes human dignity, is the need of the hour. The ILO has a significant role to play in all this by taking measures such as: promoting and sustaining a positive policy environment; making available to governments and the social partners global good practices and mechanisms to promote

employment and employability; and encouraging and supporting needs-based capacity building.

At this point in history, the social partners are uniquely well positioned to achieve this.

We can certainly do with the good wishes and goodwill of the global community to achieve this.

With these words, I thank you for your patient attention.

Original Arabic: Mr EL-GHAZI (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Algeria)

I would like to express my congratulations to the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to guide the work of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the member States that have contributed to the election of my country as a titular member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

The United Nations General Assembly, in December 1990, adopted the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, thereby ushering in a new era in the history of international action to define the rights of migrant workers and to guarantee the protection and respect of their rights. Indeed, this is a far-reaching international Convention based on previous Conventions, studies carried out by UN human rights bodies, the conclusions and recommendations of meetings of experts, discussions and resolutions pertaining to the issue of the rights of workers within UN agencies in recent years.

The evaluation of the application of the provisions of this Convention since its adoption reveals that very little has been done in this regard. This is mainly due to the non-ratification of this Convention by the migrant-receiving countries.

The contribution of migrants to the development of their countries of origin and their countries of destination largely hinges on the protection of their fundamental rights with regard to all forms of discrimination against foreigners.

Indeed, the economic and financial crisis highlights the need to take measures to protect the rights of migrants. Moreover, the growing number of countries which have ratified the relevant international instruments is proof that the international community is increasingly committed to the rights of migrants.

Based on proposed rules for several multilateral meetings, many countries have taken legislative and regulatory measures in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and related international Conventions.

Algeria has ratified Convention No. 97, as well as the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

In this respect, Algerian domestic legislation does not discriminate at all with regard to the rights and the protection of national workers and migrant workers, who currently represent 125 different nationalities and work in our country in accordance with our domestic legislation. Fundamental labour rights, such as the right to freedom of association, social protection, and OSH are all guaranteed to foreign workers. Foreign workers also enjoy the same rights as Algerian nationals, especially with regard to the respect of their physical and moral

integrity, their dignity, and protection against any form of distinction, other than those based on their professional skills.

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

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to greet you from this rostrum in the magnificent setting of the *Palais des Nations*, because the cause that brings us together is a just cause that concerns each of us, for the fight against social injustice around the world must be seen as a goal to be attained at any price in order to achieve social justice in our respective countries.

I would like to congratulate the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the President on their election as Officers of the Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General of the International Labour Office for his excellent work since his appointment as the head of our Organization.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, under the leadership of its President, reaffirms its support to all action that will strengthen the impact of the ILO on the international arena and the multilateral system.

Furthermore, the support provided to my country in employment, work and social security by the International Labour Office clearly demonstrates our country's excellent relations with this institution.

The theme chosen for this year's session of the Conference is "building a future with decent work". The current development of the world of work is a source of unlimited wealth for the progress of the planet with vast potential.

I would like to thank workers, employers, and political leaders who, through the International Labour Organization, have shown that a balance can be struck in globalization between economic imperatives and consideration for social realities.

The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which I am leading, is particularly pleased to be able to actively participate in the work of this session as the agenda items include, among others, the adoption of an instrument establishing a framework to facilitate the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy, a discussion on supplementing Convention No. 29 in order to rectify implementation gaps by, in particular, strengthening preventive measures, the protection and compensation of victims and the eradication of forced labour, and a recurrent discussion on employment.

In my view, our efforts should concentrate on good governance through the reform required to strengthen the ILO's capacity to take action globally and to promote decent work throughout the world.

Tripartism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has enabled the 38th Session of the Governing Body of the African Regional Centre for Labour Administration (CRADAT) to be held, amendments to several provisions of the Labour Code to be adopted at the 30th Ordinary Session of the National Labour Council, non-presiding judges to be appointed to industrial tribunals, a ministerial decree to be signed on the schedule for trade union elections, and workshops to be held on the reintroduction of training of trainers for labour inspectors and on the validation of the national training programme for inspectors.

Regarding employment, a tripartite workshop was organized to finalize national employment policy, a round table on private job placement services was held, and the National Employment Office's electronic portal was launched.

In terms of vocational training, in 2013 we arranged placements for 31,409 interns, and trained 216 young people and 403 trainers.

In the field of social security, it is worth highlighting: the draft laws on the Social Security Code as well as on mutual benefit societies; the national programme for social protection; and the campaign to raise awareness of health and safety in the workplace.

I also wish to commend the Report of the Director-General on fair migratory policies and the strengthened measures for the implementation of ILO Convention No. 29.

Regarding the transition from an informal economy, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has responded by setting up a one-stop shop.

I will conclude by wishing you every success in your participation at this session.

Original Chinese: Mr HUANG (Employer, China)

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session of the Conference and to express our confidence that, under his leadership, this session of the Conference will succeed in all its aims.

Since its founding 95 years ago, the ILO has observed the principle of tripartism and closely cooperated with the governments, trade unions and employers' organizations of its member States in promoting social justice and the Decent Work Agenda.

In his Report to this session, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, the Director-General calls on ILO member countries to protect the rights of the world's nearly 232 million cross-border migrant workers, which include non-discrimination, access to productive employment and to job security, the entitlement to social security, social inclusiveness and social dialogue. The Report underlines the importance of the commitment of the tripartite constituents to help ensure decent work for migrant workers. We express our appreciation and support for the Report.

As the country with the largest population in the world, China is experiencing internal migration on a massive scale. According to official figures, there were 270 million migrant workers in China by the end of 2013. These migrant workers have become an important part of the industrial workforce and have made an immense contribution to creating wealth, promoting rural and urban development, and bringing about the modernization of China.

As the representative employers' organization, the China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) participates in the national tripartite mechanism for industrial relations and encourages enterprises to build harmonious industrial relations, enjoining them to treat migrant workers equally and to ensure reasonable working and living conditions. The Confederation promotes social inclusiveness and social security for migrant workers.

At the same time, enterprises encounter difficulties and challenges which are reported by the Confederation to the Government. In that context, it appeals to the Government to create an enabling business environment and to assist enterprises in surmounting the difficulties that they face in their

production and operation, and to help them realize the goals of green transformation and industrial restructuring.

As the process of globalization gains momentum, more and more Chinese enterprises are going global in their approach and extending their businesses to other countries. These enterprises conscientiously observe the laws and regulations in the destination countries, protect the rights and interests of workers, in particular the migrant workers, and safeguard their own rights and interests in compliance with the law.

The CEC hopes to take full advantage of the multilateral platform of the ILO to urge all Chinese enterprises operating abroad to attach importance to labour migration, to build harmonious industrial relations, to integrate themselves into their local societies and to realize sustainable development.

China has made remarkable achievements in economic development and social progress since launching its process of reform and opening up over the last 30 years. Enterprises with different forms of ownership have made great progress during that period. The Confederation has worked hard in recent years to build harmonious industrial relations and to encourage enterprises to create more job opportunities, with a view to accelerating development, promoting decent work and fostering the skills of both employers and workers. At the same time, it encourages enterprises to play a more active role in this process of maintaining steady growth, pursuing structural adjustment and advancing reform.

China is in the process of building a society that is reasonably prosperous in all respects and realizing its dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Enterprises and entrepreneurs play a significant role in promoting economic and social development and constitute a major force in achieving decent work and the harmonious society which is critical to eliminating poverty and promoting the sustainable development of society.

We therefore call on the international community and the ILO to provide more support to entrepreneurs. The CEC is ready, as it has always been, to engage in communication and to cooperate with the ILO and employers' organizations of other countries in striving for a better future.

Mr ZARB (Worker, Malta)

Decent work represents an approach to development and as such needs the building of respect for international core labour standards and social dialogue. Labour standards and social dialogue help in many ways to enable development processes by encouraging stronger standards of governance and promoting social progress.

In 1999, the ILO developed and promoted the concept of Decent Work and since then, the concept of Decent Work has found its way into international labour policy where the importance of employment and social protection policy to defend the standard of living of workers has been underlined.

The success is all credited to the ILO. The ILO has promoted highly, and without restraint, the opportunities for men and women to obtain respectable working conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity.

However, the ILO needs to be more aggressive and requires the full support of the United Nations to deal effectively with situations where decent

work is a far cry. Nonetheless, I want to applaud the Director-General, Mr Ryder, for putting yet again this year the issue of decent work alongside the issue of migrant workers in his Report for this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

However, while welcoming the progress and all the efforts made towards bringing decent work to the attention of the world, it is very depressing to learn that a recent ILO study estimates that there are around 21 million people who are victims of forced labour globally.

Therefore, poor working conditions and lack of respect for human dignity is a challenge not only for the ILO, but also for trade unions around the world to work harder in the struggle against all types of slavery in the world of work.

In this context, it is my view that the concept of Decent Work will not succeed if governments and employers do not understand how important it is that respect for core labour standards has to be built on development processes, and not on the assumption that higher labour standards and social equality will naturally grow alongside economic development, since economic growth does not guarantee decent employment.

On the local front of my country, for the last decade we have been faced with an influx of migrant workers both from European countries and developing countries, mostly sub-Saharan. Unfortunately, most of them are being subjected to precarious work. The General Workers' Union (GWU) has taken this problem very seriously, so much so that we never cease to work harder and we took every step to convince successive Maltese Governments to act strongly and stop the trend of low-paid work and indecent working conditions.

While acknowledging that there are still several hurdles facing us, it is nevertheless satisfactory for us to note that legislative measures have been introduced by the Maltese Labour Government to curb exploitation, mainly in public procurement, so as to improve the wages and conditions of workers in various industrial sectors. This also shows that there is a growing sense of commitment within government circles to ensure that companies who do not offer decent working conditions are excluded from tendering for public contracts.

The issue of migrant workers is a big problem for a small island State like Malta. In fact, this problem is not only putting the public purse under stress, but it has also brought new challenges to trade unions, particularly the GWU, to achieve decent working conditions for migrant workers too. First, because migrant workers are human beings and should be treated equally and with dignity and, second, to avoid situations of unjust competition with native workers, as migrant workers are very often taking up the low-paid jobs and accepting indecent conditions that Maltese workers are refusing.

We firmly believe in the principle of decent work and, even if we have to rock the boat alone, we will remain committed to working hard in our country until all precarious jobs are replaced by work which will provide decent and better living conditions to workers and their families, with dignity and respect.

Original French: Mr DIARRA (Minister for Labour, the Public Service and Relations with Institutions, Mali)

Over the last two years, Mali has gone through the worst moments in its history. The occupation of the

northern regions of the country by rebel movements, terrorist groups, jihadists and drug traffickers has had incalculable human, economic and social consequences.

The political and institutional crisis born from this terrorism has led to the suspension of almost all official development assistance and has led to a major economic downturn. Whole sectors of the national economy, such as tourism, the hotel sector and the construction industry, have borne the full brunt of this crisis, leading to the closure of many small businesses and the laying off, and indeed dismissal, of their workers.

With the help of the international community, Mali has been able to hold free, transparent elections and establish credible institutions. Today, with the resumption of international cooperation, we can live in hope.

Regarding the Report of the Director-General for this year, we share its main conclusions and I would like to commend the efforts of the Office to prompt the member States of the ILO to put decent jobs at the heart of their policies, programmes and development projects.

This approach is the best means for all States to build their people's future through the implementation of more inclusive policies to create quality jobs and break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. In particular, in post-conflict countries such as Mali, this is also undoubtedly the road to economic growth.

This is why the Malian Government intends, in the near future, to sign a DWCP (2014–16) with the ILO, the DWCP for sustainable development in Mali. This will provide a national framework for all actions relating to the realization of decent work. This country programme will focus on: promoting decent jobs for young men and women in order to achieve sustainable development; strengthening and extending social protection, in particular for segments of the population affected by the crisis; and gradually implementing decent work through social dialogue in order to ensure sustainable recovery in Mali. We have noted with interest the salient features of the biggest programmes implemented in the African region.

In addition to the Director-General's Report, my delegation is delighted to see the recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment on the agenda for this session of the Conference. We are all the more satisfied because jobs are, today, an absolute priority for our Government. A ten-year programme for job promotion (PRODEFPE) has been in place since 2012. There should be particular emphasis on the issue of jobs for the handicapped, as well as on migratory issues. In Mali, a specialized department within the National Employment Agency has been established to deal with migratory issues.

My delegation has read with great interest the Office's report entitled *Employment policies for sustainable recovery and development, Recurrent discussion under the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*. This second recurrent discussion in 2014 is an opportunity for the tripartite constituents of the ILO to critically review the measures taken by member States, in order to ascertain the effectiveness of actions taken to date and to examine options for the future.

In 2013, Mali established a national observatory for jobs and training in order to enable the various

actors in the labour market to work coherently together and synergize their actions. This observatory is entrusted with conducting surveys and research on jobs and training, and with gathering, processing, analysing and disseminating information about the job market.

In 2014, the Government launched a review of the 1998 national employment policy, accompanied by an action plan. It also adopted, in March 2013, a national labour policy and accompanying action plan for 2013–15. The implementation of these various policies will contribute to better promotion of full employment in decent and productive jobs for young people and women, and will thereby initiate the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Lastly, the Malian Government has presented for adoption the documents for the ratification of Convention No. 122.

Original Arabic: Mr KAFICHERRAT (Worker, Morocco)

On behalf of the Workers' delegation of Morocco, under the General Union of Moroccan Workers, I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election to preside over this session of the International Labour Conference, which I am convinced will be a real success.

On this occasion, we commend the efforts of the Office to ensure the conditions necessary for the smooth running of the Conference as the Organization approaches its 100th anniversary.

The agenda of this session contains topics of utmost importance related to production and producers with a view to re-establishing the stability that is needed to be able to emerge from the global crisis which has had serious repercussions on social, economic and financial balance. The crisis has triggered, at varying degrees throughout the world, economic recession and unemployment. It has also led to an increase in poor-quality and informal work, and has deprived many people of their right to use advanced technologies for the generation of real development and sidelined them from the scientific creativity and innovation that is vital for progress and development.

Our Organization represents a powerful productive force. It should thus impress on international, financial and political organizations to prevent chaos and the recourse to extremism as reflected in the recent European elections.

The task of the ILO is to use its tools of persuasion to prevent disruptions and the resulting misfortune, such as the terrorism we all reject, the destruction of institutions and the emergence of generations which have not had the right to peace and tranquillity, and the only concern of which is vengeance. When will the question of Palestine receive a just solution? How long will the blood of innocent people continue to be shed in most parts of the world?

The performance of such functions by the ILO must be coupled with national support measures. To that end, Morocco has launched several initiatives in the fields of human rights and human resource development, which remain to be supported and expanded.

Moroccan workers, who are keen to guarantee all necessary conditions to make a qualitative leap to overcome the crisis and the challenges of globalization, have voiced, from within their representative trade unions, their rejection of unpopular govern-

ment policies which have increased hopelessness among young people who are affected by the rise in unemployment, and the discontent of workers owing to increased dismissals and a lack of freedom of association. Furthermore, Convention No. 87 has not yet been ratified by Morocco, and section 288 of the Penal Code, under which union members and workers can be prosecuted on grounds of interference with the freedom to work, has not been repealed. Many social gains have been jeopardized. Purchasing power has declined owing to a rise in consumption needs. Social dialogue, although institutionalized, has been paralysed. We have rejected these policies and, in our capacity as trade unions, have called for the organization of national demonstrations by workers, strikes, protest movements and recourse to other means of legal protest to ask the Government to fulfil its commitments, apply the provisions of relevant agreements, and re-engage in tripartite social dialogue and avoid unilateral decisions in order to speedily find solutions to the problems of workers and employers, who undoubtedly have shared interests.

Original Arabic: Ms MAHMOUD (Minister of Human Resources Development and Labour, Sudan)

The Sudanese delegation would like to start by thanking the member States who supported the election of Sudan as a titular member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

The Sudanese delegation would also like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report, which addresses a fundamental global issue – migration. We hope that this Report will strike a chord with all participants at this session and with specialists, with a view to developing a clear strategy for the problems of migration.

We recognize the importance of the statement contained in the Director-General's Report on the link between migration and the social dimension of globalization and the possibility of improving the global economy by incorporating a social dimension, that is, social justice and CSR.

The world is increasingly confronted by migrant workers fleeing poverty and seeking work and a better life. This is a natural consequence of the global capitalist regime and the market economy, which dominates internationally in the absence of policies for social protection, fairness and balance between markets. This is why, as mentioned in the Director-General's Report, migration is mostly the flow of labour from the poorest countries to affluent countries. Is this voluntary migration? And what is the definition of freedom of choice, in this context, for a person who is compelled to leave their country in search of a decent life? In this respect, we maintain that the policies regulating migration and workers' protection are insufficient. They should be supplemented by social policies to try to achieve a fair distribution of wealth around the world and to confer a social responsibility on the richest countries, which should increase investment and monitor the exploitation of labour in their own countries, thereby improving their domestic production. It would thereby be possible to avoid the serious psychological consequences of migration for migrants and their families, as well as the negative economic effects on countries of origin, since countries like Sudan export many migrants around the world, resulting in a brain drain and the loss of the workers needed to build the domestic economy.

It is fair to say that the heavy price of migration is paid not only by migrant workers but also by their countries of origin, who lose able brains and skilled hands. Remittances sent by migrants can never offset the loss of human capital.

Sudan is one of the main countries to experience the positive and negative impact of migration. Indeed, it is a vast space for a large number of migrants from different countries employed in different sectors of the Sudanese labour market. Sudanese society has lived side by side with migrant workers for thousands of years and willingly accepts migrants, who are arriving in increasing numbers – particularly from neighbouring countries – in search of work and a decent life in Sudan. Sudan has granted four freedoms: the President of the Republic has adopted decisions affording protection of the freedom of movement, employment, residence and ownership.

We reaffirm that Sudanese labour law makes no distinction between migrant workers and Sudanese workers regarding the entirety of benefits and rights. Furthermore, a migrant worker has the same right to recourse before the labour offices as a Sudanese worker. We also note that there are many migrants in an irregular situation who are accepted by Sudanese society and whose rights are guaranteed by the State. At the same time, many Sudanese workers have emigrated to a number of countries. Some years ago the figures were stable. However, following the global economic crisis and the increase in unemployment around the world, Sudanese workers have begun to experience problems with working conditions in destination countries. With regard to regular migration, we confirm that Sudan checks whether work contracts are valid, and the work to be performed and the working conditions are decent before allowing citizens to emigrate. Migrant workers are therefore protected by domestic law. The situation for irregular migration, which it is a real challenge to monitor, is different. These migrants do not receive any guarantees regarding work or a decent life.

Social dialogue with the tripartite partners is under way to amend several laws to guarantee decent work, increase wages and improve living standards. In this regard, we highlight the agreement to increase the minimum wage and the collective agreement on private sector salaries that has been signed by the employers, the Government and the Federation of Workers.

Last year, Sudan carried out a study on the labour market with the assistance of the ILO. This study showed that the rate of unemployment rose in 2013 from 16.4 per cent to 18.8 per cent. The report on the matter indicates the need to support vocational and technical training in Sudan, as well as the need to help Sudan to combat employment and provide more job opportunities.

I would like to thank the ILO for the support that it provides to Sudan.

Mr URAI MANUFOLAU (*Worker, Fiji*)

Fiji, as you know, is ruled under a dictatorship by a former military commander who controls and censors the media.

At the outset, allow me to thank the Director-General for the great work done in ensuring and reminding the regime of the importance of respecting and observing the core labour standards that had been ratified by a former, democratic Government.

Workers in Fiji go through great difficulties, trade union officials and workers have been assaulted, harassed and detained, for no reason but being members and leaders of the trade union movement. Today, as I speak, all unions and workers in the public sector, statutory organizations, government-owned companies and banking institutions are marginalized through the Essential National Industries (Employment) Decree (ENI), where all rights and privileges of union members are removed.

The ENI outlaws professional trade unionists, eliminates existing qualitative agreements, restricts industrial actions, strengthens sanctions against legally striking workers, bans overtime and allowances for workers operating 24-hour shifts, and makes provision for unprofessional bargaining agents. Workers, under the ENI, do not have the right to judicial recourse in disputes over rights, and the union left line was eradicated through the abolition of check-offs.

The Prime Minister, through a letter to the Director-General in 2012, had committed to reviewing the ENI and provisions in other legislation, in conformity with core Conventions which Fiji had ratified. Through the assurance of this letter, the tripartite Employment Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) deliberated and deleted the provisions of the ENI which were identified as offending and in breach of core Conventions.

However, the regime has made a complete turnaround in its commitments. First, they accepted an ILO mission to Fiji to look at breaches in Conventions Nos 87 and 98, and then expelled them after their arrival. The regime's new position is that the tripartite body merely advises the Minister of Labour. If there is any decision to be made on the ENI, it will be made at a political level. Further, the regime in December 2013 extended the provisions of the ENI to cover municipal workers, timber workers and the National Fire Authority, while making threats to further extend the provisions to the sugar and tourism sectors, if workers make more demands.

There is no intention by the regime to protect and promote the rights of workers and respect international labour standards. It confirmed this through a unilaterally designed Constitution, enacted on 6 September 2013, wherein all draconian legislation, including the ENI, remains in force.

A national minimum wage was imposed by the regime last year without consulting its social partners. A pittance – US\$1 an hour is the rate it decided – hardly sufficient to provide a decent living wage. In comparison, the Pacific islands of Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and the Cook Islands pay a more respectable minimum wage, which was achieved through tripartite consultation. A low minimum wage is argued by the regime to attract investors and bring about better economic growth. The reality is quite the opposite: the low minimum wage only encourages employers who are paying more to reduce the rate of pay for their employees and argue that they are complying with minimum wage standards.

Fiji has a judicial system, but there are diverse views on its independence. Everyone is equal under the law, but this does not apply in Fiji, where there is no confidence in the rule of law. Those who side with the regime are protected by the non-application of the same law that would imprison others. Official complaints against the regime are quietly filed away

by police, who deny receiving them, with no action taken.

Under the political party's decree, persons holding office in any workers' or employers' organizations are banned from membership of, or holding office in, any political party or conducting any political activity, including expressing support for a political party. Heavy fines or imprisonment of up to five years, or both, are imposed on any trade union leader or worker who breaches the decree. On the other hand, the Prime Minister and his ministers can become members of the Prime Minister's political party and openly campaign for the Prime Minister's party while they carry out ministerial duties. They hold office in the Prime Minister's political party. They will hold onto their administrative portfolio and continue to receive their salary up to, and after, the date of election.

Fiji is at a crossroads with the upcoming elections in September. The regime openly mocked the people by appointing a young and inexperienced lawyer to be the supervisor of the elections, reporting directly to the Attorney-General, who is also the minister responsible for elections. The Electoral Decree, Decree No. 11 of 2014, provides immunity for election staff from any criminal and civil proceedings. This means that if there were any directive given to rig the elections, those found to be involved could not be brought before any court of law. Many are convinced that the elections will not be free and fair because the regime defies all sense of fairness and decency.

Tripartism is the heart of the ILO. Social partners have to consult and be consulted, and collective decisions have to be respected by governments, in order for any country to exist within the parameters of industrial peace. Genuinely, sadly, tripartism no longer exists in Fiji. With respect, ministers of labour who have spoken on this podium to date only pass lip service, with no mandate to implement what they say, and elude the facts that the regime continues to blatantly breach Conventions Nos 87 and 98, and continues to marginalize the trade union movement in Fiji.

To conclude, I thank the Director-General for his Report and for ensuring that the workers of Fiji's struggles are not in vain and that a direct contacts mission will be visiting Fiji before the Governing Body deliberations in November of this year.

Mr ZHELYAZKOV (*Employer, Bulgaria*)

During the past year, the Bulgarian employers were an active party in industrial relations, and achieved significant results in strengthening and promoting social dialogue at the national level, as well as in maintaining the stability and development of the Bulgarian economy. We successfully secured an amendment to the Publicity of the Property of Persons Occupying High State Positions Act which repealed the unacceptable inclusion of members of associations of employers' organizations alongside public sector officials in the scope of the Act.

Meanwhile, employers in Bulgaria have been facing some severe challenges which need to be overcome. The unfavourable labour market trends in recent years resulted in almost 13 per cent unemployment among the active population in 2013. The negative demographic trend is another problem related to employment. This year, the pension reform concerning a gradual increase of the required retirement age was suspended. For each of the

abovementioned problems, the Bulgarian employers' organizations have prepared and elaborated particular suggested solutions, and, in our shared opinion, functioning social dialogue will help us in achieving optimum results.

The Bulgarian employers hold in high esteem the role of human resources. They are an active party in the process of continuous professional training and career development, which is a positive incentive for the enhancement of output. We are working on new types of active policies that ensure human resources are capable of satisfying the needs of the economy, and we insist that the state policy in the area of education must be closely aligned with the challenges and needs of the labour market structure.

Under the initiative of the employers' organizations, the Government has passed, and begun to gradually implement, three consecutive packages with measures targeted at limiting the administrative regulations for business, including changes to the Labour Code. Special focus is paid to supporting and facilitating the business of SMEs, whose activities have, without any reason, been aligned with those of large enterprises. We hope that implementing them and passing conditional measures will contribute to a better business environment and improve the competitive economy of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as significantly promote the investment process in our country.

Thanks to the persisting positions of all employers' organizations, Bulgaria has managed to maintain strict financial discipline and is constantly ranked among the States with the lowest budget deficit, alongside a low government debt of 18.9 per cent of the country's GDP. The foreseeable and stable tax environment, based on low flat rates of 10 per cent corporate tax and personal income tax, is a competitive advantage that we are proud of. It is true that in the last two years the economy of Bulgaria has stabilized, which was perceived as a positive trend for this year and the next; economic growth is expected to be 1.7 to 2 per cent for 2014.

During the past year, we also have reported on our excellent cooperation with the ILO office in Budapest, as well as the constructive interaction with the IOE, which was about enhanced communication and readiness to render expert assistance and cooperation.

In this light, and as a response to the abovementioned challenges, we are looking forward to the significant undertaking of all ILO Members to implement coordinated actions and integrated measures to systematically overcome the unfavourable consequences of the global economic crisis. We should realistically assess the possible risks and negative impacts of imprudent financial and economic policies, in order to ensure visible and sustainable economic growth.

Ms KABAKA (*Minister of Labour and Employment, United Republic of Tanzania*)

The discussion on fair migration is timely in relation to the ongoing discussions for the establishment of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. It is critically important for the process on the post-2015 development agenda to take into account fair migration and all other issues pertaining to decent work and productive employment, particularly for young people.

Migration has both opportunities and challenges, particularly for receiving States. If well managed,

migration can contribute positively to the growth and development of the economy. However, it is important to recognize the fact that factors for migration differ within, and across, nations and continents. Thus, fair migration is a concern to every member State and to every one of us.

In order to have fair migration, my delegation is of the opinion that it is necessary to create a continuous dialogue between the States of origin and the receiving States. It is only through this dialogue that we will be able to clearly identify opportunities and address challenges.

All governments and social partners have a great role to play in order to ensure that migrants, and particularly migrant workers, are accorded protection in accordance with the pillars of decent work.

In addressing the issues of migration, my Government is developing the National Migration and Development Policy, which, among other things, will take into consideration the pillars of decent work. The ultimate objective is to harness the potentials of migration for national development and ensure the well-being of migrant workers.

The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the discussion on transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. We have realized that if the informal economy is formalized, it can make a huge impact on development and poverty eradication efforts.

It is in this regard that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is taking various measures to formalize the informal sector so that it can properly contribute to the economic development of our country.

Since 2004, the Government has been implementing the Property and Business Formalization Programme to facilitate formalization of property and business assets in the informal sector.

Other specific strategies that are being implemented include: the establishment of different funds to support the formulation of business groups; the creation of awareness-raising programmes; the extension of social security schemes; as well as the enhancement of technical and entrepreneurship skills.

My delegation supports the discussion on employment, as unemployment continues to be one of the global threats. The United Republic of Tanzania is concerned about the continuous rise of unemployment, particularly among young people across the globe.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, in collaboration with social partners, has been undertaking different initiatives to address the issue of unemployment, especially among the young people. We have been mainstreaming decent work and employment creation in all our national development policies, strategies and plans across all ministries. Currently, the Government is implementing the National Youth Employment Programme, which will facilitate the creation of more than 800,000 jobs for the next financial year through the implementation of public programmes and self-employment initiatives.

The Government has also been undertaking both institutional and regulatory reforms to create a conducive environment to promote investment and attract foreign direct investment, which ultimately will create employment opportunities. Other measures include strengthening labour market information systems and employment services.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that in order to address these issues effectively, we need collaboration from different entities. In this regard, we urge the international community, including the ILO and other UN specialized agencies, to provide funds and programmes to continue complementing the efforts of the Government, in terms of capacity building, technology transfer and finance.

Mr DE MEESTER (*Employer, Belgium*)

While reflecting upon the Report of the Director-General and the topics of this session of the Conference, there is one word that comes to my mind and that word is “crossroads”.

Many countries, economies and regions – the whole world – find themselves at a crossroads on a whole range of topics. Migration is growing and is likely to continue to do so. Migration patterns are evolving rapidly, and labour migration is too often perceived as negative and sometimes even leads to racist behaviour. But the enormous economic benefits that can come from sound and integrated labour migration policies cannot be denied. Strength lies in differences, not in similarities, and diversity drives much-needed economic innovation.

We need modern and supplementary measures to address the significant implementation gaps remaining, in order to effectively eradicate human trafficking and forced labour in all its forms. With at least 20.9 million people in forced labour globally, failure is not an option. Our task of improving the situation of the large group of people trying to survive in the informal economy is maybe even greater. There are also issues such as employment and social gaps, demographic changes, the skills gaps and so on. The world is at a crossroads when it comes to all of these issues.

But also the ILO finds itself at a crossroads with a challenging structural, methodological and policy-reform process under way. Break down silos, bring your work into line with reality and make robust evidence-based analysis the starting point, not aspirations.

My fellow Belgian countryman and Nobel Prize winner Maurice Maeterlinck said: “At every crossroads on the path that leads to the future, tradition has placed 10,000 men to guard the past.” You could also add to that: 10,000 procedures equally blocking the way forward.

Now you can stand at the crossroads if you like, but not for too long. A crossroads is not the best place to be! So make your choice, because if you do not choose, things will move on without you and maybe not in the direction you want them to. So, we need action, action not words. We need to beat the guards and the procedures of the past and go for hands-on, meaningful, efficient and effective policies, tools and guidance in the real world out there. In order for the ILO to do so, one of the absolute necessities is full tripartite support from all three constituents. I stress the words “full” and “three”.

Allow me to quote the Director-General: “The lessons of the ILO’s past are that its future depends on constant renewal in the face of evolving realities and the active commitment of its tripartite constituency to unchanging values and goals.” That is what he keeps repeating in his speeches. I say this because I am referring to the Committee on the Application of Standards, the ILO surveillance mechanism. I am referring to the direct approach to multinational enterprises. This is only acceptable if coor-

minated via the employers' structures. I am referring to all of the above topics. How will you ever resolve or improve on issues related to employment and transitions or achieve sustainable growth, if we as employers' groups even have to fight for words like "enterprise" and "entrepreneurship"? If that is tripartism, we will remain stuck at our crossroads. Even if we resolve these issues, there are more crossroads ahead. The world of work will never stop moving, and will go faster and faster. Therefore, we need to be flexible in adapting to change and resilient in order to bounce back from disruptions.

Sustainable businesses, private employment agencies, supply chains and contractor chains are not the enemy. They are an opportunity.

Today, 70 years ago, humanity was at a crossroads – D-Day, the shores of Normandy. This session of the Conference, and the years to come, are D-Day for the ILO. A new wind is what is needed on the shores of Lake Geneva to carry us forward, and to extricate us from the parallel universe we are too often talking about and working in. Let us join forces, let us all shoulder our responsibilities as Governing Body members, officials, staff and participants at this and future sessions of the Conference. We are not in it for ourselves, but for our members and for all actors in the economy, be it formal or informal. Let us deliver on sustainable growth, decent work, proper protection, prosperity and peace. Like Guy Ryder said in his opening statement: "the three criteria for measuring the success of our Conference are: first, that we discuss the right issues; second, that we organize our work efficiently; and third, that we produce results". Keep that in mind, all of you, all the time!

"You may not remember the time you let me go first.

Or the time you dropped back to tell me it wasn't far to go.

Or the time you waited at the crossroads for me to catch up.

You may not remember all of those, but I do and this is what I have to say to you: Today, no matter what it takes, we ride home together."

Original Spanish: Mr GÓMEZ (Worker, Colombia)

I am speaking on behalf of the National Unitary Commando of Colombia, of which we are members, the Single Confederation of Workers (CUT), the Confederation of Workers of Colombia (CTC), the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), and the Democratic Confederation of Pensioners. In particular, on behalf the CGT, we would like to express our strong interest in the issues that have been addressed by the Director-General of the ILO, who has considered the main problems that affect the working class in different parts of the world in great detail. The Director-General has expressed his great concern in respect of labour migration, focusing on the very high degree of vulnerability of migrants in different parts of the world. The majority of these migrants are women and children, who are often the victims of all kinds of abuse, including trafficking in persons, carried out by criminal bands who unscrupulously exploit the needs of migrants to take advantage of them and to traffic them, and this often includes girls and boys.

In this regard, beyond the role played by governments and employers, as workers' organizations, we must pursue more effective action to protect mi-

grant workers, and show them the broadest solidarity.

In our own country, we are seriously concerned about the fact that a climate of violence against the trade union movement continues to reign. This can be seen in continued anti-union policies and attitudes, which not only result in the death of trade union members, but also in forced displacements, persecution, relocation, as well as dismissals, the breakdown of families, and the weakening of the social fabric.

A democracy without trade unions is a mere caricature of a democracy and this is why we persist in calling for the full recognition of freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and to exercise the right to strike, within a broader framework of respect for human rights.

Colombian trade unionism has always, and in particular since 2006, believed in tripartism and social dialogue. However, we have often found that this is not properly echoed by the Government and certain sectors of the business world, who feel that the best trade union is a trade union that does not exist.

The CGT considers that it is absolutely unacceptable that, in a context that is hostile to trade unions, the Deputy Public Prosecutor's Office, responsible for labour rights, has been exerting pressure to lift trade union immunity, increasing instability in the trade union movement and towards union members.

The Colombian trade union movement demands respect for life, an end to the climate of violence and anti-union attitudes, freedom for teachers' unions and other unions to carry out their activities without fear, the right to land for agricultural workers, and respect for the rights of the Afro-Colombian, Raizal and indigenous communities.

We also want to express our solidarity with retired people and pensioners throughout the world, who need appropriate platforms to enable them to defend their rights and find effective solutions to the considerable problems they face.

For us, as workers, it is of paramount importance that the ILO demand full compliance by the Government of Colombia with the conclusions of the high-level mission that visited our country in February 2011, and whose recommendations will create a different country, with equal opportunities for everyone.

The rights of the working class, child protection, gender equality, young peoples' rights, the protection of agricultural workers and freedom of association are all linked to freedom, peace and democracy. Even the right to dissent needs to be protected and this provides the basis for continuing our work so that in both Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as in the rest of the world, the opinions of those who do not agree with the established powers are respected.

Mr SERRA (Government, Italy)

This year, the International Labour Conference is discussing topics of the utmost relevance to Italy. I will limit my remarks to the Report of the Director-General on labour migration, which is a priority of the Italian presidency of the EU, which will start on 1 July.

I cannot begin my intervention today without recalling the images of horror following the latest tragedy which took place on 12 May, off the shores of my country, in the waters surrounding the island

of Lampedusa. That sacrifice of human lives should serve as a stark reminder to us all of what should be at the centre of our concerns when we talk about migration. The tragedy could have been of even greater proportions had the Italian navy not immediately intervened and thus saved more than 200 lives in that incident alone. Italy is strongly committed to combating human trafficking in the Mediterranean. The “Mare Nostrum” initiative, which Italy launched in October 2013, is a humanitarian sea rescue operation and has so far saved over 30,600 human lives and led to the arrest of around 200 traffickers. However, as the most recent tragedies have shown, this is not yet enough. We therefore support the rights-based approach at the international level, as referred to in the Director-General’s Report.

The Second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was indeed a milestone in global migration governance. We note with satisfaction that its final Declaration includes a positive recognition of many areas of great importance for Italy, namely: the particular vulnerabilities of migrant children and the protection of female migrant workers, including those involved in domestic work; the promotion of conditions for cheaper remittance transfers; the need to improve the public perception of migrants; the protection of the human rights of all migrants; and mobility programmes that facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. We are proud to have actively contributed to the inclusion of specific references to these aspects during the negotiations and to have been involved in the first concrete follow-up to the dialogue, namely the ILO’s tripartite technical meeting on labour migration.

In this context, one issue that was specifically highlighted was the need to reduce the cost of migration. Italy launched an international initiative to reduce the costs of transferring migrant remittances from 10 to 5 per cent over a five-year period, the so-called “5 by 5” objective, adopted at the G8 Summit held in L’Aquila in 2009. At the national level, Italy has already succeeded in lowering the costs of migrant remittances from 10.8 per cent in 2008 to 7.42 per cent today.

But there are other costs that migrants have to bear, namely the exorbitantly high recruitment fees. The HLD and the tripartite technical meeting on labour migration have both underscored the need to combat unethical recruitment practices, recognizing that they have very negative impacts on all labour migration stakeholders. When the human and labour rights of jobseekers are not respected, debt bondage, forced labour and human trafficking can be some of the knock-on effects. Italy has ratified Convention No. 181, and our Ministry of Labour is working closely with both the IOM and the ILO on these issues. We welcome the IOM’s International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) projects on ethical recruitment, which was subscribed by the IOE and we encourage the IOM and the ILO to join forces and cooperate in this cause. We appreciate that the Director-General’s Report addresses the issue of instituting fair recruitment processes.

We believe that the contribution of the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin in awareness raising, knowledge dissemination and capacity building on issues related to migration is of key importance in this regard.

Finally, we strongly encourage the Director-General to introduce a specific outcome on labour migration in the next Strategic Policy Framework for the Organization for the biennium 2016–17. We believe there is also a need for the ILO to make its own specific contribution on this issue. We look forward to the Director-General’s assessment of his chairmanship of the GMG for the year 2014.

Ms THAPPER (*Worker, Sweden*)

Swedish workers consider the theme of the Director-General’s Report a very important and appropriate one for this year’s session of the Conference.

We very much agree that the goal must be to work for a fair migration. We know that the vast majority of today’s more than 230 million migrant workers are in a precarious and vulnerable situation; many of them are being exploited with no rights or protection.

Therefore, I wish to point out the crucial role of the ILO. We believe the ILO must be at the forefront as the watchdog on migration, producing statistics and analysis in order to improve the understanding and possibilities to attack the specific problems that are a reality for migrant workers today.

Fundamentally, we take a positive view of labour migration when it is a fair migration.

We know that labour migration offers opportunities for businesses, governments, organizations and, let us not forget, for society as a whole.

Labour migration offers ways to avoid shortages of labourers with specific skills and capabilities, and hire the best workers for particular jobs.

For individuals, labour migration offers both ways to avoid unemployment, economic deprivation or other difficulties in their home country, as well as opportunities to build a career or simply make real the dream of living in another country.

Labour migration is also associated with risks, however. Many migrants work for low wages in a poor working environment and many are subject to forced labour and trafficking.

When migrants are forced to accept inferior working conditions, there is an increasing risk that labour migration will lead to underbidding and negative competition between employees, which in turn leads to further downward pressure on wages and labour conditions.

Trade unions all over the world play an important role in creating conditions for fair migration. Our overall policy must be that migrant workers are always entitled to equal rights with other workers in the host country.

Our view is that voluntary labour migration has mainly, if not exclusively, positive implications and effects. Today’s situation is entirely different, however. Many workers are forced to migrate in search of jobs to wherever they can find any means to support themselves.

Among the reasons for this forced migration are not only the lack of jobs, but also war, conflicts, bad governance and a lack of fundamental human rights.

As trade unionists, we can never accept discrimination against migrant workers. Regrettably, in today’s working life, migrant workers frequently experience discrimination and are often forced to submit to less favourable working conditions. This is not acceptable.

One of the defining features of the Swedish model for social dialogue and collective bargaining has

been that employers compete with high and increasing productivity, thereby producing advanced and high value goods.

For this, employers are dependent on qualified workers; low or diminishing wages are not a competitive weapon.

When designing a regulatory framework for labour migration, the legislators therefore face two tasks.

Firstly, to create a system that is so open that it reflects the actual need for a migrant workforce within businesses and communities and the needs of migrants themselves. If legislators fail in this task, migration will instead be redirected, either to irregular, illegal migration, or to other legal forms with, among other things, a lower degree of trade union organization and less favourable working conditions, such as temporary agency work and transfers to another country within a corporation.

Secondly, to prevent migrant workers who are in vulnerable positions from being exploited by unscrupulous employers and to prevent labour migration from leading to underbidding competitions between employees and between enterprises. The big challenge is to manage to combine these two tasks.

The situation of Palestinian workers continues to be a very difficult one and it is not improving at all. We fully agree with the conclusions of the Director-General's Report and we will follow the situation very closely.

Original French: Ms ALEXANDRE (Worker, France)

This 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference is being held at a time of major change, as reflected in discussions in both committee meetings and plenary sessions. There are multiple consequences to globalization in human, economic and social terms.

At a time when 202 million people around the world are jobless, when youth unemployment is particularly worrying, when 839 million workers are living in poverty on less than US\$2 a day, it is essential that the ILO fully play its role.

France has been hit hard by the economic and financial crisis and has not escaped its share of job losses, eroded job security and the undermining of labour market institutions and institutions for social dialogue. The euphemism of stability cannot mask the severe austerity of an agreement that provides for no less than 70 billion in spending cuts between 2014 and 2017, plunging millions of workers and their families into greater social hardship. Austerity is economic, social and democratic suicide.

The European countries that are subjected to the iron law of the troika are experiencing situations of extreme social emergency in the face of the indifference of financial institutions. Extreme poverty, child poverty, the loss of rights arising from unemployment and the loss of access to health services are reflected in the discussions of the Committee on the Application of Standards at this session of the Conference. Unfortunately, this Committee, for the third year in a row, has seen the crisis regarding the right to strike – a fundamental right – continue. Although Employers continue to criticize the monitoring and supervision system for ILO standards, many Governments, including the French Government, have reaffirmed their commitment to the monitoring and supervision system for ILO standards, the role and mandate of experts and the consensus-based

mode of employers and workers adopting the list and conclusions.

Migration, with its many causes, is set to increase in the years ahead. All too often, migration is accompanied by the loss of rights, segregation, and discrimination of all kinds, and can even lead to forced labour. Domestic workers, construction workers, textile workers and workers from other sectors; 20 million workers who have been reduced to slavery in the twenty-first century. In order to combat this scourge, this 103rd Session of the Conference will provide a historic opportunity to adopt a Protocol to Convention No. 29 that will establish the issues of prevention, reparation and compensation for victims of this inhuman suffering in an international standard.

In 1919, the ILO was established with the aim of providing social justice for workers, which was reaffirmed in the aftermath of the Second World War by the Declaration of Philadelphia. In these troubled times, it is essential to preserve and fulfil the fundamental mission of this Organization.

These lines, drawn from the poetic musings of the French poet Lamartine, are engraved in front of Palais Wilson, the headquarters of the League of Nations and should be an inspiration to us all:

“May the free Port of Geneva be open to us; freedom for the weak is glory for the strong. Among the many vessels scattered across its waters, may this intellectual rallying point bring together Northern and Southern Europe to exchange their views hand in hand.”

Exchanging views hand in hand is an inspiring image of the tripartite structure, which must prevent human rights from succumbing to the relentless pressures of capitalism.

Mr NOROV (Government, Uzbekistan)

The delegation of Uzbekistan has carefully studied the ILO report entitled *Strengthening action to end forced labour* and fully supports the main conclusions of the report and the proposed measures.

Uzbekistan, being one of the first Central Asian countries to ratify, in 1997, Convention No. 105, as well as other fundamental ILO Conventions, is taking a series of comprehensive measures to fulfil its international obligation to prevent forced labour and the worst forms of child labour.

In close cooperation with the social partners, Uzbekistan has been actively promoting international standards stemming from ILO Conventions on forced labour and child labour.

The Government of Uzbekistan regularly submits reports on the application of the ILO Conventions to the International Labour Office. Since the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, held in June 2013, the Government of Uzbekistan, together with the social partners, has carried out comprehensive work to develop constructive cooperation with the ILO on the implementation of international labour standards based on the recommendations and conclusions of the Committee of Experts and the Committee on the Application of Standards.

In 2013, joint monitoring of child labour was conducted during the cotton harvest with the participation of ILO experts, using a methodology devised by IPEC. International observers had unimpeded access to educational institutions, cotton fields and other places of monitoring. International experts had the opportunity to explore not only

child labour issues, but also to observe the organizational process of the work of adult cotton pickers.

Ms Doumbia-Henry, Director of the International Labour Standards Department of the International Labour Office, in her speech at the opening session of the Committee on the Application of Standards, paid special attention to this monitoring, considering it to be a positive example of effective cooperation between the Government of Uzbekistan, the social partners and the ILO.

At the same time, Uzbekistan clearly recognizes the need for ongoing and systematic work to improve the employment conditions of workers, to increase public awareness-raising activities to prevent the use of forced labour of children and adults, and to address other relevant issues related to compliance with labour standards.

On 25 April 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Uzbekistan, the social partners and the ILO Moscow Office was signed. It approved a DWCP for 2014–16, including priorities, goals and indicators in three strategic areas of technical cooperation: first, strengthening social partnership in Uzbekistan; second, encouraging

decent employment opportunities; third, improving working conditions and social protection.

In order to implement the technical assistance programme and the ILO Conventions ratified by Uzbekistan, as well as to prevent forced labour and the worst forms of child labour, through the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 27 May 2014, a plan of additional measures for 2014–16 was approved.

Uzbekistan is ready to further strengthen and expand open and constructive cooperation with the ILO as part of the DWCP, including on the elimination of forced labour and child labour based on the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity.

We are fully committed to fulfilling our international obligations to eliminate forced labour by children and adults under ILO Conventions, the recommendations of the Committee of Experts and the recommendations of the Committee on the Application of Standards, through technical cooperation with the ILO secretariat and the Moscow Office.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.10 p.m.)

Eighth sitting

Friday, 6 June 2014, 2.35 p.m.

President: Mr Alexandris

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

Mr SOUVANNAVONG (*Employer, Lao People's Democratic Republic*)

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), to address the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I would like to express my support for the ILO Director-General's Report, which focuses, among other things, on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy and strengthening action to end forced labour.

The LNCCI plays an important role in private sector development to serve the economic growth and social advancement of the country. In recent years, with the country opening up to a market-oriented economy, employers in the Lao People's Democratic Republic have actively contributed to the creation of development of employment and skilled labour to meet the demand of the growing industries and societies. There is a vibrant formal economy in relation to open investment and private sector policies, with a large number of enterprises operating under formal social security schemes.

The LNCCI, through its Employer Activities Bureau, is enhancing its efforts to strengthen SMEs that are mostly operating in the non-formal economy to enable them to do profitable business and integrate their enterprises into a more structured formal system with proper business management, skill anticipation, skill development and CSR. Services are now being provided to members in terms of public information, training, improvement of the business environment, and public and private sector partnership, taking into consideration new laws and regulations related to enterprises and employment.

In the process leading to the Lao People's Democratic Republic's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2013 and in the preparation of the ASEAN Economic Community in the run-up to 2015, the Lao Government has improved and issued new laws to promote trade and investment and socio-economic development in general. The amendments of laws and regulations have been made with proper consultation with the employers in different industrial sectors. A new decree from the National Assembly allows employers to systematically provide their comments and conduct negotiations with the public and labour organizations concerned. For

example, tripartite consultations were held on the law on social security and the improved law on labour.

In 2013, the Lao economy grew by 8.1 per cent, fuelled by a vibrant resource sector, continued foreign direct investment and helpful macroeconomic policies. The economic growth was also attributed to political stability, and trade and investment liberalization policies. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is also on the way to achieving most of the UN MDGs, thus moving the economy forward towards an ultimate objective of graduating the country from the list of the least developed countries by 2020. However, despite impressive economic and social indicators, the Lao People's Democratic Republic still faces a number of challenges related to its geographical location, demography, undeveloped basic infrastructure and public services. The business environment has improved slightly but it is still very weak compared with other ASEAN countries. Hence, more effort is needed, especially to develop the non-resource sectors and SMEs.

The LNCCI, representing the employers, is in favour of the Lao Government decision not to be part of a number of employment/labour-related treaties and agreements that are not in harmony with current conditions in the country. The LNCCI Employer Activities Bureau will continue to work closely with the public and labour organizations concerned to discuss and review different treaties and agreements under the ILO agenda.

On this occasion, I would like to sincerely thank the ILO for its assistance to the LNCCI Employer Activities Bureau, especially the support provided under the ILO priority programme to strengthen the capacity of ASEAN employers' associations. The support provided previously was very relevant to the employers. I hope that the ILO will further extend its assistance to the work of the Employer Activities Bureau under the new agenda.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the ILO on the marvellous organization of this 103rd Session of the Conference, to which I wish every success.

Original French: Mr ANGUIMATE (Minister of Public Service, Labour, Social Security and Employment, Central African Republic)

Speaking on behalf of the delegation of the Central African Republic, I would like to add my voice to those of the previous speakers in congratulating the President of the Conference and the other Officers on their election, which will undoubtedly contribute to the success of the current session of the

International Labour Conference. I congratulate the Chairperson of the Governing Body on the high quality of her report and the work accomplished from June 2013 to June 2014. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the Director-General of the Office, Mr Ryder, and congratulate him on the quality of his Report, a document which, without a doubt, goes straight to the heart of our societies' concerns. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to the Swiss people and, in particular, the people of the Canton of Geneva, for the legendary hospitality they have extended to all the delegations and ILO member States on this occasion.

How can we improve working conditions and eliminate the exploitation of the workforce and modern slavery throughout the world? How can we establish an enterprise-friendly environment which stimulates the creation of decent jobs? How can we manage simultaneously to bring about social protection, economic development and growth which will promote social integration? What is the role of social dialogue in promoting a programme designed to place employment at the heart of development? Serious questions such as these justify entirely the choice of fair migration as the subject of your Report.

Worldwide, every year, thousands of people leave their countries of origin seeking work. Such labour migration is a major component of globalization and plays an important role in the world economy. Every year, migrant workers send considerable remittances back to their countries of origin in the developing world. Estimates for 2005 put the amount involved at between US\$160 and US\$250 billion, depending on whether informal transfers are included. This figure is, in fact, higher than the total for direct foreign investment and all official aid earmarked for development.

Migrants thus meet the needs of their families and their communities, while contributing to the economic growth and prosperity of their host countries. However, they are faced with a number of challenges, such as poor working conditions and discrimination. This is where the practical aspect of the Report, the aim of which is to stimulate discussions at the international and national levels on the thorny issue of migration and the protection of decent work, comes in. The Central African Republic believes that it is possible to set up migration mechanisms which take account of the interests not only of the countries of origin and destination, but also of the migrant workers and national workforces.

However, this can only be achieved on the condition that fundamental measures are adopted which are designed, in particular, to: promote decent work in regions of origin in order to give substance to the idea that migration is a choice, rather than a necessity; amend bilateral and regional agreements in response to the dynamic development of workforce mobility and, in particular, to: ensure the social and economic protection of migrants; guarantee a multi-lateral system which is better able to ensure fair migration; recognize the value of dialogue with the social partners and the other stakeholders concerned; and seek out legal mechanisms, such as the ratification of the relevant international labour Conventions.

For more than three decades now, my country, the Central African Republic, has experienced a series of military and political crises, most recently in March 2013. My country currently has a number of

priorities, which we have already raised at the level of the Department of Labour.

In conclusion, I would like to express my Government's gratitude and appreciation for the support provided in so many forms by the ILO Office in Kinshasa to the Central African Republic, a country weakened by crises. In my role as Minister of Labour of the Central African Republic, I welcome the opportunity to work with this Organization in order to achieve the priority goals contained in our DWCP.

Original Russian: Ms NORBAYEVA (Worker, Uzbekistan)

The report *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy* notes a broad consensus that informal labour is characterized by features such as the non-registration of enterprises, a lack of social protection and the failure to provide employment contracts.

For that reason, legislation is an important tool for recognizing and protecting workers in the informal economy.

All workers, irrespective of their employment status or place of work, should have the opportunity to exercise and protect their labour rights, as enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and fundamental labour standards.

In order for labour legislation to ensure sufficient protection to all workers, governments must be encouraged to analyse the evolution of labour relations as well as to identify all workers and ensure their adequate protection.

Policies and programmes must have a main goal of integrating informal workers into the legal and institutional frameworks of the real economy, which would reduce their vulnerability and social isolation.

Governments must also provide the macroeconomic, social and legal conditions to facilitate the large-scale creation of decent jobs and business development.

To increase the quality and quantity of jobs, particular focus should be placed on investing in human capital – for example, in education, skills training, continuing education, and health and safety – and in stimulating entrepreneurship.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is paying particular attention to improving its legal and institutional mechanisms for a systematic transition from an informal to a formal economy.

First, a 12-year free education system has been introduced, which includes three years of secondary specialist vocational education.

Second, a job creation and employment generation programme is approved and implemented every year. It creates job opportunities for all social groups, particularly graduates of vocational colleges.

Third, government centres for one-off temporary work have been in existence since 2001 to help people find such jobs, and a legal basis has been established to exempt such workers from personal income tax.

Fourth, in 2006, a presidential order formalized labour relations for domestic workers and people engaged in cattle rearing on private plots.

Fifth, in 2009, social insurance systems were extended to cover people employed in unincorporated family businesses and artisanal activities.

Sixth, as of 1 June 2014, a presidential order has doubled the maximum average annual number of workers that a small business may employ and still be eligible for tax breaks.

All of these measures have together contributed to increased employment in our country and labour productivity.

As participants at this Conference will be aware, according to a resolution adopted by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, the concept of “employment in the informal sector” is not the same as “informal employment”.

We believe that unions need to focus their attention on informal employment, irrespective of whether in the formal or informal sector.

In this context, unions can play a prominent role in drawing the attention of the social partners to the need to eradicate the main factors causing informal employment and hindering economic and social activity in the real economy.

We should also widely share and exchange experience of implementing modern strategies and effective practices that unions all over the world have used to create links with informal sector workers and enterprises, as well as to support their transition to the formal sector and the creation of decent working conditions.

Original Arabic: Mr WAHBALLAH (Worker, Egypt)

Speaking both personally and on behalf of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) and the Workers’ delegation of Egypt, I would like to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to the presidency of this session of the International Labour Conference.

I would also like to thank the ILO Director-General, Mr Ryder, for the work he has carried out on behalf of the world’s workers.

Ever since its creation in 1919, the ILO has focused on the issue of migration. The Constitution of the Organisation provides for the “protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own”. As a consequence, there was a need to establish the framework of a fair migration programme. Migration, be it regular or irregular, is on the increase, owing to the difficult economic and political context affecting developing societies.

Clearly, Egyptian migrant workers deserve to have decent working conditions and to be treated well. We must achieve equality between immigrant and national workers. There has to be coordination in this regard between the member States and efforts must be made to take into account the needs of the labour market. With this aim in mind, the Organization is called on to provide both technical support and assistance concerning the creation and development of vocational training centres in order to generate jobs, thus reducing unemployment and facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy. It should be pointed out that 8 million Egyptians currently work outside of their home country.

During the period between the current and the previous session of the International Labour Conference, a number of political movements appeared in Egypt which led to the revolution of 30 June 2013. This event involved the participation of 30 million citizens, including workers calling for freedom, social justice and human dignity.

The People’s Revolution of 30 June 2013 set out a roadmap for the future of Egypt that has resulted in the adoption of a new Constitution, the election of a new President of the Republic and the implementation of a number of measures concerning the election of a new Parliament. The workers took part in the process of drafting the new Constitution and obtained significant benefits, including constitutional recognition of trade union freedoms, the fixing of a minimum wage and universal social protection. The ETUF then worked with the Government to make the workers’ dream of a supreme council for social dialogue, responsible for resolving workers’ issues, a reality. Furthermore, the Government addressed the demands of the workers by setting up labour tribunals responsible for issuing rulings on labour disputes in a timely manner.

Last year, Egypt adopted a new Constitution and a climate of democracy developed in the country, which was consolidated by the election of Mr Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as President of the Republic.

The Arab Republic of Egypt and its tripartite partners (Government, workers and employers) make every effort to apply the international labour Conventions that the country has ratified so far. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has removed Egypt from the list of individual cases because our country works to guarantee and support trade union freedoms. A bill on trade unions has been drawn up and will be submitted to Parliament once the parliamentary elections have taken place.

Egypt is striving to strengthen social dialogue between the tripartite partners by involving them in the discussions on a whole range of legislation on labour and worker-related issues. As a result, the ETUF, working with the Government and the employers, took part in talks on important legislation, including the Labour Code, the law on universal medical coverage and the law on trade unions.

We hope to see greater cooperation between the ILO Decent Work Team for North Africa and ILO Country Office for Egypt, Eritrea and Sudan (DWT/CO-Cairo) and the trade union movement, in line with the mandate of the Organization.

The ETUF urges tripartite partners across the world to support the Palestinian people in their struggle for freedom and for the creation of an independent State in the land of Palestine. We also call for the release of those Palestinian prisoners currently being held in the prisons of the Israeli occupiers.

Original French: Mr NTOUTOUME EMANE (Minister of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training, Gabon)

I am pleased to note the analysis of the Director-General of the ILO, who said that the world of work “is subject to constant change, and that change has accelerated rather than abated in recent years, when the enduring effects of global crisis have added to the scale of the challenges we face and the urgency of building solutions to them”.

In this regard, the ILO must remain proactive and continue to be an entrenched bulwark that justifies its leading role in promoting social standards – the guarantee of social justice which is itself a source of social peace.

In particular, we have to continue the reform process that has been undertaken within our institution in recent years. I am thinking specifically of the standards review mechanism, which is aimed at im-

proving the body of instruments related to labour and to the social policies of the ILO.

A number of topics discussed by the Conference are of significant interest to us. First of all, the question of employment has been considered in our recurrent discussion procedure. It is an issue that touches the entire international community. The overall approach to the crisis in employment will largely determine the credibility, and indeed the very survival, of the founding principles of democracy and of global governance.

Turning to the African continent, the African Union Summit on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development is scheduled for September 2014 in Ouagadougou. It will surely provide us with an opportunity to set even more ambitious goals and to reaffirm that job creation remains a priority within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, since youth unemployment is starting to threaten stability in Africa.

In general, and on the matter of youth employment in particular, Gabon is at the forefront at the subregional level. Indeed, in order to combat the high levels of unemployment in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Gabon, through its President, Mr Ali Bongo Ondimba, put forward for adoption by other member States of CEMAC the establishment of a fund called “Train My Generation”. With a total budget of US\$200 million, its objective is to improve the employability of young people from our community. This fund reflects a new approach to vocational training for young people that integrates targeted areas of activity which will provide jobs while guaranteeing equality of opportunity.

At the national level, efforts have been made to improve the living conditions of our populations. In order to implement our human capital investment programme, the Government has introduced a social pact with an overall budget of XAF250 million to finance, among other things, social policy through economic safety nets, solidarity-based transfers, the development of income-generating activities and improvements to the public employment service.

Regarding employability and hiring of jobseekers, the Government has decided to restructure the National Employment Office, beginning by creating a map of unemployment, significantly increasing support funds for starting and returning to work, and introducing a mandatory youth apprenticeship contract for firms with more than 50 employees.

Naturally, these efforts are in addition to other activities that have already been implemented to improve the living conditions of our population and, consequently, ensure the harmonious development of our country, including the necessary improvements to the investment framework and macroeconomic environment.

When it comes to the issue of eradicating forced or compulsory labour, the Government is fighting with determination. Similarly, child labour, workplace harassment and xenophobia are also being resolutely tackled by the public authorities. Today, 21 million people are victims of forced labour in the world. That is an unsettling reality and we believe that the provisions of Convention No. 29 should be strengthened, particularly with regard to prevention, protection and compensation.

Concerning migration, Gabon ensures the rights of migrant workers and aids their social and professional integration.

With regard to the transition from the informal to the formal economy, we also believe that this will result in protection and better conditions for workers in the sector, while offering them increased social protection.

Original Spanish: Mr PENINO (Employer, Uruguay)

The International Labour Conference has once again demonstrated its ability to carry out its main mission: tripartism. Thus far, tripartism has proved to be the best mechanism to ensure enjoyment of fundamental labour principles and rights, which apply to both workers and employers.

Reference is often made to our country, Uruguay, in respect of its policies on tripartism and social dialogue. We acknowledge that in some cases there has been fruitful dialogue in this area. In fact, only yesterday, we deposited with the Director-General of the ILO the instrument of ratification of the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), which had been promoted by the Government, workers and employers alike. However, in the last few years, a number of labour laws and decrees have been adopted in Uruguay without any input from the business sector. During the process to develop a number of labour standards relating to fundamental labour rights there was a lack of tripartite consultation, which is considered to be the appropriate dialogue to achieve better labour relations legislation.

We recall that the tripartism promoted by the ILO is based on real and effective consultation. It should be conducted in good faith, giving all parties the time needed to express their opinions and considering them in depth. The failure to take the employers' views into consideration has meant that a number of the labour standards adopted, either as legal texts or for practical implementation, have had negative consequences for sustainable enterprise development and therefore decent work.

It should be emphasized that employers fully subscribe to fundamental labour rights protected by the standards. Where we legitimately take issue is on how these rights have been regulated, in violation of other fundamental rights. The new law regulating legal proceedings on labour issues, for example, included provisions notoriously in breach of the Constitution. This gave rise to a backlog of hundreds of appeals against constitutional breaches, which meant that cases that should have been resolved within a few months were unnecessarily delayed. This legislation was recently amended, following the definitive judgments of the Supreme Court of Justice, which declared the legislation untenable.

More recently, a law was adopted penalizing the employer for certain aspects of workplace accidents. Unlike other countries that have already addressed the issue and developed high-quality legislation in this field, Uruguayan legislation did not follow suit. It created criminal provisions that even its own government legislators warned might be unconstitutional. As on other occasions, no input from employers was taken into account regarding this law, which merely criminalizes and makes no attempt to prevent. A criminal law on its own will not change the culture of prevention.

This highlights another point. As the ILO knows, Uruguay does not disseminate information on workplace accidents, which is a well-known obstacle to designing and implementing effective health

and safety strategies. Human life and worker health and safety deserve better protection than this recent legislation. As can be seen, the lack of productive social dialogue raises issues related to fundamental labour rights and principles such as due judicial process in labour matters and worker health and safety, as well as collective bargaining.

There has been an open case before the ILO since 2009, presented by the employers' sector and the IOE, concerning the dynamics of collective bargaining. The delays by our country in considering the recommendations of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association and the Committee on the Application of Standards are puzzling. In this regard, given the amount of time that has elapsed without achieving any results since the ILO recommendations, it is clear – at least in this case – that Uruguay seriously lacks commitment to this Organization's system for monitoring standards.

Finally, we stress that Uruguayan employers are not seeking preferential legislation; our only desire is to have a regulatory framework that will lead to decent work and sustainable enterprises.

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

Speaking on behalf of the 14 million workers in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and of the Bolivarian Socialist Workers' Federation of Venezuela, we welcome the reports submitted to the Conference with great interest. Our country has acted as a bastion for the abolition and elimination of forced labour in all its forms, and for the elimination of outsourcing. It has expedited the reduction of informal employment, extended social security coverage to informal workers, and established employment as part of a social labour process which, together with education, constitute the two fundamental services provided by the State; each enterprise is a school, providing education through work.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Venezuela lived through the regime of the "Fourth Republic", which violated the rights of the working class. In 1991, a reform of the labour legislation revoked the achievements of many years, such as the right to social security on the basis of seniority. This period also saw the creation of the so-called "Tripartite Commission", which passed and drove many of the reforms, earning itself the name of the "Thrice-damned Commission" due to its shameful role in supporting the interests of large multinationals. A privatization process was adopted in respect of services and enterprises of strategic interest; social security was also privatized and free health and education services disappeared almost entirely, becoming a private business in line with the dominant global neoliberal model.

In this period of representative democracy, the Labour Act was maintained for 55 years with only partial reforms driven by the Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Manufacturers' Associations (FEDECAMARAS) employers' association. In reaction to the contradictions that resulted from the implementation of a neoliberal model, reaching a peak during the wave of privatizations carried out in 1989, among other measures with a negative social impact, a number of social struggles were engaged, forcing through a legal restructuring to achieve our current peaceful social contract. As a result of those struggles, in 1991 the Labour Act was awarded legal framework status, constituting

some measure of progress. However, peace did not last long. On 19 June 1997, on the basis of the neoliberal stance of the IMF and the World Bank, a decision was taken to revoke some of the achievements of the Venezuelan working class, namely the retroactivity of social benefits.

In a short space of time, the 1998 Bolivarian Revolution was led by Eternal Commander Hugo Chávez, who called for a national constitutional assembly to draw up a new constitution, rendering anti-worker measures null and void. In this way, the Venezuelan working class, thanks to the first revolutionary government's opposition to neoliberalism, recovered all the rights that it had previously been denied. Accordingly, wide participative social dialogue was established; the annual revision of the minimum wage was adjusted to economic indices; social benefits on the basis of seniority were restored; and free health and education for workers were guaranteed, strengthened, developed and promoted.

Simón Bolívar, who led Venezuela to independence, said in his speech to the Congress of Angostura on 15 February 1819 that the best system of government is that which produces the most happiness, the most social security and the most political stability. President Chávez interpreted these words by strengthening and broadening the fundamental rights of the working class, which was responsible for driving change in the Bolivarian Revolution and is alone capable of putting Bolivarian thought into practice.

And finally, we wish to express our socialist and Bolivarian solidarity to the workers of Ecuador on the occasion of the Chevron ecocide against Mother Earth; to the people of Colombia, in the hope that they may reach the peace that they have long yearned for, including an end to the brutal murder of workers; to our African friends, recognizing their just demands; and, finally, to the people and workers of Palestine, giving them our full support in the achievement of a free and sovereign State. Unity and victory to all the peoples of the world! I would further like to recall that it has now been 15 months since the death of our historic leader, Commander Hugo Chávez.

Mr FARRUGIA (Employer, Malta)

This year's session of the International Labour Conference is taking place six years after the financial crisis which crippled many of the world's leading economies and from which the global economy has not fully recovered. Looking back at the discussions that led to the establishment of the Global Jobs Pact in 2009, it is evident that a sustained jobs-led recovery has been elusive in many countries, with mounting disillusionment in the ability of international institutions to develop effective strategies to reverse this situation.

During this period, Malta has experienced a rapid transformation of its labour market, and is responding well to the country-specific recommendations set by the EU to reach specific targets. The employment rate has increased to 63.2 per cent from a level of 55 per cent a few years ago. Our female participation rate has surged from 32 to 47 per cent within ten years. The female participation rate for the 25–30 age group has reached 70 per cent, which is higher than the EU average of 66 per cent. An increasing proportion of our working population is employed in an expanding services sector. More

employees are seeking and being offered flexible contracts of employment. There is also a marked increase in the number of persons who have remained in employment beyond retirement age. These supply-side trends have been possible in part because employers have responded by generating employment opportunities, and have also adapted themselves to the changing requirements of the labour market and domestic and global competitive forces.

There are other, more challenging shortcomings that need to be addressed in the coming years. Among them is the reduction in early school-leaving and educational reforms to address skills gaps and strengthen the apprenticeship system. The National Employment Policy launched recently by the Government includes a number of positive measures to reduce labour market frictions and to improve the skills content of the Maltese human resources, among them the provision of free child-care, which has been welcomed by employers. The Thematic Country Review for Apprenticeships conducted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) which was launched this week also promises to upgrade Malta's apprenticeship programmes.

We urge caution in dealing with the social dimension of employment in Malta, which was one of the first countries to establish a minimum wage as per Convention No. 131. Moreover, Malta goes beyond the requirements of this Convention through an indexation system that upgrades all wages by an automatic annual cost-of-living increase.

Tampering with this mechanism, which is already more generous compared to many other countries, carries a serious risk of disturbing labour market relativities and causing wage inflation at a time when international competitiveness in many countries depends on a fragile balance, with efforts being made in competing countries towards wage moderation. In recent years, some EU countries have frozen and even reduced the minimum wage to maintain international competitiveness. The best strategy for reducing the incidence of working poor is to have as few people as possible on the minimum wage through upgrading of skills and being sufficiently competitive to generate higher-quality jobs.

We support the concept of "making work pay", in so far as it is taken to mean that fair remuneration is paid in return for productive work. In a country which boasts a union membership in excess of 55 per cent, this is achieved in most cases through the collective bargaining mechanism. Yet an emerging view of this concept is that a decent wage is one that enables people to afford their aspirations, or a level of income that makes it worthwhile to abandon a lifestyle of living on social benefits. This is the reason why employers have serious reservations about the idea of tapering social benefits over a number of years to those who have been unemployed for more than two years. Taking up employment should never be considered as an opportunity cost to living on social benefits.

Another worrying trend is the increase in employment in the public sector over the past two years. The attractiveness of some areas of public-sector employment – perceived as being permanent, less demanding work – is draining labour from the private sector and causing persons on the unemployment register to refuse productive jobs in the private sector. This phenomenon has contributed to

the increase of foreign workers in recent years to address skills shortages in many areas of the private sector.

The Director-General's Report has emphasized the impact of global migration, and as such it has a direct relevance to Malta, where 9 per cent of our labour force is foreign, consisting of EU citizens and third-country nationals from all parts of the world. We fully support the principle that labour legislation should apply equally to all employees irrespective of nationality, as recommended in the Report.

In Malta, the current discussion about union recognition is critical in shaping the state of industrial relations. Employers are very concerned that they are being drawn into territorial disputes among unions, and that such conflict is having an adverse impact on industrial relations stability and collective bargaining outcomes. Our position is that union recognition has to be based exclusively on tangible proof of membership by a majority of employees in one trade union. Fiddling with this fundamental principle will risk negative repercussions on investment and job creation.

In Malta, we are currently facing a situation of creeping unemployment. Yet throughout the recession we have managed to maintain unemployment levels that still rank among the lowest in Europe. For an open economy with no natural resources, this is a great accomplishment, which has been possible because of the strength of our social dialogue structures, and which can only be maintained in future through improving an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises that are the source of generation of wealth in our society.

Mr KALOKO (*Representative, African Union*)

This year, 2014, has been a momentous year for the African Union as bold initiatives have been taken to work towards a better and brighter future for the people of the African continent.

Coincidentally, African initiatives are being launched at a time when other initiatives are high on the global agenda for debate and review, such as the review of the International Conference on Population and Development as well as the debates and negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda, adopted by African Heads of State in January 2014, demonstrates the transformative course intended by the AU over the coming years and decades. Influenced by the Solemn Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in May 2013 and the African Union Commission's Strategic Plan 2014–17, the six priority areas of the Common African Position emphasize a people-centred approach to development. Pillar one of the six pillars calls for structural economic transformation and inclusive growth that can play a role in "creating resilient economies, decent employment opportunities minimizing income and wealth disparities, and eradicating poverty".

The relevance of industrialization as a precondition for inclusive and sustainable economic growth for African economies was discussed at the African Finance Ministers Conference in Abuja in March 2014. On agriculture and food security, which mainly speaks to the rural and informal economy and forms the basis of the continent's economic activities, the AU, in an effort to raise the profile of

the sector, declared 2014 the Year of Agriculture and Food Security. In addition, Agenda 2063 encapsulates the various initiatives, with emphasis on the prudent management of Africa's resources while focusing on the progress and well-being of the continent's inhabitants.

In recent years, statistics and other figures have suggested that some African economies have done well. While this may be cause for some celebration, many people have quickly realized the need for such growth to be more inclusive, sustainable, resilient and meaningful to all, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups in our societies.

The Extraordinary Summit on Employment in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on poverty eradication and inclusive development is a step towards addressing this economic aberration of growth without benefits or the people's well-being at the core. It aims to eradicate poverty by providing broad-based access to decent employment, curbing underemployment in the informal economy and rural sector, and extending social protection through a holistic approach.

The road to Ouagadougou has already been paved by the Special Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union in Windhoek, Namibia, where the African Ministers of Labour and Employment met in April 2014 to deliberate on and prepare the policy documents for the Extraordinary Summit. Among some of the major policy issues discussed in Windhoek were: the transformation from the informal to the formal economy with a view to extending social protection and adding value to the informal economy where the majority of Africa's population ekes out a living; labour migration that looks at the issues holistically but with a focus on intra- and interregional labour migration, portability and effective labour market administration; development of Africa's labour market institutions to benefit all stakeholders; and, lastly, youth and women's employment as a major factor in poverty eradication.

In conclusion, allow me to appeal to all partners and other stakeholders, especially the ILO, to continue to follow the process and provide the requisite support during, and after, the Summit in Ouagadougou.

Original Russian: Mr VELIKHOV (Representative, International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions)

I have the honour of speaking today on behalf of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS). I would like to thank the ILO for its close and effective cooperation with our association. This cooperation was enshrined in a Cooperation Agreement between AICESIS and the ILO on 8 May 2012. An important landmark in this relatively short history of our cooperation was the series of joint studies and the compilation of a joint document: *The role and impact of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (ESC-Sis) in the response to the global, financial, economic and jobs crisis*.

I should now like to address another issue. The informal economy, just like the formal economy, is a subject that requires constant attention and analysis, for example, in terms of how it affects people's well-being and livelihoods. Having carefully studied current socio-political and market analyses, we should like to make the following observations.

What is characteristic of the informal economy is the high level of vulnerability for workers. Paradoxically, in many countries the informal economy makes up a considerable part of the economy, with approximately 90 per cent of the workforce in the informal sector. The informal economy is also characterized by underemployment for extended periods over a person's lifetime.

The most vulnerable groups in the informal sector, in particular women and persons with disabilities, are denied the possibility to enjoy social guarantees and other rights stemming from the social security system and labour laws. For example, women tend to outnumber men in the agricultural sectors and their unfavourable working conditions, in this case, highlight the inequalities between the sexes, entrenching the feminization of poverty. Consequently, the most vulnerable social groups in terms of gender, age, or disability are then pushed further into the informal economy. This situation, whereby these people are deprived of their right to work, education, decent food and medical assistance, needs to be carefully studied.

The workforce in the informal economy is characterized by a low level of education and, sometimes, poor literacy skills. A lack of qualifications prevents them from working independently or from doing non-hazardous and more interesting occupations. Indeed, there is a lack of alternatives to working in the informal sector as a means of generating income, therefore, indirectly or directly, those involved in it are perpetuating a system which only governments have the will and the power to change. If governments fail to do this, the risk of further impoverishing informal workers is relatively high compared to formal workers.

This is the reality that workers in the informal economy face: low incomes, which may be five to ten times less than workers in the formal sector; unregulated working hours; and no collective bargaining opportunities to defend workers' rights and interests. All of this causes the informal sector to grow at the expense of the formal sector. For example, there has been substantial economic growth in many African countries, but this has failed to lead to job creation. As a consequence, the informal sector has grown stronger to the detriment of the workers' interests.

Having great difficulty in gaining employment in the formal sector, people of working age, irrespective of whether they possess the necessary qualifications, are forced to enter the informal economy in order to earn some kind of income to get by.

Thus, the question arises as to what can be done to tackle the situation. Can we turn a blind eye to this matter, or do we have the will to make a change? We agree with the ILO's view regarding the need to develop SMEs as one of the main factors to bring about the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Original French: Mr CHIKH (Representative, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)

The report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO and the Report of the Director-General of the ILO outline to the current session of the International Labour Conference the progress achieved in the international promotion of the principle of decent work for all categories of workers, despite the constraints imposed by the global eco-

conomic crisis and the excesses of unbridled globalization.

This progress is the result of a long process of tripartite dialogue, the value of which is beyond dispute and the aim of which is to ensure, at the global level, social justice, and the embodiment of fundamental principles and rights at work.

These rights involve in particular the need to combat forced labour resolutely and to transition progressively from the informal to the formal economy, moving towards better protection of workers, in particular the most vulnerable and specifically domestic workers and migrants. We can add to these categories women and young people, to whom special attention should be paid.

Keeping in mind the sociological difficulties and the complexity and diversity of measures to be taken to meet the requirements of decent work, the availability and willingness of the ILO to develop a far-reaching programme of technical cooperation is very much appreciated by our organization, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which in turn calls for the strengthening of the social dimension of globalization.

The OIC concurs with the objectives set forth by the ILO and recalled in the Director-General's Report. In this connection, the OIC's ten-year Action Programme 2005–15 is testimony to its mission to take up the challenges of the twenty-first century. One of the principal challenges is to ensure decent work for the workers of the member countries of the OIC. This is reflected in the Baku Declaration, which was adopted in April 2013 by the labour ministers of the OIC, and which states that: "decent work, productive employment and safe workplaces are important elements to ensuring the sustainability of societies and combating poverty". These are also important elements for ensuring sustainable development, as advocated by the ILO.

The other challenge before us and identified by our labour ministers concerns demographic pressure faced by the OIC member countries, which must be taken into account when defining social protection policies to strengthen the participation of women, young people, and migrants and their families. Indeed, women and young people are the social categories within the OIC member countries that are the most exposed to unemployment, despite representing the future of society, and they must be brought into the mainstream as our countries modernize.

With respect to migrants, they have received particular attention in our countries from our labour ministers, who are keen to set up and develop a sustainable social protection system for the most vulnerable and the least privileged of these workers. This goal has been highlighted by the ILO, which argues that migration should become a choice and not an obligation for those who migrate, should contribute to the economic development of their host country as well as their country of origin, and should constitute a factor in bringing the two countries closer together.

It is on the basis of these various challenges that the ministers of labour of the OIC call upon member States to strengthen their participation in the development and implementation of employment, OSH and social protection policies at the international level.

Unfortunately, as we read the Director-General's Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, things are not so rosy. This Report,

the objectivity, impartiality and precision of which are worthy of praise, is based on facts and information gathered in the field by the mission sent by the Director-General, Mr Ryder.

The facts and information are damning as far as the deterioration in the conditions relating to Palestinian workers and populations in the occupied Arab territories is concerned. The obstacles to the free movement of Palestinian workers resulting from the separation barriers and checkpoints, the precariousness of the working conditions imposed on them, and the discrimination they face in respect of wages and social protection, are all measures that bring to mind the system of apartheid, which was condemned by the international community. Yet the Israeli authorities act in total impunity as a result of the unconditional support they receive from powerful allies.

It is this impunity, which has been denounced by the OIC, that has encouraged the authorities to seek to extend their territorial gains by destroying Palestinian property and building Jewish settlements on Palestinian land.

All of this makes it very difficult for peace negotiations aimed at the two-State solution to restart. Given this situation, is there still hope that peace negotiations can be restarted or should we just assume that they are not possible, considering that Israel deems that it is "in danger of peace"? Such an attitude will lead nowhere.

By way of conclusion, I would like to highlight the following statement made by Mr Ryder: "[T]he ILO's commitment to the building of a sovereign Palestinian state with an effective social dimension remains as strong as ever."

Original Russian: Mr OSOVYI (Worker, Ukraine)

Recent events in my country, Ukraine, have been at the centre of the world's attention. Unfortunately, this has not been thanks to achievements in the economy, or in the area of work. Rather it has been to the contrary. The people who overthrew corrupt powers and aspired to a rapid transition to something better are now facing new challenges. As a result of the aggressive policy of Russia, Crimea has been occupied, a tacit war wages in eastern Ukraine in the industrial and coal mining areas, and people are dying on a daily basis.

This situation is exacerbated by the continuing global financial and economic crisis, which adversely affects our country's economy and workers' incomes. It has been predicted that Ukraine's GDP will fall by around 5 per cent this year. Slight growth is expected only in 2015. This will first and foremost result from expanding economic ties with EU countries, with which we recently signed an Association Agreement.

However, a strategic solution to the problem lies firstly, in our view, in the creation of a new model for the economic and social development of Ukraine. The current development model which was based for the last two decades on cheap labour, a situation whereby a worker lives from pay cheque to pay cheque, has long expired. Nonetheless, the importance of fair pay is still not understood in Ukraine. Unions have been able to raise the minimum wage to an official minimum for sustenance. However, it is still too low and it does not fulfil its main function of reproduction of the labour force. On the whole, the cost of labour in Ukraine is un-

dervalued; it is two to four times less than in European countries.

To curb the broad-scale inequality, and to prevent the growth of the working poor, we appeal to the ILO to assist Ukraine in reforming its labour payment system. Ukrainian unions categorically disagree with the IMF, which claimed that previous years' wages and pension growth was too high and that it allegedly adversely affected Ukraine's economy. How can one speak of wage growth when current wages in the US dollar equivalent are at the same level as they were seven years ago?

The true causes of the sad state of the economy are the growing scope of the shadow economy, the theft of resources by the previous regime, and total corruption which has inhibited normal business and the attracting of investment. However, at the behest of the IMF, wages, including the minimum wage, have been frozen. This is at a time when inflation is at some 12 to 14 per cent and our national currency has already been devalued by almost one third.

A major problem is unpaid wages. The circumstances in the social sphere are exacerbated by the need to spend money on security and assisting internally displaced persons from armed conflict areas. To eliminate wage debts, unions have initiated changes to current legislation. First, we suggested that compensation be paid for delays in wage payments, and in the event of the insolvency of an employer the legislation envisages payment by a guarantee institution. This is provided for in the Protection of Workers' Claims (Employer's Insolvency) Convention, 1992 (No. 173).

The unions have also examined zones of social inequality in labour and, together with specialists from the Ministry of Social Policy, we developed a draft roadmap of action of social partners to eliminate these zones.

Regarding the threat of mass layoffs under the pretext of the crisis, the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU) called on the Government to undertake immediate measures to stabilize businesses and to search for new markets for domestic production. Negotiations on this issue are being held with the association of employers.

Today, there are many enterprises that employ people part-time. Moreover, 44 per cent of those that are unemployed are younger than 35 years of age. Given that the indicators show a sharp fall in production – sharper even than the current decrease in employment – unemployment will only worsen in the future and, consequently, there will be a new wave of Ukrainian migrants going to other countries.

The FPU has supported a number of reforms put forward by the new Government to: strengthen governance; fight corruption; increase transparency and improve the business environment; eliminate privileges in fiscal legislation; and to work out the inequalities in pensions.

We count on the ILO to continue supporting the further harmonization of Ukraine's labour and social legislation with that of Europe, the direct application of international labour standards by the courts and the development of social dialogue in Ukraine. We also support the ongoing reform of the ILO, its increased coordinating activities with all UN institutions, and joint programmes on employment and social protection through the Delivering as One UN initiative.

Ms PITT (Government, Australia)

The Australian Government appreciates the opportunity to respond to the excellent Report of the Director-General *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. There are few countries which are not touched by migration issues as either countries of origin, of transit or of destination, or in the case of Australia, all three.

The Report manages to tease out both the breadth and the complexity of the issues involved in modern migration. Some of the issues explored include labour abuse and exploitation, the role of private agencies and the operation of various government migration schemes and policies.

In addition, the needs of employers and the fast-changing labour markets are set against the challenges of undocumented migration, with the realities of national security considerations and border control issues added to the mix. It is indeed a complex international issue and one in which the ILO is very properly engaged.

Australia is a nation of migrants, with wave after wave of immigration contributing to our vibrant, productive and multicultural society. We agree that migration is a key feature of today's workplace and one which raises policy challenges. Migration is growing in size and diversity and is likely to continue to do so as workers move across international borders seeking out opportunities for themselves and for their families.

Unfortunately, we acknowledge that migration is still too frequently associated with completely unacceptable labour abuse. We both recognize and add our voices to the international concern about abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices affecting migrant workers in particular, including issues of human trafficking and forced labour.

Australia remains firmly committed to abolishing all forms of forced labour and preventing human trafficking and we support the ILO in its work on these issues. Australia has comprehensively criminalized human trafficking, slavery and slave-like practices, including forced labour, debt bondage and deceptive recruitment.

Australia also participates in a range of international and regional initiatives to combat people smuggling and human trafficking, noting that the victims of such crimes are a particular focus of this Report. For example, Australia has been working with the ILO to reduce the exploitation of migrant workers and their families through a project called TRIANGLE, which stands for the Tripartite Action to Protect Migrants within the Greater Mekong Sub-region from Labour Exploitation.

Australia also has arrangements to support suspected victims of trafficking, including support to allow them to remain lawfully in Australia, and we continue to build relationships particularly within our region to increase our knowledge and cooperation on these matters. It is also important here to note that Australia's domestic law provides the same workplace protection and conditions to foreign workers as are afforded to Australian nationals.

Australians love to travel. You will find Aussies all around the world, as many Australians venture overseas to work. Equally, skilled migration plays an important role in meeting Australia's business and economic needs. Australia has a long-standing permanent and temporary migration programme and it is our experience that migration programmes

work most effectively when they are both targeted and well managed, like the Seasonal Worker Programme which has been implemented successfully in Australia.

On the question that the Director-General asked, inviting comment on how the ILO's work on migration can be maximized, we believe that migration should be a priority for future programmes. Australia would support the ILO in cooperating with governments to ensure adequate regulation of private agencies, particularly given the substantial evidence of widespread abuse connected with the operation of these agencies. Education and information on what fair recruitment practices look like, and support and practical assistance to member countries to prevent exploitation by unscrupulous employers should also be a priority.

We are working with the IOM on this issue and have provided seed funding towards the development of IRIS. It is hoped that this system will create a framework for employers and other recruitment intermediaries in the fight against unethical recruitment practices. We encourage the ILO to work in partnership on this project and in the context of the Public-Private Alliance for Fair and Ethical Recruitment.

As the President of the G20 this year, Australia would like to acknowledge the ILO's continued support. The ILO is a key participant in the G20 Task Force on Employment, providing valuable input, analysis and policy advice on a wide range of topics, including measures to promote good-quality employment. We also acknowledge the assistance provided by the ILO to the human resources development agenda of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

In conclusion, the Australian Government, like the ILO, believes that success is not measured by the number of international meetings or by the sheer volume of activities undertaken, but rather by actual impacts that can be demonstrated in addressing agreed objectives. The Australian Government hopes that we can all draw on our own experience, while continuing to learn from others, in order to contribute to ensuring sustained growth and job creation in an ever-changing world and to both meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities of migration.

Mr GHEBREHIWET (*Government, Eritrea*)

I congratulate the President on his election and the Director-General for his articulate Report, which details what the world needs to do collectively to make our world economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, focusing on formalizing the informal economy. The Report will enable my country to enhance its implementation programmes and share its experiences regarding labour administration.

Let me take this opportunity to highlight some of the achievements of my Government with regard to the goals of the Decent Work Agenda. The Government of Eritrea, in addition to its existing development programmes, has taken proactive measures, including multifaceted food security, employment creation, skills and vocational training, and entrepreneurship programmes. Social partners, civil society organizations, women, young people and students are the immediate participants and beneficiaries of the programmes in operation. Furthermore, the Government of the State of Eritrea, jointly with

its social partners and with ILO technical assistance, has carried out various activities that enhance labour administration, social dialogue and tripartite consultation.

Measures are being taken to develop efficient labour administration, which requires ample time and effort to ensure fulfilment of ILO principles and objectives. However, being overwhelmed by our far-reaching and highly prioritized development programmes, coupled with the "no peace, no war" situation and unjustified sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, the Government has lacked the finances to achieve this noble cause.

Workers and their families are the immediate victims of the Government's involuntary inability to comply with labour standards. We believe that the verdict of the border conflict runs counter to the core ILO principles. My delegation therefore calls upon the ILO to join efforts to facilitate access to funding, end the "no peace, no war" situation and lift the imposed sanctions. We trust the ILO will play its role in this area.

Finally, in accordance with our profound principles of self-reliance and social justice, which are in line with ILO values, the Government reaffirms its commitment to making them a reality. We toil today for a bright tomorrow.

Original Arabic: Mr YOUSIF (Worker, Sudan)

I have the honour of congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to guide the work of the 103rd Session of the Conference. I also have the pleasure of conveying to them the warmest greetings of the Sudanese Workers' Trade Union Federation (SWTUF).

We should also like to express our full appreciation of the Report of the Director-General and the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, as well as the efforts they make to present excellent Reports each year for the purposes of discussion in a tripartite framework: something that does not exist anywhere else.

The themes submitted this year to the Conference committees are of great importance. We concur that it is necessary to add new values to Convention No. 29 in order to tackle this inhumane phenomenon. We regret that some 20 million people are victims of forced labour.

We also agree that it is necessary to facilitate the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy in order to ensure decent work. Indeed, workers in the informal sector account for a sizeable portion of the global economy, particularly in our continent, Africa. They are exposed to multiple dangers and do not benefit from social security and social protection schemes. We hope that the discussions during this session of the Conference will enable us to find solutions guaranteeing a decent life for informal workers. Furthermore, it is necessary to hold a new discussion on the strategic objectives with a view to doing more for informal workers and to guaranteeing employment opportunities, in particular for young people and women, as well as social protection, social dialogue and fundamental labour rights.

We support the seventh item on the agenda of the Conference related to the amendments of 2014 to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, put forward by the Special Tripartite Committee.

I should now like to address the Appendix of the Report of the Director-General, *The situation of*

workers of the occupied Arab territories. We are all closely following the situation, a situation that is more dramatic than the Report makes out. It is therefore indispensable that all the honest persons and all the consciences of the world among the workers, employers and governments take a firm stance in support of the workers and the people of Palestine with a view to the full liberation of, and recognition of, the State of Palestine, with Al-Quds as its capital, and of the liberation of all the occupied Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon.

The effects of the economic crisis are still being felt in all the developing countries, especially in Africa and in our Arab region. Indeed, unemployment is affecting young people and university graduates, men and women, in a context of unfair international trade relations, dominated by multinationals and global financial funds that impose unfair conditions on developing countries and make them drown in debt, the interest rates of which are ten times higher than their real value. We should like to reiterate in this respect that it is necessary to write off the debt of the developing world because the lenders have already recovered their rights and much more.

The ILO, tasked with ensuring the application of Conventions and international standards, must guarantee equality when it comes to ILO posts and structures. It is vital to rectify the situation, to ensure justice and equality and to leave behind, once and for all, discrimination and double standards with respect to criteria.

Thanks to social dialogue mechanisms within the Higher Council for Wages, the SWTUF made great efforts to secure in 2013 a significant wage increase in the public and private sectors despite the difficult economic climate resulting from the civil war in southern Sudan. We succeeded in modernizing our labour and social security legislation to the benefit of our workers and our partners. Our confederation plays a key role in terms of dialogue and national reconciliation, and in ending conflicts. We should like to spread a culture of peace. On 21 May 2014, we also celebrated the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. We are seeking to promote peace in our region, in collaboration with our friends from federations of neighbouring countries, and with the East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC), the OATUU and the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU).

The SWTUF is determined, despite the difficult context, to take all the necessary efforts and to seize every opportunity available to it so as to implement the fundamental objectives and strategies of the ILO, thus allowing the ILO to better discharge its mandate and to secure the well-being of workers and of all the peoples of the world.

Original Spanish: Mr PARRA ROJAS (Employer, Cuba)

It is very important that this year's Report focuses on fair migration, considering that 231.5 million people participate in migratory flows from one continent to another. They usually move for economic reasons, especially because of the inequality between developed countries and so-called third world countries. It has come to light that for most of these migrants there is no decent work available and their fundamental labour rights are frequently violated. This situation certainly shapes the work of the ILO, which is responsible for the promotion of the appli-

cation of Convention No. 181 as well as other international labour standards applicable to such situations, and for encouraging social dialogue and providing the public with a better understanding of migration processes.

We would like to draw attention to the so-called "brain drain" mentioned in the Report. We do not agree that conditions in the countries of origin – a scarcity of work, poor working conditions or low salaries – are its only cause. There have existed, and continue to exist, programmes in developed countries aimed at stimulating these migratory flows by creating expectations of a much higher quality of life than that which workers enjoy in their own countries. The situation is worsening in cases like Cuba, where these programmes, aimed at recruiting highly qualified people, are serving political interests.

The discussion on the intensification of efforts to eliminate forced labour has come at a particularly appropriate time; it allows us to address, and make decisions regarding, the issue of the gaps in the application of Convention No. 29, and this is especially important given the increase in the trafficking of people for labour or sexual exploitation.

On the agenda for this session of the Conference, under the recurrent discussion on the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, is the analysis of employment policies for sustainable recovery and development. This initiates the second cycle of discussion, and the conclusions we reach should reflect how successful we have been in implementing the strategies outlined. Unfortunately, the statistics indicate that the economic recovery has been very unequal: many countries are experiencing serious employment crises and some 200 million people globally are unemployed, approximately 40 per cent of whom are young women and men.

The experience of these last four years will provide us with better clarity and consensus regarding what measures should be taken by member governments in their respective countries and by the Office. Regarding the latter, we would like to highlight the need for the Office, as part of its work, to promote the application of the conclusions of the 96th Session of the Conference (2007) concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises. It is of fundamental importance that the Office promotes an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises; it should also conduct studies on, and create instruments to support, the link between productivity, employment and wages at enterprise level.

Our small country, subjected to an embargo for more than 50 years, is taking a battering due to the economic crisis, and I did not exaggerate the difficulties that I mentioned earlier. However, our determination to overcome our problems has led us to develop ongoing social dialogue that is tailored to our country's situation. This has proven to be an irreplaceable tool for the identification of solutions to each of our problems, and has provided us with ways to proceed.

Lastly, we would like to draw attention to the fact that the next session of the Conference will only last two weeks. Our experience in this Conference should enable us to adjust all the mechanisms accordingly, bearing in mind that we cannot sacrifice quality in implementing them. The shorter time allocated should not allow us to be distracted from, or to fail to deeply examine, the issues that are at the core of this institution's work.

On behalf of the workers and the workers' unions of Benin, I extend cordial greetings and congratulations to all those gathered here.

At the last session of the Conference, the Workers took the floor before this august assembly and deplored the miserable situation regarding the exercise of rights, especially with respect to collective and individual fundamental freedoms. Here I am referring to the right to strike, the right to public demonstration – in short, freedom of expression. This right has been called into question by our Government, which is flagrantly violating Conventions Nos 87 and 98.

At this session of the Conference, we take the floor to denounce the fact that the situation in our country, far from improving, has deteriorated year-on-year.

On 27 December last year, our union confederations organized a protest march in response to the continued flagrant violation of freedoms, the increasing insecurity for any opponents and workers who dared to make demands, and the rampant corruption in occupational competitive examinations. The march left from the labour exchange and fulfilled all the formalities laid down by legislation. It was crushed with bloodshed and with unprecedented violence, which even began at the labour exchange in Cotonou before the march took off. Blood was spilt on the stairs and in our very offices.

All the secretaries-general who organized the demonstration who were injured by this atrocity were taken to the hospital in the capital. This barbaric violation then led us to hold a 48-hour warning strike on 3 and 4 January 2014 to call for the respect of civil liberties by punishing the perpetrators of these violations in line with the Constitution of our country; for the payment of the 1.25 per cent pay increase granted by the Government to all public sector workers in 2011, which is being applied selectively with teachers not receiving their due; and for an increase in the national guaranteed minimum wage.

Later on, most of the teachers in a precarious situation rallied at the movement, and strikers at their general meeting were arrested, beaten, threatened and humiliated. To this day, people working in the legal and health sectors are calling for their rights to be respected through various actions, but in vain. The Government has shown its true colours to strikers during this period, which has lasted for over four months. We are coming out of the strike now but our demands have still not been met.

None of the recommendations in the report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations on Conventions Nos 87 and 98 on page 67, paragraph 2, relating to Benin have ever been implemented by our Government. Our Government has submitted a bill to our National Assembly for the umpteenth time to review the right to strike already in force, to introduce barbaric clauses such as the need for continuity of the public service and a serious restriction by the Government to hold strike ballots. The aim of the Government is, at all costs, to abolish the right to strike in Benin.

Our aim here is not to bad-mouth our Government but to draw your attention to the fierce determination of our Government to legalize the violation of Conventions Nos 87 and 98.

We, the workers in Benin, are fighting for the application of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 so that we can introduce freedom and justice in our country, which will promote production in this part of the world. A right must be accompanied by penalties and sanctions for those violating the right, otherwise that right no longer exists.

If the President is committed to helping us, given that since 28 May we have been discussing these very points and aims and experiencing the same dynamics in this house, my delegation hopes to return home to Benin and give the workers the message that there will in fact be a better future in store for them.

First and foremost, may I address our warm congratulations to the President of the Conference on being elected to this important function. On behalf of Romanian workers, we would like to express our conviction that, under his stewardship, the Conference will be a success.

I am also honoured to extend the appreciation of Romanian workers to the Director-General for his excellent Report.

The ILO's approach of creating a strong link between its tripartite structure and the problems of each worker and person forms a solid basis for future action by all its Members. We are all fully aware that the global objective of the ILO, decent work, means we must reinforce and reinvigorate national tripartism.

It is extremely important to consolidate the synergies between job creation, combating poverty and promoting social cohesion while introducing a strong gender component in all member States of the Organization by promoting the corresponding ILO Conventions and Recommendations.

ILO aims and principles are regarded as indispensable points of reference for our economies and societies in their efforts to strike a better balance, that is to say, in the words of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization to create an environment in which "societies can achieve their goals of economic development, good living standards and social progress".

The global crisis has left its mark on employment, work and the social situation in every region in a different fashion. We agree that the ensuing tensions have brought the issue of social justice to the fore in the forms of youth employment, the quality of employment, social protection, compliance with child labour law, forced labour and social dialogue at national, sectoral and company level.

I would like to address an issue currently of concern to Romanian workers. In 2009, our Government reached an agreement with the IMF, the World Bank and the EU committing itself to amend the Labour Code and the laws on social partners, collective bargaining, industrial disputes and social dialogue. The new Social Dialogue Law adopted in 2011 creates considerable problems for the unions and at the same time for workers. We believe that this law is an attack against the principle of tripartism.

We have managed to explain to politicians that social dialogue is essential to solve conflicts. Negotiations are under way to identify the provisions in the Social Dialogue Law that could be amended.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Labour Office for its assistance in

this respect and we hope that this support will continue in the future.

In our view, the right to form trade unions, the right to collective bargaining, the right of workers to protection against potential abuses by employers, the regulation of working time, the right to continuing professional development, the protection of union officials during their terms of office in line with ILO Conventions and EU Directives are incontestable values that we protect. Moreover, one demand we constantly make to our Government is precisely to ratify the greatest number of ILO Conventions.

The Romanian unions are prepared to play a constructive role as social partners to achieve social cohesion and peace in a context of respect for fundamental workers' rights and freedom.

Original Spanish: Ms PÉREZ (Employer, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

On behalf of FEDECAMARAS, we congratulate the Director-General of the ILO on his Report to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, which promotes decent work as a tool to combat poverty and to boost the economic growth of citizens. We warmly welcome the Report and voice our firm commitment to working collaboratively towards those objectives. We also congratulate Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja on his appointment as President of the IOE and of this session of the Conference.

Furthermore, we express our sincere gratitude to the ILO and the IOE for giving us the opportunity to welcome them to our country during the visit by the high-level mission, headed by the Chairperson of the Governing Body, which took place in January of this year. We appreciate the dedication and meticulous and balanced approach with which the mission was carried out, as it offered the tripartite constituents an equal opportunity to express their views on the implementation of the ILO Conventions ratified by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We are confident that this mission, in conjunction with other daily events in the country, helped re-establish contact between this employers' association and the Venezuelan Government, which was severed over 15 years ago.

In April 2014, the Deputy Minister for Labour of our country, Mr Elio Colmenares, welcomed the President of FEDECAMARAS in his office. In the same month, the Government, in light of developments in the country, set up an event called the "Peace Conference" (*Conferencia de Paz*), to address the various problems plaguing Venezuela, including the economic situation. On that occasion, the President of the Republic recognized FEDECAMARAS and invited it to participate in this meeting.

Similarly, other forums were established, such as an economic round table, at which the various business sectors submitted proposals to endeavour to overcome the main obstacles in the country's economic situation. We recognize this government initiative of the Peace Conference as a positive step in the right direction towards the necessary dialogue. Nonetheless, almost three months after its launch, no major results have been recorded. We think that we need to move to a more structured approach that fosters a healthy exchange of ideas and better implementation of solutions, based on – and this is very important – a climate of greater trust between all stakeholders.

FEDECAMARAS believes in truly inclusive social dialogue – I repeat, truly inclusive – meaning that it has to take into consideration the most representative workers' and employers' organizations, as the only way to achieve social peace and a higher level of economic development in society. Indeed, workers who tend to belong to non-official unions need to be an important part of these discussions. Without their participation, the broad inclusion and democratic and active participation enshrined in our Constitution will be compromised. Furthermore, the success of any social dialogue initiative in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela depends on overcoming the climate of violence and on including other forces in society in the discussions, such as students and a fair civil society representation.

In these complicated times the country is going through, all parties must be heard. The dialogue must be ongoing, sincere and far-reaching, which the country needs, and held in a climate of mutual respect and recognition. Ongoing and effective dialogue is essential to ensure the best welfare and progress for the Venezuelan people, as well as for employer sustainability and decent work in the country, which are key factors in combating poverty.

When it comes to the economy, we have been arguing that we cannot continue down the path of the model that has been implemented by the Government, which excludes the private sector and fails to take into account effective social dialogue. It will not be possible to emerge from the crisis unless we pay heed to the criticisms of the nation's various forces in society. Only then can we move to a model of coexistence that creates greater welfare for all Venezuelans.

The Government must take tough economic measures that require broad consensus, and all Venezuelans have a responsibility to find solutions. We hope that the participation of Venezuelan tripartite constituents in this Conference will contribute to a better understanding of the positions of the parties and underpin an ideal level of inclusive and ongoing social dialogue. We have the fundamental pillars of this house – social dialogue, decent work and enterprise sustainability – as the best means to address poverty. This is the only way we can look to the future and build together the pathways to ensure the peace and unity of all who live in and love this beautiful nation called Venezuela.

Ms OCAMPO (Worker, Philippines)

Dignity and justice for the Filipino workers! Today, I stand before you with a sense of history and in all humility as the first woman and the first public sector worker to be the titular head of the Philippine delegation to the International Labour Conference. At times, women workers and public sector workers are treated as second-class citizens in the labour movement, but they are definitely not second rate.

I join the Philippine tripartite delegation in welcoming the ILO Director-General's framing of a fair migration agenda, which is the first in the ILO.

I represent the largest trade union coalition in the Philippine labour movement, *Nagkaisa*, meaning "solidarity", which has 49 labour centres, including SENTRO, the Federation of Free Workers, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, the public sector federations, including the Public Services Labor Independent Confederation, the Congress of

Independent Unions and, of course, my very own Philippine Government Employees' Association.

More than 10 million of our nationals live and work in over 200 countries. While we suffer from brain drain, we have workers – some of them even professionals – who, because of a lack of opportunities in our country, are forced to take vulnerable work and suffer abuse (occasionally fatal), especially those in domestic work. Others become victims or survivors of human trafficking.

Our call is to include, as a critical component of fair migration, observance of the right of migrant workers, wherever they are, to self-organization and collective bargaining and to human rights and decent work guarantees. It is the responsibility of the receiving and sending countries, both of which benefit from migrant workers' sacrifices and toil.

Statistics and experience would support our claim that our migrant and local workers have contributed to economic growth, or to the creation of wealth. Rightfully, we should be accorded decent work guarantees, but this is not the case. There is a need for a speedy resolution of long-term concerns that take away the dignity and lives of workers.

First is the absence of security of tenure and precariousness of work. Contractualization, both in the private and public sectors, is becoming more pronounced. Labour contractors and employers, mostly part of the global supply chain of multinationals, profit from the precariousness of work. Thus, concrete steps to ensure compliance with the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy of 2006, including its responsibility to increase employment, opportunities and standards, should be pursued.

On low wages and income inequality, we know many employers remain uncaring, as they raise their profits at the expense of wages, safe workplaces and just working terms and conditions. Daily minimum wages in the Philippines do not even meet the basic food and non-food requirements of workers and their families and they cannot cope with the rising costs of services like electricity, water, transportation, education and health care. We want an equitable share of the benefits of economic growth, such as a real increase in take-home pay through living wages and tax breaks.

On extra-judicial killings, legal and practical restrictions on the full exercise of the rights to organize and collective bargaining are killing unionism. Union organizing is becoming doubly difficult at times, as cases of extra-judicial killings have not been resolved and the perpetrators are roaming free.

Coming from the public sector, I demand the ratification of Convention No. 151. We believe that public sector workers who have sacrificed enormously to advance our Government's programme of reform should be able to exercise their right to organize. We are relying on the commitment of President Aquino, who said that he would push for the Philippine Senate to ratify ILO Convention No. 151 immediately.

Another issue is limited social protection. As unemployment is projected to rise further until 2018, unemployment assistance, even for a period of six months, is critical to guarantee that workers and their families meet their basic daily needs while looking for employment. Expanded or universal health care, social or old-age pension and child subsidy are also among the social protection programmes to which our workers are entitled.

Furthermore, on the limited or lack of climate change resiliency in the workplace, workers are advocating for labour standards vis-à-vis climate change, most especially to help workers cope with the negative impact of the latter, which can be as bad as job losses.

Finally, of course, enable us and our families to live in dignity; we need concrete actions now.

Original Russian: Mr SHAYKHOV (Employer, Uzbekistan)

Uzbekistan has been successively applying its strategy for economic development to create a sustainable economy, increase the well-being of its population, provide social protection for all its people, and it has been focusing particular attention on young people in the country.

Bearing in mind the fact that 2014 has been declared by our President as the "Year of the Healthy Child", the Government, in close collaboration with the social partners, has come up with a broad plan of measures to strengthen social protection. They addressed social protection for young people, and developing the innovative areas of our economy so that young people can utilize the artistic potential and the knowledge that have been instilled in them in schools, colleges, vocational schools and universities.

One of the major challenges before the Government, the social partners and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan is making sure that young people can make a free choice with regard to their professional future. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which represents the interests of employers, has tried first and foremost to support young people choosing to set up their own business. To this end, along with the advocacy and awareness-raising work that we carry out in colleges and vocational schools and universities, our Chamber of Commerce has also been organizing internships with domestic companies. Moreover, together with our partners, such as the Central Bank, the commercial banks, the youth movement called "Kamolot", the trade union committee and the Federation of Trade Unions, we have been carrying out a number of projects to teach young people entrepreneurial skills, for example: generating business ideas, business plan development, and how to manage finances and other resources necessary to set up and develop their own business.

Systemic work is ongoing to create a thriving climate for investment in our country, to enhance the legislative framework, stimulate the growth of SMEs and to attract domestic and foreign investment. We have done a lot of work to cut bureaucratic red tape and to simplify things to improve entrepreneurship. As part of our programme for an "e-government" system, registration of enterprises can now be done online.

Pursuant to a decision of President Karimov, a new mechanism will be launched in October this year, the "personal office for entrepreneurs". This will allow any person who wishes to create or develop his or her business to receive the necessary information through a single online government portal – gov.uz – without having to go through the various state bodies.

Efforts made to develop business have allowed us, in 2013, to increase the share of SMEs in the GDP to 56 per cent. Moreover, these SMEs are responsible for some 76 per cent of employment of the working population.

In 2013 alone, some 970,000 people found a job, of which 60.3 per cent were in rural areas. This includes more than 480,000 jobs created in small and micro-enterprises and sole traders and over 210,000 work-from-home jobs. More than 500,000 recent graduates from vocational colleges entered employment. Recent college graduates who had decided to start up their own business were given over 140 billion Uzbekistan soms (UZS) in microcredit benefit from the Government.

In the future, under the aegis of a tripartite agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers, the Council Federation of Trade Unions (CFTU) and our Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in April between the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the CFTU, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the ILO, and also in line with the DWCP for 2014–16, our Chamber of Commerce and Industry will continue to foster the domestic goal of ensuring full employment. This is in full harmony with the standards of the ILO.

*Original Portuguese: Mr DE LISBOA AMANCIO VALE
(Worker, Brazil)*

It is a great honour for me to address the plenary of the Conference today as an elected delegate representing all the workers of Brazil. This occasion is made even more special by the fact that, this month, we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia, a document that represents a milestone in the history of this Organization, and that, by placing the work of men and women at the centre of regulatory policies, still has the power to inspire and illuminate the path that lies ahead. Labour standards and democracy are the path to the realization of the ILO's *raison d'être*.

I want to emphasize here the words of the Director-General that any reform aimed at improving the performance of the ILO should be planned to ensure the preservation of its fundamental task of regulating the international labour system. If this noble aim is compromised, any gains we might make in terms of the efficient running of the Conference will have been in vain.

We are in no doubt that this Organization must pursue the task of regulating the international labour system by remaining true to its vocation of concerted tripartite dialogue between the social partners that make up the world of labour: the employers, governments and workers. If our attempts to re-establish the placing of value on work as a strategic objective of development and if efforts to tackle the crisis are to be successful, then we must maintain this unique tripartite approach.

Today, more than ever, we need a strong ILO. The working class is increasingly coming under attack throughout the world, the aim clearly being to safeguard levels of private-sector profit. We cannot back down, especially not in this Organization, when it comes to the rights already enshrined in its Conventions, and, in particular, the right to strike.

However, the attack on workers does not merely involve the withdrawal of long-established rights. Many of our challenges in the struggle for better working conditions are linked to a two-fold problem. On the one hand, we have the widespread adoption by companies of harmful practices of outsourcing and, on the other, the spread of a dangerous narrative that seeks to paint informal and precarious work as a virtuous individual entrepreneurial

initiative. Should these unscrupulous interests which only seek profit prevail, it will not be long before we see child labour being presented as something educational and uplifting, undermining the existing Conventions in this regard.

We have all long been aware that formalization of work provides workers and their families with effective protection, while aiding development at the national level. We cannot allow such social protection to be converted into a policy designed for the few which promotes discrimination and xenophobia in our countries. Today we, the governments, employers and workers, are all faced with the significant challenge of dealing with the consequences of global migration. As a part of this process, we must reject the tendency to divide the workers into first-class workers, with labour rights, and second-class workers, who are totally unprotected.

We are fully convinced that this Organization can play a key role in the promotion of decent work throughout the world. However, in order to achieve this aim, the Governing Body of this Organization must, as a matter of urgency, schedule a debate on the regulation and effectiveness of international standards all along the value chain that is so emblematic of our globalized world. Through the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), the trade union movement of the Americas is contributing to efforts to ensure that our societies progress in terms of development and the strengthening of democracy.

This year, we launched a very important tool, the Development Platform for the Americas (PLADA). This platform provides a structured view of development, reaffirming the pillars of decent work, the importance of the State and public services, the need for redistribution of wealth, and the importance of participatory democracy, gender equality and protection of the environment.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that the standards supervisory system, which is the *raison d'être* of this Organization, is under attack from political forces seeking to undermine universal human rights. Consequently, we need to move quickly and decisively to establish an ILO standards tribunal.

Mr GOLCHHA (Employer, Nepal)

It is indeed a great opportunity for me to deliver a speech in this 103rd Session of the Conference, which is being attended by distinguished delegates coming from across the globe. I think this is an important platform for all of us to share our common concerns and hold discussions on issues and challenges which we all are facing.

We have been experiencing rapid changes in the business environment across the globe, and this has put immense pressure on enterprises to make the necessary adjustments to remain competitive. Business life is being shortened due to the impact of market forces. The sustainable operation of businesses, creating more jobs, improving working conditions and ensuring the quality of working lives are some of the challenges common to all of us.

At present, despite our efforts, things are not happening as we would desire. Meeting these challenges has become difficult for countries suffering from low growth, inadequate investments and resource constraints, and lacking in appropriate policies. Over the years, changes have been taking place on socio-economic fronts, but mitigating the disparity

is still a major challenge. People's expectations are on the rise. Socio-economic development has been impacted by many forces. Sustaining economic growth and minimizing the impact of economic crisis is a common challenge for all countries, whether developed or developing. Employment-focused investments and actions are needed to create more jobs and raise the standard of living. Economic growth alone may not be sufficient for the reduction of poverty. The adoption of appropriate policy measures and their effective implementation is required to tackle the issue.

In the context of a country like Nepal, the issue of improving working conditions and expanding social protection coverage has drawn much attention. Policy and legislative reform is ongoing. Some initiatives have already been taken to provide minimum social protection and we are working to introduce a contributory social security system for workers. However, introducing a durable social security system to cover a large population has become a challenge.

Many of you may be aware that the changes that have been taking place in Nepal in recent years – the formation of the Government after the election of the second Constituent Assembly in November 2013 – have given some indication for political stability. We believe that the sooner the promulgation of the new Constitution takes place, the sooner the system will be back to normal and development activities will gain momentum. Now the focus of the State is to draw up a new Constitution within a year.

The private sector of Nepal has been making continuous efforts to expedite economic growth and create more employment. We have been advocating for political stability and policy reform. The idea of a common minimum economic agenda has been brought forward by the private sector in Nepal. A document has been signed by all major political parties wherein they have expressed their commitment to give political concessions to see through the end of the political transition.

It has also expressed the commitment to expedite hydropower development by keeping the hydropower sector free of any kind of interference such as strikes. Since then, the recently organized 2014 Nepal Economic Summit and Nepal Business Conclave generated a good response from the global business communities for investment into Nepal. The Government has also committed to creating more investment-friendly policies and opportunities in Nepal.

Our major concern is to promote investment and create new jobs to address unemployment. Large portions of the young population have remained unemployed or underemployed. Every year about 400,000 people enter the labour market. There has been little progress in generating new jobs, hence the migration of young people in search of jobs to foreign countries has been increasing every year. The country is losing productive human resources; we need to have more concerted efforts and cooperation to generate quality employment and enhance productivity. We have been ceaselessly urging the Government to come up with an appropriate policy.

We have given emphasis to promoting social dialogue at all levels. We believe that consultation and building mutual cooperation is the solution to any problem. We are working to establish a bipartite mechanism for holding regular dialogue with trade

unions. We have also been working towards legislative reforms. Reform of the labour law to create a social security system and labour flexibility is the focal area of our legislative reform.

Business growth and creation of more employment is necessary to ensure decent jobs, reduce poverty and promote economic growth. Efforts are needed to attract more investments from all sides. We believe that higher productivity and enterprise efficiency is the key to improving the quality of working life. We all wish to work closely and join hands to support the initiatives necessary for economic growth and development in working conditions.

I will briefly mention the issues and challenges that we have been facing in Nepal. I hope that the leaders of our delegation will also put forward their views on the topic. Our major focus is to expand economic activities by increasing investment and creating additional employment to ensure durable industrial peace and sustainable business.

As we know, every country has its own characteristics and concerns which may differ from others, but there are some common issues that we have been facing. It is therefore necessary to make a joint effort to address these common issues. I feel that the ILO should understand these issues and concerns and should come up with specific programmes suitable for countries like Nepal.

Original Spanish: Ms LEGUIZAMÓN (Worker, Paraguay)

It is a great honour for the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) of Paraguay to participate in the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, representing Paraguayan workers.

We have a new Government in Paraguay and any change brings great hope, but also a number of uncertainties. The situation for workers remains very difficult and led us to launch a general strike on 26 March 2014. It was called by the country's trade union organizations seeking active involvement in the new national Government, which forged ahead with neo-liberalist policies without ensuring worker participation. As a result of this strike, negotiations began with the eight trade union federations of Paraguay and the round table on social dialogue was set up, coordinated by the Vice-President and the Minister of Labour of Paraguay. It deals with ten core areas, which are currently being addressed, and some headway has been made.

Moreover, for the first time, our country has a Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, which has been long-awaited by the workers. There are significant challenges, not least that one of the issues in negotiations with the Government is the appointment of the Minister of Labour. Meanwhile, as always, breaches of labour law persist and few enterprises have collective labour agreements guaranteed by labour laws. The lack of freedom of association is a serious problem, especially in the private sector, as is the low social security coverage.

The need to humanize the capital-work relationship – and taking into account the facts and events of the past – teaches us that any evolutionary process in individual and collective management leads to major objectives being achieved in the interests of societies as a whole. Our country needs to rethink labour relations, underemployment, informal work, formalizing labour and bringing in changes by incorporating cutting-edge technologies and those that are useful to humankind.

We are against the ferocious onslaught of savage capitalism, which seeks to take away the benefits of the working class, spearheaded by the mass media and directed by company owners in order to undermine all the progress and gains made in the benefits that ensure a better quality of life for the working class in the formal and informal economy.

Forced labour and child labour continue to be an ongoing problem in Paraguayan society. The main victims are children, women, indigenous peoples, the rural population and transport workers, who suffer from all kinds of ill-treatment and diseases. The system itself makes them victims and is at odds with the situation in which these workers find themselves. The slow progress of women's advancement is evident in the latent discrimination persisting at all levels. We are concerned that little or no attention is given to the ecosystem and environment in our country.

Finally, we call for the technical cooperation and support of the ILO for the ten round tables set up for social dialogue and for the ILO to keep a watchful eye over the process beginning in our country.

*Original French: Ms KASSIM SOUFOU
(Government, Comoros)*

On behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros and in my personal capacity, I would like to express my congratulations to the Chairperson of the Governing Body, as well as to the ILO Director-General, for the quality of their Reports and for the results that they have achieved in the 2012–13 biennium.

Today, thanks to the progress that has been demonstrated, the promotion of decent work as the main vehicle of social progress is no longer considered to be an economic risk, but rather a *sine qua non* for sustainable development.

I would like to welcome the topicality of the reports submitted to this session of the Conference, which provide both a basis for following up action already taken and for adjusting our intervention strategies to the major changes and new challenges presented by the world of work. Comoros fully endorses the analyses, vision and ways forward outlined by these reports with a view to creating a stronger organization that is committed to renewal.

As has been rightly said, our millennium has been characterized by one particular feature: the increase of global wealth accompanied by the growth of unemployment and persistence of poverty in a large part of the world. The promotion of employment, transitioning from the informal to the formal economy, fair migration, and social dialogue and justice should be the main principles that transform the world of work, if not the fundamentals that guide our actions as we seek to attain the ILO's objectives, in accordance with its unchanging values.

Although Comoros is seeing the first signs of economic growth and recovery owing to the implementation of an austerity policy, the problem of unemployment and underemployment, coupled with rapid population growth, is still acute.

Structural reforms in place since 2009 and the calmer political situation have helped economic recovery, which has had an impact, albeit weak, on poverty reduction. The dominant feature of the Comorian labour market remains underemployment, the recourse of the majority of the working population.

The relatively high proportion of informal employment is the logical consequence of the scale of unemployment, the scarcity and lack of security of paid employment, the vulnerability of civil servants and growing rural poverty.

Fortunately, with ILO support, the Government has adopted a new legal and institutional framework for addressing these issues. In particular, we have established an employment bureau to facilitate the development of a system for collecting employment data and monitoring employment trends, to help in matching jobseekers with job offers, and to contribute towards the scaling up of initiatives for promoting self-employment among young people and women.

A number of other measures have also been taken. A National Employment Policy has been drawn up and adopted, providing a reference framework. It is a strategic tool with the principal aim of achieving wide-scale productive and decent full employment in Comoros, with a view to better ensuring sustainable development. This policy will form part of our macroeconomic framework and the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development (SCADD).

In this regard, it is a priority to create more and better-quality jobs, especially to absorb unemployment among young people and women. Neither has the promotion of social justice been forgotten. A policy in this respect has just been passed by Parliament in the form of a law and so is enforceable, conferring legitimacy on its implementation.

We have also established an Advisory Council on Labour and Employment with a view to strengthening social dialogue, reflecting the processes of democratization and economic liberalization.

It is my pleasure to tell you that we have just deposited the instrument of ratification of Convention No. 144 with the Director-General.

With regard to the application of international labour standards, we have revised our Labour Code to adapt it to international labour legislation and standards.

Allow me to inform you that in late 2013, our country organized a national conference on combating child labour, of which a draft law against child labour and exploitation constituted one of the main outcomes.

Lastly, in 2012, my country also instituted a national strategy for technical and vocational training and a Master Plan for Women's Entrepreneurship with the aim of reducing gender inequality and increasing women's participation in our country's economic development. I would like to thank the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) for its financial support in implementing this plan.

I would also like to reiterate the gratitude of the Comorian Government and people to the ILO Governing Body and Director-General for the many ways in which they support my country.

I restate the Comorian Government's commitment to achieving all of our Organization's objectives and take the opportunity to call on international organizations to work side-by-side with the ILO to meet the challenges of economic growth with social justice.

Original Arabic: Ms SHARIF (Worker, Libya)

The Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, addresses a subject

which is of capital importance in the current context. Migration is a constantly growing phenomenon and, according to the Report, currently concerns some 232 million people. It comes as a consequence of the deteriorating situation in many countries facing armed conflict, war and repressive regimes which prohibit people from enjoying their rights and where unemployment and poverty are rife. Another consequence is the brain drain, whereby people seek better incomes or a decent life in countries that are considered advanced or civilized.

Since its creation, the phenomenon of migration has been part of the ILO's concerns, given that the Constitution of 1919 calls for the protection of workers abroad. Many efforts have been made to establish migration policies. However, these policies have not yet achieved complete social protection for migrants. The priority has been given to financial benefits and performance, neglecting social and human considerations, following the model set by globalization. This explains the need to develop a culture which focuses on human and social aspects.

The initiatives adopted should have clear objectives with respect to the countries of origin and destination. The migration programmes and policies implemented in the countries of origin and destination, in collaboration with international organizations, have not yet met their objectives. Their effects are not satisfactory, because both the countries of origin and destination lack the capacity to deal with increasing numbers of migrants.

The circumstances have forced a considerable number of people to migrate. We should not be blaming them but rather those who exploit them, such as the organized gangs which target potential migrants. The international community must come together to draw up development plans and programmes to provide employment opportunities in the countries of origin, thus preventing the suffering and death of potential migrants during long journeys across deserts or in accidents at sea on make-shift boats.

My country is suffering from the phenomenon of illegal migration. A significant number of migrants reach our country, taking advantage of the current situation. Even if they are treated with humanity and allowed to work, they can still be targeted by organized gangs. The State does not have the capacities to address the growing number of immigrants, and we therefore call on the international community to join its efforts to those of Libya, to enable it to give migrants the human treatment that they deserve.

With regard to the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, many years have gone by since the adoption of two resolutions of the International Labour Conference on this subject, in 1974 and in 1980. However, the situation is only getting worse, the occupying authorities continue to adopt racist practices, deny trade union rights and liberties, confiscate land and create and develop settlements, not to mention the murders and the rising unemployment in Palestine. These constitute violations of international labour standards, international commitments and international charters. We must therefore put a rapid end to these violations.

On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, let me first congratulate Mr Funes de Rioja on his election as the President of 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. Let me also express my appreciation to the Director-General and to the Chairperson of the Governing Body for their comprehensive Reports presented to the Conference.

As one of the newer member States of the ILO, my Government has worked very closely with the ILO. We have received valuable technical assistance from the Organization to improve labour standards and strengthen relevant institutions in the Maldives. The ILO's project on empowering the Labour Relations Authority of the Maldives, the employment tribunal, unions and employers' associations has been instrumental in strengthening these institutions and protecting labour rights. This project has provided training and invaluable guidance to the staff of different government institutions such as the Labour Relations Authority, specifically improving the quality of the labour inspections and their dispute resolution mechanisms. The ILO has also played an important role in the drafting of an employment policy as well as the drafting of a labour administration policy, labour inspection policy and a dispute resolution and prevention strategy. Additionally, an industrial relations bill is also currently in the drafting process with ILO support. It is also worth noting that with the expertise of ILO consultations, a study on employment challenges in the Maldives, which focuses on employment issues, was published early this year.

The Maldives is still far from establishing an ideal labour administration system. However, with the ILO's technical support and guidance we have made significant progress towards it. Therefore, I take this opportunity to thank the ILO for their continued support towards strengthening institutions and protecting labour rights in the Maldives.

The economy of the Maldives is heavily dependent on foreign labour. According to recent government statistics, approximately one third of the total population of the Maldives are migrant workers, of which 50,000 have irregular status. While the Maldives faces a range of challenging issues such as deplorable acts of trafficking in persons, my Government remains committed to addressing these issues. The Maldives has made significant progress in recent years towards protecting migrant worker rights and eliminating all form of forced labour with the assistance of its international partners. In this regard, a bill was enacted in December 2013, which makes trafficking in persons a criminal offence. It also criminalizes all acts of forced labour and fraudulent recruitment as acts of human trafficking. This is certainly an important step towards solving wider migrant-related issues in the country. In order to oversee the effective implementation of the Act, my Government has formed a statutory committee which will also play an instrumental role in determining the national programme to combat trafficking in persons.

Further, the Maldives is also in its final stages of ratifying the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in its ef-

forts to combat trafficking in persons and protect the rights of migrant workers.

The Maldives is committed towards reforming its national labour regulations in line with ILO standards to ensure that the rights of migrant worker populations and also of the local workers are better protected. I once again thank the ILO and all the international partners for their assistance in this regard. I reaffirm that the Maldives will continue with its efforts to provide its workers with equal and fair treatment in the labour market. The Maldives greatly values its collaboration with the ILO and looks forward to engaging further on labour-related issues in the future, to create the best possible labour administration system.

Original Spanish: Mr ÁVILA GARCÍA (Worker, Honduras)

This august assembly, where Government, Employer and Worker representatives from all over the world come together, represents an expression of authentic tripartism. We would like to use this opportunity to denounce the situation confronting trade unionism in Honduras.

We want to make it very clear that we denounce the media campaign that the Government is using to try and denigrate the labour movement in our country, especially our comrades involved in the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS) case, as well as representatives of the private sector, with the sole intention of doing away with tripartism in that institution and others.

We would also like to highlight the fact that work is becoming increasingly precarious in our country, which is the antithesis of decent work. The Government has implemented various temporary work programmes, about some of which we have lodged complaints with the ILO in the past. These temporary employment programmes are undermining labour stability and the hard-won rights of workers, rights which are enshrined in the Constitution of our country.

Our workers, through our federations and confederations, categorically reject the Ministry of Labour's unilateral initiative to reform the current Labour Code with help from the ILO. It says it is going to regulate the labour market, which will affect workers' social and economic conditions. In these circumstances, we have decided that we will not participate in any reform of the Code until we get sufficient guarantees that the rights of workers will not be diluted and that there will be real tripartite dialogue.

The Government's actions are aimed at destroying the teaching and agriculture trade unions, limiting their rights and abolishing the union charters that protect their boards of directors and their autonomy. There has also been persecution of union leaders who criticize the Government. This is why we are calling for this international organization to make an immediate pronouncement, in order to protect these basic principles, which are vital to trade unions' relevance.

Honduras has signed a number of ILO Conventions, among them Conventions Nos 87 and 98. Currently, the Government is clearly interfering in unions' affairs and collective bargaining. Workers on temporary work arrangements are undermining collective bargaining, as the conditions of these programmes make it impossible for us to pursue proper collective bargaining, or exercise the right to form unions.

I would also like to highlight the persecution in Honduras's agricultural sector, particularly the persecution of small-scale farmers in the Bajo Aguán region. In this region, the blood of many farmers has been spilt as a result of the Government's apathy and even the corruption in its institutions.

The wave of violence continues in our country, with children and young people being killed. Corruption is endemic, even in the Government itself.

For all the above reasons, we strongly request the full and unmitigated support of the ILO; we would like the ILO to provide assistance with a programme to recover the rights of workers and reform our institutions. We call upon the Committee on the Application of Standards, the Committee on Freedom of Association and the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which visited Honduras on 24 April 2014, to respond to the complaints lodged by various trade unions in 2012 and 2013, as the 2014 report of the Committee of Experts does not discuss any of those cases.

Original French: Mr KATILE (Worker, Mali)

On Saturday, 17 May 2014, a Government delegation, led by our Prime Minister and including a number of ministers and heads of department, was attacked by the Azawad National Liberation Movement, supported by Ansar Dine militants and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) terrorists. Thirty-eight people were killed, of whom six were workers, and more than 70 injured, including the General Secretary of the National Workers' Union of Mali (UNTM), our comrade Modi Touré, who was shot in the hip and the foot. Thirty civil servants were taken hostage in the Kidal area.

The Prime Minister's visit, widely publicized by the media, had concerned practical and peaceful subjects. He wished to: find out what people's expectations were with respect to the upcoming negotiations at Ouagadougou; take stock of the obstacles and difficulties hindering the establishment of administrative structures in the various communities, with the aim of resolving those difficulties; open all schools; and ensure that the health services and judicial and police systems, among others, were operational.

For the UNTM and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers of Mali (CSTM), the only crime of the workers and union leaders was that they were posted in the north of the country; they were the innocent victims of people who only heed the rattling of sabres. Their crime was attending a meeting with the Prime Minister, with the aim of supporting the general population.

We would like solutions. The UNTM and the CSTM reject the use of armed force by the State. Its use of armed force calls into question the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for dialogue and negotiation as the best means of conflict resolution. The UNTM and the CSTM likewise reject recourse to armed rebellion at a time when political parties, civil society organizations and unions are being set up by different population groups, some of whom are even more destitute than the people in the north.

Both our associations call for the establishment of a national policy to manage development and to raise awareness at grassroots level to enable people to manage their communities. We want respect for human rights, in particular for the rights of the black

workers native to the north of the country and those who are posted there. The massacres and the hostage-taking of which they have been the victims, and the crippling wounds inflicted on trade union leaders, are atrocious, reprehensible acts; nevertheless, the UNTM and the CSTM remain committed to consultation and dialogue as the means to resolve national problems.

We call upon the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference to unambiguously condemn the refusal to engage in dialogue, the use of arms as a means of crisis resolution, and the killing and hostage-taking of workers. We call upon you to adopt a motion calling for the peace negotiations, respect for Mali as a united country, respect for the human rights of all our population, and respect for the rules of democracy and the rights of all minorities.

Mr HIKAUMBA (*Worker, Zambia*)

I feel greatly honoured to have this opportunity to make a contribution to the ongoing debate on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General. Two days ago, my minister was on this platform and raised a number of issues affecting my country, Zambia.

Of particular interest is the issue of job creation. In the Director-General's Report, statistics on employment, labour and social trends show that youth unemployment is a global problem. We totally agree with the Report. Much as it may be a global problem, in Zambia it stands at such a magnitude that it is unmanageable if we are to act on our own. It is for this reason that we appreciate initiatives by the ILO to tackle this problem. I therefore join the Minister of Labour and Social Security and the President of the Zambia Federation of Employers in paying tribute to the ILO for the interventions that have been made so far in trying to address this problem. As indicated by the Government of Zambia, in order to alleviate this ever-growing problem, we need to create approximately 1 million new jobs in the next five years.

The Zambian trade unions stand ready to play their part in ensuring that strategies that are already in place, and those that are to be formulated in future, are successfully and effectively implemented. We therefore call upon the Government and employers in Zambia to work in tripartism with us, so that programmes can become a reality in the next five years. To us, as workers, it is not just the numbers we are interested in, but it is also the quality of the jobs that are to be created. We will only be satisfied if the new jobs conform to the Decent Work Agenda. Fortunately, during his visit to Zambia, the Director-General witnessed the launch of three important activities: the revised DWCP, the Zambia Jobs Portal and the Green Jobs Programme for the construction industry. With these initiatives, we look forward to new jobs in which workers will enjoy their full rights in the workplace. Of particular importance is the right to freedom of association, as enshrined in the ILO core Conventions. We look forward to jobs that are permanent and pensionable. We look forward to new jobs with adequate remuneration.

Even as we revise our labour laws, a process which is currently under way and receiving technical support from the ILO, we would like to achieve a job market that will be anchored in laws

that will promote equity and social and economic justice.

As workers, in order that we maximize benefits, I call upon the trade unions in Zambia and the world at large to step up their organizational capacity and efforts. They should make every effort to build unity of purpose. As one of our slogans says, "United we stand, divided we fall". The time is now to stand up for our rights. The time is now to show our relevance to the working fraternity.

Mr YUSON (*Representative, Building and Wood Workers International*)

Two hundred and thirty-two million: this is a reference to the current number of migrant workers in the global labour market.

With such a huge figure we sometimes lose sight of what lies behind the number. For me, this figure represents the thousands of migrant workers in the construction, building, wood and forestry sectors whom I have had the pleasure to meet. They have shared with me their stories and aspirations for a better life for themselves and their families. In their quest to fulfil their dreams and search for decent work, they have endured enormous difficulties, ranging from ambivalent governments, unscrupulous recruitment agencies and exploitative employers.

Despite these challenges, migrant workers have remained steadfast in their desire and commitment to organize and fight for their rights – rights which are encompassed within the core labour standards of the ILO. Thus, the ILO has a pivotal role in ensuring that not only the fundamental rights of workers are protected but, more importantly, that there is an institutional framework enabling them to seek recourse when their rights are violated or unprotected.

Building and Wood Workers International supports the Report of the Director-General to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. We hope that this Conference will approve the Report, as it will give the ILO the political mandate to move forward in developing bold initiatives on fair migration with a basis that is firmly rooted in international labour and human rights.

We agree with the points made by the Director-General that the ILO indeed has the institutional structure in place with the pillars of standards and tripartism to fully set the course for fair migration.

In the area of standards, we recognize that the number of countries which have ratified the Conventions is very low, and there is a need sometimes to update Conventions to make them relevant to the globalized world, as in the case of Convention No. 29. However, we stress that ILO Conventions are still very relevant. Thus, we call on the ILO to fulfil the mandate proposed by last year's ILO Tripartite Technical Meeting on Labour Migration of developing a campaign to promote the ratification and implementation of the Conventions to protect the rights of migrants.

I would like to express our criticism of the recent initiative by the IOM and the IOE with regard to voluntary certification processes for international recruiters. We strongly believe that what is needed are binding and enforceable measures which will ensure fair and ethical recruitment. In addition, we are concerned as this initiative is missing one critical stakeholder – the workers. In this again, the ILO, with the unique advantage of a tripartite struc-

ture, is the vehicle to address not only recruitment but all areas pertaining to ensuring the rights of migrant workers.

We are pleased that the ILO has heeded our call and has rightfully reclaimed the role of defending and promoting the rights of workers. That is critical at this juncture when the United Nations is in the midst of discussing the post-2015 development agenda.

Original French: Mr LEFÈVRE (Representative, International Confederation of Executive Staff)

First of all, I wish to congratulate the President on behalf of the International Confederation of Executive Staff on his election at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference and wish him every success in discharging his important functions. On behalf of the International Confederation of Executive Staff, representing executive staff and managers in many countries around the world, I would also like to congratulate the Worker, Employer and Government representatives on their involvement in the International Labour Conference and their efforts to improve the social protection floor, both through discussions on Convention No. 131 and Recommendation No. 135, as well as through efforts to improve the application of fundamental rights and through the recognition of the work of the experts.

This session of the Conference gives us the opportunity to recall the principles of the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia, adopted 70 years ago, and the benefits for society and workers that stem from tripartite negotiations and discussions.

The financial crisis has resulted in a diverse range of situations, severely impoverishing many people, while some countries have managed to regain growth. For countries that have been hit hard by the financial crisis, our confederation is convinced of the important role of management and team leaders in enterprise structures and local authorities, and of their social role.

This means promoting a sense of responsibility and committing to developing businesses, thereby contributing to the well-being of everyone. We need to protect on a daily basis the women and men for whom we are responsible, and to prevent human and industrial disasters.

As we are doing at the ILO and also in Europe, Canada, Africa and other continents, we need to improve the social protection floor and working conditions through our national organizations and our sectoral federations. We also need to facilitate and accompany the transitions that are being proposed as far as possible, whether in enterprises or through negotiations and exchanges between our members and their governments.

With an organization that seeks to organize itself at the continent level, as demonstrated by the recent creation of Africadre and also the National Confederation of Canada as a partner, the International Confederation of Executive Staff intends to play a coordinating and facilitating role among its members and observers, and be involved in networking and management structures in countries requiring support.

However, we must draw attention to the unsatisfactory situation in various countries with regard to the right of managers to form associations or trade unions, and to contribute to the drafting of collective agreements. The freedom of collective bargain-

ing is still denied to managers in various countries, including Canada and other regions of North America. We are convinced that the ILO, the International Labour Conference, the United Nations Global Compact and goodwill on the part of governments will allow us to break down the barrier which prevents managers from enjoying representation and recognition despite the fact that other workers do. Our global network is resolutely committed to the dissemination of fundamental rights and to supporting objectives for a better-quality, more human working environment for our workers and our managers.

Mr NOBILE (Representative, Caritas Internationalis)

As a starting point, we would like to echo the words of Saint Pope John Paul II, who, in his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, affirmed that “human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question, if we try to see that question really from the point of view of man’s good”. It is with this conviction that we take part in the reflections of a working group of Catholic-inspired organizations contributing to the discussion on the post-2015 development framework and with whom we share the view that decent work for all should be a stand-alone goal.

We believe that poverty eradication is the responsibility of, and requires concerted commitments from, governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations, the private sector and civil society; commitments that are grounded in human dignity, human rights and responsibilities, and solidarity.

With long and widespread experience in the private sector, as well as in practical programming and policy-making activity worldwide, from the grassroots to global levels, often in direct partnership with States, international organizations and other civil society organizations, we call upon and support the international community in its efforts to renew the commitment of the entire human family to poverty eradication through the promotion of decent work, good-quality jobs and social protection, for all workers in all sectors of the economy, including the informal economy. We express particular concern about the situation of young people and migrants who, despite being an important part of the solution to the economic crisis, face more acute and difficult challenges in this regard.

Promoting work as a means of eradicating poverty should not be viewed as an issue on which compromises could be made. The quantity of jobs cannot be detrimental to the quality of jobs; work must be decent.

The extension of social protection is a fundamental means to accomplish solidarity within, and across, society. Weak social protection systems need consolidation. Social protection floors, as defined by Recommendation No. 202, are powerful tools to expand protection to cover all workers, families and communities.

Special attention should be paid to the situation of youth. Many young people work without contracts, or with part-time contracts and precarious salaries. “Many young people today seriously question whether life is something good, and have a hard time finding their way”, as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI stated on the occasion of the 2013 World Youth Day. We call upon all governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations and civil society organizations, to work with youth movements and

youth representatives to ensure a secure and meaningful future for the young generations. Young people should be ensured access to work and should enjoy decent working conditions and social protection, including when leaving school and entering the labour force. Business leaders have an important responsibility to engage and accompany the younger generation in this transition.

Finally, we wish to express urgent concern at the situation of migrant workers and their families. Migrant work and earnings make a substantial contribution to positive development and the reduction of poverty both in countries where migrants work and in their countries of origin. Migration is a positive driving force for social development. However, many millions of migrants, moving within their regions or across continents, and including significant numbers of farm workers and domestic workers, whether documented or undocumented, are subjected to working conditions that are profoundly indecent.

We call upon governments, employers' and workers' organizations and civil society to work together in order to ensure that all migrant workers and their families benefit from the same rights and assume the same responsibilities in the country where they live as any other workers. Specific attention is to be paid to fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as to the provision of adequate, fair and portable social protection, at levels that conform to universal human rights and international labour standards.

Original Spanish: Mr CELI VEGAS (Representative, Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America)

It is a great honour to greet you all on behalf of the Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America (ECCLA) and to congratulate the President on his brilliant leadership of this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, provides a wide range of insights into the current situation of migrant workers and the difficulties of governments in establishing policies for fair migration. Migration is not a new phenomenon. However, the numbers of people who cross borders every day are constantly increasing, and this is a situation that involves most countries.

There are currently 232 million migrants throughout the world, a figure that represents 3 per cent of the world population and an increase of 75 million since 2000. Developed countries currently account for 51 per cent of all migrants, and one of the major migration flows is from Latin America to North America.

Migration is a phenomenon which is closely linked to work and contributes to the growth and development of countries. It enriches experiences and favours intercultural exchanges, in countries of origin and destination alike. Migrants play a key role in maintaining the competitiveness and prosperity of receiving countries.

As a consequence, migration bears clear witness to the asymmetries and inequalities of globalization, characterized by growing inequality in development and increasing economic differences, concentration of riches and pronounced social inequalities.

Within this framework, implementation of the ILO agenda on migration must bear in mind socio-cultural as well as economic aspects. It must uphold

the fundamental principles and rights at work of migrants, and equal treatment and non-discrimination. It must establish fair wages and secure jobs and promote access to social security in receiving countries.

In order to make the most of the benefits of international migration, standards and policies adopted by States in this area must be based on coherence and legitimacy, thereby ensuring greater observance of migrants' human rights.

Many migrants face problems and difficulties, in particular those without identity papers who find themselves deprived of protection. This denies them the full enjoyment of basic rights and exposes them to a greater likelihood of abuse, exploitation or violation of their human rights and basic freedoms.

Effective agreements have been put in place by governments to meet the need for a fair migration. The most advanced process of regional and sub-regional integration with respect to the rights of migrants is to be found in the EU with the treaty concerning the free movement of persons across 28 countries.

On the American continent, agreements have been established relating to the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Andean Community (CAN) and CARICOM.

Despite the many gains offered by migration, policies in this sphere have become more and more restrictive. Examples of this trend include the building of the border fence between the United States and Mexico and the "Return Directive" of the EU.

In recent decades, the ILO has achieved a great deal of progress in the area of human rights through standards, thereby helping to improve the situation of migrants. One way of assessing the effectiveness of these standards is to examine their level of ratification. Unfortunately, many developed countries have not ratified these Conventions and standards, but that should not be a reason for other countries to act in the same way.

The work done by NGOs as a means of expression of civil society constitutes one of the fundamental pillars for raising the level of awareness in government policy.

Migrants should be protected in their countries of destination for both economic and political reasons. Just as international Conventions have generally been approved by a consensus of most States, government policies must be approved unanimously by the political class regardless of ideology.

Political groups linked to liberal or protectionist currents of opinion must protect all migrants irrespective of social class, race, sex or origin.

Migrants are a visible manifestation of economic globalization and government policies must include them in development plans and not exclude them for reasons of political opportunism. Limiting the rights of migrants could pave the way for restrictions of human freedom, which would represent a backward step in terms of the evolution of international law.

Original Spanish: Mr RODRIGUEZ FUENTES (Representative, Confederation of Workers of the Universities of the Americas)

It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity to address the International Labour Conference on behalf of the National Workers' Union (UNT) and the Union of Workers of the National Autonomous University (STUNAM) of Mexico, my country. I

also speak on behalf of the Confederation of Workers of the Universities of the Americas (CONTUA), an organization which represents 25 trade unions of university workers from 20 Latin American countries.

Over the last few decades, a campaign has been waged against trade unionism with the political objectives of discrediting us socially, limiting our political action and imposing a ruthless commercialization on labour relations. This campaign seeks to cut back workers' labour and social rights and to limit political rights, thereby weakening democratic institutions. The ILO is not spared by this onslaught, but we are staunchly defending it, as well as tripartism and social dialogue.

This year's debate in the various Conference committees has been very intense. Labour relations across the world are changing, and the tension generated has put us, the workers, very much on the alert. We must protect our hard-won rights, and at the same time we are promoting social transformation projects to guarantee better levels of equality, a better distribution of wealth, fair work conditions, more and better sustainable jobs and stronger democracy with social peace.

The work of the 103rd Session of the Conference is proving to be very important for the world's worst-protected workers. The ILO is preparing to sign two standard-setting Recommendations to defend workers; it is focusing on the transition from the informal to the formal economy with a rights-based approach; and consensus has been achieved on a Protocol to eliminate forced labour.

We have also had an opportunity to debate the right to strike in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. This is a right that we insist on because it is not only a defensive fighting instrument but also a mechanism for workers to take the political initiative. It enables workers to put forward proposals to change the orientation of economic and social policies, and to propose ways of establishing a new development platform on the basis of four pillars – political, economic, social and sustainable – and in this way contribute to the debate. Our proposals are intellectually rigorous and are designed to defend social justice, the fair distribution of wealth and democracy as a way of life. In this way we are contributing to finding a way out of the current crisis.

In this context, we, the university workers of the Americas, find ourselves facing complex struggles in different countries.

In Brazil, our affiliate, the Trade Union Federation of Brazilian University Workers (FASUBRA), has been on strike for many months, fighting for better salaries and against the privatization of university hospitals.

In Peru, workers are contesting the new state Civil Service Law and our affiliate, the National Federation of University Workers of Peru (FENTUP), is taking the lead in the fight on behalf of the state trade unions.

In Ecuador, we have been fighting for years against policies that persecute trade union activity, and if we do not stop the Government, it will try to impose further labour standards without any consensus, as we have said in meetings of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards.

In Costa Rica, the body of rectors and the University Council want to bring legal proceedings against our affiliate, the Union of Workers of the National

University (SITUN), to force it to change its collective bargaining agreement, with regard to the nomination of representatives to the board of directors of the social fund.

In Panama, we continue to fight the lack of recognition of civil servants' legal status, and our affiliate, the Association of Employees of the University of Panama (ASEUPA), is fighting, and has submitted complaints both to the International Labour Conference and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

In Mexico, we continue our fight for freedom, trade union democracy and genuine collective bargaining. We have been pushing for the establishment of a national programme to restore the purchasing power of salaries. With the federal Government, we are promoting the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which has been approved by the legislative authorities this very week, and Convention No. 98. These will now have to be ratified by the Senate. At the same time, we are working to formalize informal work because the recent labour reform has opened the doors to greater exploitation of workers and therefore greater precariousness.

Original Spanish: Mr SIGLIANO (Representative, Organization of Mutual Entities of the Americas)

The American mutualist system once again has the opportunity, through me as its intermediary, to address this honourable Conference, the present session of which has been convened by the ILO to address the challenge of building a future with decent work. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his pertinent and important Report.

The Organization of Mutual Entities of the Americas (ODEMA), as the legitimate representative of this region's mutualist system, has the authority to state that the system, which is already more than 100 years old, and which I represent today, has, implicit in its origins and in the development of its services to the community, a sense of irrevocable solidarity, and an adhesion to the concepts and principles which place humanity at the heart of its mission. I cannot omit a brief historical reference to the impact that mutual societies had on the birth of trade union organizations, which were established at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution as a result of the need to create institutions that would fight for the labour rights of workers. At that time, as we know, the evolution of systems of production led to working conditions that were often unjust, and in response there were demands made and campaigns waged to obtain standards frameworks that would look after fairly the interests of the parties involved during this period when relationships in workplaces were changing.

Time has passed and the ILO, with its wisely chosen tripartite structure, was set up; it continues to overcome inequality and to constantly drive change in the world of work. Nevertheless, currently, the ILO's work outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean is worrying. Progress is stagnating. The data from 2013 is a cause for concern: in urban areas 14.8 million women and men are looking for work but unable to find any; at least 130 million people are working in informal jobs; and 22 million young people are neither studying nor working.

Without a doubt, it is essential that we put political measures into practice and set up appropriate

mechanisms to cope with this new challenge. The conclusions of the ILO report on developing companies that generate decent, quality jobs mention social dialogue and institutionalized work-design programmes, and allude, without mentioning them, to not-for-profit civil society organizations – which incorporate these elements in their functioning. And, in Latin America and the Caribbean, these mutualist organizations are represented by ODEMA, a faithful advocate of a system that is a valuable component of a social economy based on solidarity, in the same way as the African Mutual Union.

The working structures of mutual societies bring together thousands of men and women workers who respond to a deep calling to serve their neighbours, and this feeling is evident in their commitment to carrying out their tasks. They belong to the social model that places people at its centre; they are in the front line in the battle against poverty, exclusion, discrimination and all forms of infringements of human rights.

The sense of security they feel when they are performing their duties derives from the conviction that, whatever criteria are used to define decent work, they are carrying out their tasks in a work environment that amply satisfies these conditions, where the efficiency and transparency of procedures is prioritized, and where processes are subject to the legal standards operative in the countries where they are working.

Today, there is irrefutable evidence that these organizations, pillars of a social economy based on solidarity, have much to be proud of. This is clearly true, given that internationally renowned institutions have distinguished certain American mutual societies as social enterprises in which the working conditions are excellent.

Lastly, responding to the call to fight poverty and inequality, and in the knowledge that decent work is a fundamental tool for the just distribution of wealth and the achievement of social inclusion, ODEMA, on behalf of American mutualism, is committed to redoubling its efforts to respond to these real challenges.

Original French: Mr ABDELMOUMNI (Representative, African Mutual Union)

As Chairperson of the Union Africaine de la Mutualité African Mutual Union), I am certain that in Africa, as in the rest of the world, friendly societies provide an important contribution to people's lives and to society as a whole. In a world experiencing a major economic crisis, mutual assistance brings individuals together to produce collective responses appropriate to the societies in which they live. These allow them to protect themselves from life's risks through friendly societies.

Friendly societies are actors in both civil society and the solidarity economy. They are based on the principles of participation, not-for-profit values, solidarity and democracy. They contribute to sustainable economic growth that puts people at the heart of development and promotes social integration. Furthermore, the friendly society model is a useful tool for extending social protection.

Today, I am going to focus on the African friendly societies I represent, which work in the field of health. We are present in remote areas where we implement community policies; we create social and medical centres and, by participating in the re-

duction of health-care costs, we prevent many people from sinking into poverty. A population that has been cared for, and is in good health, is also an active population that can contribute to economic growth. In this regard, we also participate in the fight against poverty and, in favouring access to health care and limiting its costs, we help many people avoid social exclusion.

Today, when many African countries are strengthening their social protection systems, we would like to be ever more involved and heard. The solutions we propose are not only complementary to policies implemented by States, they can also be instrumental in those policies. We would also like to develop greater synergy with projects implemented by major financial partners.

We also have a duty to offer an alternative to the growing establishment of private insurers in Africa, which is to the detriment of more effective solidarity-based solutions that ensure health coverage for citizens. In particular, the friendly society model allows non-discriminatory coverage, including for people who are viewed as "unprofitable" by insurers. We are therefore committed to working with States to extend social protection floors, and the friendly society movement as a whole, not only its African branch, supports this initiative.

In order to strengthen our organization, we have introduced ambitious measures to develop its position as a platform for communication, coordination and exchange between friendly societies in Africa. Our main objective remains working on access to high-quality health care for all.

We are working to develop a training centre that will allow us to train the friendly society representatives of tomorrow and to create jobs. A friendly societies monitor will also be established, with the aim of clearly measuring our social impact and carrying out studies to report on our activities and results.

Moreover, we have adopted a regionalization policy that involves the opening of regional offices adapted to the African context, which is marked by the existence of multiple social protection systems. Our aim is, through these offices, to promote friendly societies and their values on the ground, extend medical coverage and raise awareness among governments about our role in that, as well as our role in the solidarity economy.

Today, my association is involved in many partnerships and we can count on our partners' support.

We enjoy a very close relationship with the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM), of which I am Vice-President. It brings together the main federations of friendly societies around the world and is now the cornerstone on which the defence of the friendly society model is being constructed.

We also have a productive relationship with ODEMA, which allows for the ongoing exchange of experience and knowledge. We are also adopting common strategies and objectives to develop friendly societies on both continents and establishing governance models based on participative democracy and non-selective management modes that favour the separation of jobs to preserve the unique nature of friendly societies and their health-care packages.

I would like to mention the case of Morocco as an example of a place where friendly societies have been successful.

Confident in our knowledge and our ability to bring about real solutions, the African friendly societies movement, which I represent here, would like to take this opportunity to call on ministers and representatives of African and Arab countries, international organizations and all delegates. The establishment of an effective health policy where friendly societies, in partnership with the authorities, assume a regulator's role in the health coverage system is a solution that should be promoted in this time of economic crisis. We also effectively contribute to raising coverage levels, fighting poverty and social exclusion, and facilitating access to health care for the entire population, including difficult-to-cover groups. The friendly society model remains a compelling choice for facilitating and expanding access to health care and for protecting consumers.

The African friendly societies movement now stands ready to contribute further to the extension of social protection in Africa.

Ms HAGEN (*Representative, International Federation of University Women*)

The International Federation of University Women (IFUW) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the deliberations of the International Labour Conference on the overall theme of fair migration and the specific agenda items on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy, the elimination of forced labour and the strategic objective of employment. A gender-based perspective, with a particular emphasis on skills development for girls and women, should be featured in the outcomes for all of these agenda items. The IFUW also wishes to highlight the importance of the work on gender balance at the International Labour Conference.

On the theme of a fair migration, the IFUW appreciates the Director-General's Report, which takes into account the predominance of female migration in specific geographic regions and encourages these regions – Europe, the Americas and Oceania – to develop gender-specific programmes, especially regarding skills development. Labour forces can only be employed if they are educated and it is therefore indispensable to provide education, notably for women, so that they can access paid jobs and provide for their families. The IFUW has the Hegg Hoffet Fund for Displaced Women Graduates, which offers grants for that purpose. Empowering women and girls should be specifically targeted in all migration policies. The International Labour Conference should also support the inclusion of migration in the post-2015 development agenda, with gender-related indicators on non-discrimination and, especially, on skills development.

With regard to the elimination of forced labour, the IFUW commends the ILO Report for recognizing that girls and women are among the higher-risk victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The only way to counter this is through awareness raising and protections that include, most importantly, the education of girls. Ensuring the transition of girls into secondary schools should include a human rights educational component, so that they know when their rights are being abused. The Protocol and Recommendation on forced labour should make specific reference to policies that are oriented towards ensuring access to education for girls and skills development for women.

In many developing countries and middle-income countries, many girls are dropping out of secondary school to provide an extra pair of hands or earn needed income for their families. Yet, the long-term employability of young people is intimately tied to education. We emphasize, in particular, the growing skills gap and the need to integrate preparation for the workplace into the educational system. This should include a sensitivity to identifying and overcoming the barriers that girls and women face in ensuring access to education and skills development.

The skills gap is especially pertinent as a key element in the policy framework that is being developed for transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. Girls and women are more likely to be homeworkers, to have a high burden of unpaid work and to encounter discrimination in the labour market. The Committee is encouraged to ensure that there is a gender focus in its classification of the informal economy and to promote skills training for at-risk population groups to improve employability and income-earning opportunities, including entrepreneurship skills for women.

Finally, the IFUW takes note of the continuing challenge of improving the representation of women in ILO meetings. We commend the Bureau for Gender Equality for its report on the representation of women and men in the International Labour Conference from 2007 to 2013 and note that it has not yet reached the goal of at least 30 per cent women overall. We encourage the Director-General to send letters to member States that have yet to reach a 30 per cent level of participation of women in International Labour Conference delegations and the International Labour Conference to publicize the data and reasons given for under-representation.

Original Spanish: Mr PÉREZ OROPEZA (Representative, World Federation of Teachers' Unions)

We extend a cordial and brotherly greeting from the World Federation of Teachers' Unions (FISE) and declare that we stand in solidarity with the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) on trade union matters.

The FISE defends emancipatory, free, quality education for all people in the world. This struggle means that we must analyse the realities of each country in the world, not only in terms of education but also in terms of our direct and indirect connection with the entire social dimension of labour.

Capitalism today is going through a systemic crisis and is implementing policies that affect all humanity. For this it uses organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank to impose economic solutions which reduce social investment in education, health and housing through the privatization of these services. This also affects other universal rights such as: the right to life; the right to strike; collective agreements and decent wages; excluding people from education and increasing child labour; raising taxes; creating greater flexibility in laws in order to exploit workers; and relying in the majority of cases on illegitimate governments that surrender the sovereignty and freedom of their peoples.

Governments which decide to defend their sovereignty, freedom and independence, together with their people, are subjected to media campaigns, economic embargos, civil wars, the Arab Spring, the Troika, "soft coups" and invasions which seek to justify the appropriation of their natural riches

and the exploitation of their peoples. For this, the parties concerned use organizations that have a global impact, such as the Organization of American States (OAS) with its Inter-American Democratic Charter in Latin America, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the UN. They invade countries and destroy schools, universities, hospitals, roads and the urban fabric. And then they invent economic assistance for the reconstruction of the country, indebting it forever. This is capitalist cynicism. The people who destroy these countries and their peoples then appear as their rescuers. In order to increase their capital they conduct the business of war, intimidating peoples and their governments and, especially, trying to hide the systemic crisis which is a sign that their days are numbered.

The consequences of their ineffectiveness are seen in the destruction of the ozone layer and the polar ice caps. More than a billion people are illiterate today, including 860 million adults of whom two-thirds are women. A total of 104 million children do not attend school, of whom 57 per cent are girls, in violation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). One million children are currently dying of hunger, water sources are contaminated and some countries are permanently indebted.

In conclusion, capitalism has proved to be a system under which humanity is racing headlong towards extinction. However, there is hope for humanity. There are people and governments who are making progress in defeating individualism, the accumulation of wealth, environmental destruction, and the privatization of education and health; they are improving rights to housing, drinking water, food, work, decent pensions and labour rights. In South America, a set of integration policies are being developed in the economic, social, cultural and environmental spheres with a multi-polar outlook based on non-interference and self-determination of peoples.

This is the way to an inclusive, fair, equitable, democratic, proactive and human society. The agreements constituting the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA), MERCOSUR, UNASUR and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) are now receiving the full attention of the world. Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay are examples of a multi-polar world and show that a society based on a system other than capitalism – namely, socialism – is possible. In Venezuela there is a sovereign legitimate Government which respects the Constitution and universal human rights, while maintaining social dialogue with the entire Venezuelan people.

With regard to the MDGS, as a result of education and the work of UNESCO, we now have 5 million people who have been freed from illiteracy and are studying at primary and secondary levels, we have 3 million people at university level, we have 40 million school textbooks and laptops for all, avoiding privatization in the process. We would like to say that policies like this are, in our opinion, social policies.

From the outside, interventionist attempts have been made to carry out a “soft coup” in Venezuela. We, in our capacity as teachers, roundly reject the North American intervention in Venezuela and we denounce the anti-patriotic positions of

FEDECAMARAS, the trade unions and politicians that oppose a legitimate Government which has the majority support of the Venezuelan people. Independence and a socialist homeland! We shall live and we shall overcome!

Original French: Mr ABDI (Minister of Labour, in charge of Administrative Reform, Djibouti)

Today, I have the honour and privilege of representing my country at this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference in the very same room where, one year ago, on Friday, 14 June 2013, I presented my first speech before the delegates from the ministries and the world of work. Our participation in this major event gives us an opportunity to have a useful and fruitful interaction with many partners. This exchange of experience feeds into our process of continuous reflection on creating decent work and improving social protection for workers. At the same time, the analysis we perform when drafting policies at the national level is based on the in-depth research of the ILO into areas linked to its mandate and we would like to welcome the major strands identified in the *World of Work Report 2014: Developing with jobs*.

If I may, I would like to tell the Conference about developments in the Ministry of Labour and in administrative reform in Djibouti since June 2013. On my return to Djibouti, I addressed, with the support of the President of the Republic, Mr Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, a major social crisis that affected the US military base in Djibouti. After six weeks of negotiations with representatives of the US army, the US navy, officials from the American Embassy and representatives of society, all Djiboutian staff working on the site – 1,053 persons – were able to return to work unconditionally. At the same time, I took part in the process of renegotiating the understandings set out in the agreement on the stationing of US armed forces in Djibouti.

Administrative reform is well under way. Henceforth, thanks to the single-file system, state officials are known and monitored and their training has been planned; this began on 19 October 2013 and will continue until June 2017.

I have also tackled the finalization of the health insurance system. The law establishing the institutional tool for universal health insurance, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), was enacted on 5 February 2014 and entitlements are scheduled to begin in September 2014. In future, everyone will have the right to access health care: public service workers, private sector workers, self-employed workers, students, retired people and poor people. Through the contributions made, the AMU will provide a social protection floor for the entire population when facing the vagaries of health. The National Social Security Fund has an action plan to implement universal health insurance, in order to register new policyholders, conclude partnership agreements with private and public health-care providers and bring the system into operation.

The other major work that we have started is drafting a national employment policy. It will be based on Convention No. 122, which calls on members to develop a strategy for full employment. This national employment policy has started with a framework document entitled, “Diagnosis of employment in Djibouti”, which sets out the current situation and problems regarding employment. It was developed through a largely participative pro-

cess involving the Government, the public service, private sector operators and trade unions. This initial step was required to identify the problems and pressures on employment. The initiative therefore also shows an awareness on the part of the authorities of the breadth of problems linked to employment. A constructive debate on the document took place on 14 April 2014 and, through the planning strategy workshop, the resulting draft bill was approved on 20 May 2014. The final document, the result of collective work, introduces the measures, overall approaches, strategic areas and priority programmes that will be launched to reduce unemployment and improve the situation regarding human development.

The employment policy is built around various objectives and is divided into costed programmes focused on the labour market, improving vocational training, the employability of young people, social projects that create jobs, introducing a framework for the emergence of a network of SMEs and small and medium-sized industries (SMIs), and improving the labour market institutional framework and governance. The national employment policy will be integrated into the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Employment Creation (SCAPE), which is part of the operational plan for the vision of employment for Djibouti up to 2035. Finally, the Ministry has made the drafting of 16 reports on ratified Conventions and the drafting of reports on international labour Conventions a priority objective.

I would not like to end my speech without a thought for all those who are unemployed and the precarious situations in which they live. It is because of this particularly vulnerable section of our societies that our call for action is ever more pressing and urgent.

Original Arabic: Mr AL MASSRI (Employer, Syrian Arab Republic)

I come from Syria, the cradle of civilizations and religions and model of peaceful coexistence in the world; Syria, the crossroads of all the world's civilizations on the Silk Route; Syria, which has shone a light on the entire world and which was the birthplace of the religions which have illuminated humankind. It was in Syria too that the first alphabets were devised, on which humankind honed its intellect; in Syria, that iron was transformed into steel, and brocade and damask first woven from threads of silk; and in Syria, where the world took its first steps in art and refinement. Syria is also home to Damascus, the most ancient continuously inhabited city of the world.

As of three years ago, Syria was one of a select group of countries which were fully self-sufficient. Our factories manufactured medicines, clothing, baby food and all the necessities of daily life. Syria discharged its humanitarian responsibilities at the international level, joining in programmes to assist the needy of the world, the victims of wars and natural disasters. Then came this despicable war and the organized terrorist campaign against it, which has laid waste to its buildings and targeted its citizens. It is the industrial sector – so essential to the development and prosperity of any society – which throughout this crisis has been the worst affected and the focus of systematic attacks to destroy it,

with the aim of weakening the economy, undermining the country's resilience and exerting control over its decisions.

Prominent among the attacks launched against Syria is the unfair economic sanctions regime, which, by including a number of Syrian industrialists on the list of persons targeted by the sanctions, has also been very damaging to the Syrian economy, prohibiting multinational corporations and banking concerns from doing business with Syrian companies. Criminal gangs have also threatened business owners and their families with abduction or murder, forcing them to emigrate from Syria and to close their businesses. A number of industrialists and their families have paid with their lives for their resistance and their determination to continue their manufacturing activities.

Confronted by their failure to quell the resistance by industrialists and to subvert their loyalty to their country, their businesses and their employees, the perpetrators then redirected their vicious hostilities at the systematic destruction of factories. Buildings have been destroyed, machinery and equipment has been stolen or burned, and raw materials and manufactured products alike have been looted. In the same process, convoys of lorries transporting commodities and manufactured goods have been targeted, along with oil pipelines and power lines. Workers have been prevented from reporting to work, bringing industrial activity in Syria to its knees. As a result, and given the lack of resources and funding, a large number of businesses have shut down.

Notwithstanding the scope of the destruction of the country's industries and the difficulty of measuring the damage inflicted, the employers' organizations, including the Damascus Chamber of Industry, working together with the Government, have carried out an inventory of the damage that has been incurred by the industrial sector. The damage which we have been able to itemize amounts, up until the end of 2013, to US\$13 billion: US\$1.3 billion in the public sector and more than US\$11 billion in the private sector.

Even the most developed economies could not endure the sacrifices and massive challenges which our industry has had to face over the years of the crisis. Nevertheless, the Syrian business sector, with its fierce loyalty to its country and to its work and its ability to adapt and innovate, is persisting in its endeavour to surmount the multitude of obstacles in its path, in the hope that one day this crisis and this aggression will end.

As the crisis starts to subside, the Damascus Chamber of Industry has drawn up a post-crisis plan. Thus, during 2014, it launched the Takatof project, with the aim of creating a fund to revitalize the country's industry and to re-equip factories which have suffered damage with the necessary machinery and other supplies.

We are appealing to the ILO and the UN to support this fund, so that we can get Syria's industry back on its feet again, together with its SMEs.

The Syrian Arab people welcome the election of the President of the Republic, which took place in a free and democratic electoral process conducted under a pluralist system.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

Ninth sitting

Monday, 9 June 2014, 2.40 p.m.

Presidents: Ms Mugo and Mr Funes de Rioja

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

Ms PABEDINSKIENĖ (*Government, Lithuania*)

I am grateful for the honour to address the plenary today. I would like to particularly thank the ILO for providing us with the opportunity to exchange our views on the Director-General's Report and on the most relevant challenges in the world of work.

First of all, let me express our overall support for the reform process of the International Labour Conference, having in mind ways to make the plenary sessions more engaging and more useful. It is very important to make this highest decision-making body more communicative, objective and transparent.

The ILO plays a significant role in the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as solving their social and economic issues. International and regional cooperation and partnerships are crucial for human rights, as well as the strengthening of collaboration with all social partners.

Items placed on the Conference agenda this year clearly show the most serious issues in today's world of work. First of all, forced labour is the subject of widespread international attention and concern and requires urgent action for its effective elimination. Moreover, transitioning from the informal to the formal economy should ensure that opportunities for livelihood and entrepreneurship are not destroyed while promoting the creation of decent jobs in the formal economy.

Undeclared work is one area which requires a greater level of attention in both a national and an international context. We believe that the best way of ensuring the reduction of undeclared work cases is coordinated action on the part of the corresponding competent institutions, combining measures of prevention and control.

This year the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, shows migration being a key feature of today's world of work and one which raises complex policy challenges. We consider international migration to be a clear trend in the global context and we are ready to engage with other member States and the social partners in a dialogue in order to identify shared priorities and strengthen bilateral and regional migration management.

The ILO's unique mandate and expertise justifies its leading role in addressing international migration, in particular with regard to employment and labour market implications and in promoting coher-

ent gender-sensitive labour migration policies, designed through the tripartite processes, with the maximum inclusion of the social partners. Despite some positive experiences, migration remains a contentious issue in political debates and further actions need to be taken to improve the conversation at national and international levels. In this context, it is necessary for carefully balanced technical support to be provided by the ILO for those countries in which migration still remains a serious issue.

Original Portuguese: Mr DIAS (*Minister of Labour and Employment, Brazil*)

First, allow me to say that it is an honour for me to return to the ILO and I would like to congratulate the Director-General, Guy Ryder, on his excellent work at the helm of this institution. I would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the successful Global Conference on Child Labour which was held in my country in October 2013. Its conclusions and recommendations have indeed contributed to the effective elimination of child labour in Brazil and have bolstered the initiatives in progress in Latin America, particularly in MERCOSUR.

I would also like to highlight the invaluable assistance given by the ILO and other international organizations to the work of the G20 Labour Ministers' meetings, in particular the quest for better coordination between macroeconomic policies and employment promotion policies.

The Brazilian Government reiterates the view, which it has expressed several times in this plenary, that watering down workers' rights is not the way to solve a crisis. Brazil has just passed the milestone of creating 5 million formal jobs in the last four years under the Government of President Dilma Rousseff, and in December 2013 we achieved an all-time low unemployment rate of 4.6 per cent, with a significant increase in per capita income and a corresponding reduction of inequality in Brazil. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has developed a raft of strategic actions in coordination with other government departments with a view to maintaining and improving these parameters in the future. Since 2013, we have been working on a coordinated system of employment and decent work in keeping with the declarations of our national conference on the subject, in partnership with employers' and workers' representatives, federal and local government bodies, and civil society organizations involved in labour issues.

We are also extending our vocational training programmes, such as the National Programme for Access to Technical Education and Employment

(PRONATEC), with a view to catering for new occupational modalities and categories, especially focusing on young people and the most vulnerable groups of the population, including persons with disabilities. Through PRONATEC and its training module, our Government will finance training courses aimed at SMEs. We are endeavouring to exceed our initial goal of catering for 1.2 million persons through these courses by 2015.

Over the last 20 years, Brazil has developed a wide range of actions aimed at eradicating work done in slavery-like conditions in our country. Progress has been made but more progress is still needed. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the National Congress of Brazil adopted on 5 June this year, after 15 years of debate, an amendment to the Brazilian Constitution which establishes that rural and urban estates where the equivalent of slave labour occurs will be expropriated and used in land reform or public housing programmes.

I would like to mention here the decisive support of the Brazilian delegation for the adoption of a supplementary instrument to Convention No. 29, aimed at facilitating the enforcement of existing standards. We also support the drafting of a Recommendation on facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy. We believe that formal employment is one of the most valuable expressions of the concept of decent work.

Ten years ago, the informal sector in Brazil accounted for 55 per cent of the labour market. By 2013, we had brought that down to the lowest level in our history, just 39 per cent. Between 2010 and 2014, more than 4 million self-employed individuals were registered, presupposing significant measures for a differentiated tax regime and access to social security for these workers. In this context, in line with the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193), the Brazilian Government passed a law on labour cooperatives which, inter alia, gives them legal assistance while establishing a national programme to promote cooperatives and labour.

In addition, on 22 May this year, we launched a national action plan against informal employment with the aim of speeding up the transition to formal employment. We also should mention that the Ministry of Social Development recently announced that 10 per cent of beneficiaries of the self-employment programme had benefited from the allowance for families. This is further evidence that this programme has been a success and has facilitated access to decent work. With regard to policies on labour migration, we have welcomed thousands of workers from Haiti and from other countries. We have provided them with access to official jobs and recognized their rights as workers under our Labour Code.

To conclude, I would like to say that on 15 May this year President Dilma Rousseff signed an agreement on the promotion of employment and decent work in the context of the football World Cup. That action was coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in conjunction with other ministries under our National Decent Work Agenda, in partnership with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations. This reaffirms Brazil's commitment to moving further along the path of tripartism and social dialogue. We only hope that our football team is as successful in the World Cup

as our country has been in promoting employment and social protection.

(Mr Funes de Rioja takes the Chair.)

Mr ANDOR (*Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Union*)

This Conference holds great importance for the EU, which is experiencing an economic recovery but one that is very modest and uneven. Unemployment in the EU and also in the Eurozone has started to fall but we still need to strengthen the commitment to quality job creation among the policy priorities of our Member States. Combating long-term unemployment, tackling inactivity and early school leaving among young people, and boosting female participation in the labour market are key components of our employment strategy. We are implementing an EU-wide "Youth Guarantee" so that all young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, an apprenticeship, a traineeship, or a chance to continue their educational training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Our cooperation with the ILO on this matter has been very constructive.

On the other hand, we are also aware that targeted interventions cannot be substitutes for a supportive macroeconomic policy mix and, in particular, for repairing the European single currency. We are striving to strengthen the social dimension of our Economic and Monetary Union, having understood that without collective action to tackle employment and social challenges in a timely and effective manner, long-lasting disparities may develop with great risk to social as well as institutional stability. This effort serves the endeavour for better coherence in macroeconomic, employment and social policies, which is one of the key messages of this session of the Conference.

The EU made a substantial contribution to all Conference agenda items. First, we need to be better equipped to combat today's forms of forced labour and protect the victims more effectively. All EU Member States have ratified the core labour standards, including Convention No. 29. They form part of our international agreements, instruments and bilateral cooperations. Our treaties and legislation cover action to combat forced labour, and we have special legislation on trafficking in human beings. We therefore consider that this standard-setting process is very important and we hope that the Conference confirms agreement on this issue.

Second, labour migration is a key feature of the world of work today. It involves complex policy challenges that need addressing at all levels. So I want to thank Director-General, Guy Ryder, for his Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*.

The ILO Conventions have inspired our legislation which grants non-EU workers' rights at work comparable to those of EU citizens. We promote Convention No. 189, and we are working with the ILO to improve the situation of migrant domestic workers in migration corridors around the world. And, in particular, I would like to welcome the publication of the *World of Work Report*. It contains useful pointers on policies that boost quality employment effectively. A key point is the need to address the increase in inequality which is detrimental to economic growth and social cohesion.

The *World of Work Report* makes the point that the pursuit of competitiveness must go hand in hand

with promoting decent work and we agree with that approach. Last week, in the same spirit, I presented a new Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work for the European Union. This new strategy highlights the importance of close international co-operation on health and safety at work, for instance in global supply chains.

The Sustainability Compact for Bangladesh involving the EU, the United States, the ILO and the Government of Bangladesh is a practical example of an integrated approach to working conditions throughout the supply chain. It has brought progress in labour standards and building safety in Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector but I am sure you agree that much more needs to be done. The EU contributes actively to the G20 subgroup on safer workplaces to improve health and safety at work in the G20 countries and elsewhere.

During this session of the Conference we actively contributed to the discussions on the informal economy and support the adoption of the amendments of 2014 to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. Lastly, we agree that this Conference should conclude that sustainable development is impossible without progress in the employment and Decent Work Agenda, which should be included as a central goal in the post-2015 development framework.

We have also voiced support and appreciation for the ILO's efforts to include full and productive employment, decent work and social protection within the post-2015 framework. We believe in the great added value of the tripartite International Labour Organization in addressing these global issues. We share a common ambition to make the world a better place to work and live in.

Mgr TOMASI (*Apostolic Nuncio, The Holy See*)

I have the honour, on behalf of the Holy See, to convey a special message to the ILO Director-General and this Conference from his Holiness Pope Francis.

At the dawn of creation, God made man the steward of his handiwork and charged him to cultivate and protect it. Human labour is part of that creation and continues God's creative work. This truth leads us to consider work as both a gift and a duty. Indeed, labour is not a mere commodity but has its own inherent dignity and worth. The Holy See expresses its appreciation of the ILO's contribution to upholding the dignity of human work in the context of social and economic development through discussion and cooperation between governments, labourers and employers. Such efforts serve the common good of the human family and promote the dignity of workers everywhere.

This session of the Conference has been convened at a crucial moment of social and economic history, one which presents challenges for the entire world. Unemployment is tragically expanding the frontiers of poverty. This is particularly disheartening for unemployed young people, who can all too easily become demoralized, losing their sense of worth, feeling alienated from society. In working for greater opportunities for employment, we affirm the conviction that it is only "through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labour that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives".

Another grave and related issue confronting our world is that of mass migration. The sheer numbers

of men and women forced to seek work away from their homelands is a cause of concern. Despite their hopes for a better future they frequently encounter mistrust and exclusion, to say nothing of experiencing tragedies and disasters. Having made such sacrifices, these men and women often fail to find dignified work and fall victim to a certain "globalization of indifference". Their situation exposes them to further dangers, such as the horror of human trafficking, forced labour and enslavement. It is unacceptable that, in our world, slave labour has become common coin. This cannot continue! Human trafficking is a scourge, a crime against the whole of humanity. It is time to join forces and work together to free its victims and to eradicate this crime that affects all of us, from individual families to the worldwide community.

It is also time to reinforce existing forms of cooperation and to establish new avenues for expanding solidarity. This calls for: a renewed insistence on the dignity of every person; a more determined implementation of international labour standards; planning for a focused development on the human person as its central actor and primary beneficiary; a re-evaluation of the responsibilities of international corporations in the countries where they operate, including the areas of profit and investment management; and a concerted effort to encourage governments to facilitate the movement of migrants for the benefit of all, thus eliminating human trafficking and perilous travel conditions. Effective cooperation in these areas will be greatly assisted by defining future sustainable development goals. As I recently expressed to the Secretary-General and Chief Executives of the United Nations: "Future sustainable development goals must therefore be formulated and carried out with generosity and courage, so that they can have a real impact on the structural causes of poverty and hunger, attain more substantial results in protecting the environment, ensure decent work for all, and provide appropriate protection for the family, which is an essential element in sustainable human and social development."

The social teaching of the Catholic Church supports the initiatives of the ILO which aim to promote the dignity of the human person and the nobility of human labour. I encourage you in your efforts to face the challenges of today's world in fidelity to these lofty goals. At the same time, I invoke God's blessing on all that you do to defend and advance the dignity of work for the common good of our human family.

Mr ISKANDAR (*Minister for Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia*)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his appointment to the presidency of this session of the Conference. It is a great pleasure for me and my delegation to be here at this session of the Conference, an event which involves discussions on various important issues related to the world of work. My delegation is pleased to participate in, and to contribute to, the agenda of this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

At this year's session of the Conference we have discussed at length the issues of forced labour, facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, employment and cross-cutting issues relating to fair migration. I wish to reiterate Indonesia's commitment to the achievement of the goal of

the elimination of forced labour. Indonesia has ratified Convention No. 29, in addition to other ILO fundamental Conventions. Indonesia has also ratified Convention No. 105, as well as the related Convention No. 182. We have ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We, therefore, support efforts to supplement Convention No. 29 with an instrument that will enable us to address implementation gaps to advance prevention, protection and compensation measures. Such an instrument will allow us to make progress in our efforts to achieve the effective elimination of forced labour.

Some forms of forced labour also involve trafficking of persons, an issue which should be tackled firmly and in a committed fashion. Trafficking in persons is both a regional and a global problem, requiring action through cooperation at all levels and awareness-raising activities, particularly among the most vulnerable groups.

Concerning the discussion on facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, we are of the view that efforts should focus on increasing the number of successful outcomes in this regard, and, more importantly, on how to formulate employment policies related to job creation. The restoration and preservation of livelihoods is essential in the formulation of comprehensive national policies. Measures to ensure social protection for informal economy workers should also be considered. In this regard, Presidential Regulation No. 109/2013 on Social Security Programme Participation states that workers must be provided with insurance against occupational accidents, disease and death. It is also very important to take into account the diverse nature of each national context and the categories of workers and enterprises found in the informal economy.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Mr Ryder, the Director-General, success in performing his duties as this year's Chair of the GMG. In his Report entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, Mr Ryder points out that migration poses policy challenges and highlights the fact that there are many cases of unacceptable treatment and abuse. We could not agree more. This is an issue that must be addressed through action and that requires firm commitment on the part of all those concerned.

Indonesia has ratified the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This ratification reaffirms our commitment to the protection of migrant workers and to the strengthening of the legal foundations of such protection, including the existing protection mechanism.

At the regional level, we are engaged in the formulation of measures to promote and protect migrant workers in South-East Asia, as well as in instances of dialogue involving countries of origin and destination, such as the Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (the Abu Dhabi Dialogue) and the Regional Consultative Process on the Management of Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (the Colombo Process).

We welcome the reference made by the ILO Director-General to the Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organization (Declaration of Philadelphia) in his opening remarks to the International Labour Conference this year. We must abide by the fundamental principles contained in this Declaration, in particular that "labour is not a commodity".

This is a constant reminder for us that the inhumane and unacceptable treatment of workers must be abolished. We are also of the view that all countries should implement measures to ensure the management of fair migration. In this regard, fair migration should be based on accessible and transparent fair labour market information. Action is also required concerning the facilitation of the assessment of training needs in countries of origin and destination.

Original Spanish: Mr MÉNDEZ (Employer, Argentina)

It is an honour for me to address this distinguished body as President of the Argentine Industrial Union (UIA) and an Employers' delegate of Argentina.

I am particularly pleased to be able to give my regards to Dr Daniel Funes de Rioja as President of the International Labour Conference, who is, as well as a close friend, a very important leader of the Argentine Industrial Union and an expert in work-related issues at national and international levels, whose work has been recognized.

Allow me to begin by turning to the agenda of the Conference and the Report of the Director-General. In both, the results and the creation of this forum for reflection and construction are underpinned by tripartite dialogue, which is an essential element towards which the ILO constantly strives and the Argentine Industrial Union unconditionally supports.

I congratulate the Director-General for setting out the analysis and discussion of the crucially important topic of migration, which is a steadily growing phenomenon, the dynamics of which are part of globalization, production and climate change.

To that end, tripartism is the most appropriate structure for the examination of these subjects and the major policy and governance issues.

It is also important to point out certain difficulties facing the employers' realm which should be incorporated into the shared agenda with governments and workers. It is through resolving these difficulties that the best conditions for development and decent employment will emerge.

As a representative of the employers of my country, I would like to mention several items which we consider central to all countries' agendas: youth employment; the transition from the informal to the formal sector, particularly for small and micro-enterprises; and the implications of new forms of forced labour. The Argentine Industrial Union considers these to be central questions for any state policy which seeks to reflect the common interests of workers and employers.

As Argentine employers, we are particularly focused on phenomena affecting the different stages of the informal sector. We know that finding adequate responses to the problem implies that we all reach consensus on the various matters, because policies that are closed, biased or imbalanced for certain sectors can turn useful tools into harmful instruments.

My particular sector has always maintained that without enterprises there are no jobs. Today it is evident that without sustainable enterprises there can be no decent or sustainable employment. For this situation to exist, employers need to establish conditions regarding administration, monitoring, credit and work which will enable their enterprises to operate properly.

We have a moral responsibility to ensure that not only our ethical code but also our vision as businessmen counters all forms of slavery. We thereby reaffirm our compliance with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which the ILO adopted in 1998.

I would like to mention an issue which affects us all as Members of the ILO: the process of transforming and adapting the Office itself and its governance structure. We agree with the Director-General regarding the Organization's need for a global approach towards an overall results-based management framework, efficient and effective use of all ILO resources and efficient and effective governance of the Organization, as indicated in a Report presented at this session of the International Labour Conference.

The reform of the Governing Body, which has been implemented, and that of the Conference, which has been approved by the Governing Body, and the restructuring of the work of the Office with a particular focus on regional activities, constitute key decisions for the future of the ILO. Equally important are the relationship with, and cooperation of, the constituents, and technical assistance.

The Argentine Industrial Union is aware of the challenge and obligation that lie ahead to generate and protect decent employment. It is essential that we work together closely to create the necessary conditions to foster the overall well-being that comes with employment, including predictability, fair rules and training standards.

In Argentina, we are working to make tripartite dialogue the mechanism which settles differences and encourages us to move in the same direction. Our country has a long experience of dialogue, which needs to be strengthened and extended, in line with our targets. Tripartite dialogue is an unending process, which is always subject to improvements that are the product of collective input. We therefore reaffirm our commitment at the national level and in this forum, because we know that it is only by discussing and developing together that we can find effective solutions.

Ms CAPPUCCIO (*Worker, Italy*)

On behalf of the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), the Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions (CISL) and the Italian Labour Union (UIL), I would like to express my appreciation of the choice of subject matter of migration for the Report of the Director-General for this session of the Conference. The increasing rate of migration, the complexity of the political approaches and unacceptable labour exploitation demand that a coordinated management system be established without further delay at global, regional and national levels, with priority given to migrants' human and labour rights, and fundamental freedoms. We agree with the related proposals for action contained in the Report of the Director-General and the political analysis. We believe that the ILO is the best-placed organization for defining strategies and providing ap-

propriate guidance in this field thanks to its unique tripartite structure, values and social justice objectives.

The Decent Work Agenda and its four strategic pillars at the core of ILO policies represent the key elements for the establishment of an effective and comprehensive response to the need for migration governance. The Report identifies the promotion of standards and the strengthening of ILO knowledge and capacity building for constituents as cross-cutting issues that should be highlighted in all programmes and activities. The Turin Centre is an essential organization in this regard as its mission is to provide training for the world of work through a tripartite structure, in all areas of importance, including the rights-based approach which is essential for the implementation of the agenda for fair migration. However, we are concerned that capacity building no longer constitutes the centre's main activity. An increasing number of activities aim at information sharing and the organization of events which do not target social partners or improve constituents' capacity building. Renewed efforts should be made to integrate the centre's activities into those of ILO departments, as such activities are currently too infrequent, discontinued and unstructured.

Historically, Italy was a country of origin for migrants, while today it is a transit and destination country for those people: 5.5 million migrants live in Italy and many intend to cross the country to reach other parts of Europe. The mention of the Lampedusa tragedy by Ambassador Cera is also something on which to reflect. Since the most severe forms of labour exploitation occur in illegal and hidden networks, the CGIL, CISL and UIL have defined a trade union policy on migration based primarily on the reaffirmation of the rule of law. To that end, we have asked the Italian Parliament to adopt stricter rules against the gangmaster system, the illegal recruitment of cheap labour through intermediaries, in order to break those circuits of criminality.

We support measures aimed at achieving the objective of transforming undeclared work into declared work and at bringing the situation of migrant labourers into line with the law. We have requested that the law against illegal migration, which offends people's dignity, be repealed. We have asked that the situation of migrants be regularized, and that migrants be afforded the rights to vote and participate at the political level. We also call for the right to citizenship to be granted according to the *jus soli*: those born in Italy should be entitled to Italian citizenship.

The recent workplace tragedies in Bangladesh, Turkey and other countries were not preordained by fate. Working conditions have dramatically deteriorated under increased competition and a lack of monitoring, especially in global supply chains. Occupational health and safety protection is a human right and must not be considered conditional or dependent on the position of multinationals and other enterprises. Respect of occupational safety and health is at the core of the Decent Work Agenda and should incorporate the eight fundamental principles and rights at work.

We are concerned with identifying a solution to the highly critical situation facing the world of work. The creation of quality jobs is of the utmost urgency. Governments have, up to now, adopted

neoliberal and monetary policies that have endangered social policies by increasing precariousness, unemployment, inequality, instability and poverty. Freedom of association, social dialogue and collective bargaining, together with clear public investment programmes and industrial policies, are essential tools to restore trust and design positive pathways. The current situation requires a targeted response from the ILO, as stipulated in the Oslo Declaration for the European region.

In the context of this session of the International Labour Conference, we express our deep regret about the outcome of the Committee on the Application of Standards, which was due to the unilateral refusal of the Employers' group to agree on consensual conclusions on the specific issue of the right of strike and also to a negative attitude towards the issue of standards and supervision. The Employers' position could endanger the relevance, sustainability and credibility of the main ILO supervisory mechanism. As the only forum to which States are called to report on their fulfilment of their standards-related obligations through a tripartite structure, dialogue within that forum should be conducted in a spirit of respect, cooperation and responsibility. It is our wish that the Governing Body will find a speedy solution using the highest legal channels in accordance with the ILO Constitution.

Finally, I recall that we are on the eve of two significant international events: the post-2015 agenda debates and Beijing +20. While the MDGs have advanced in certain areas they are far from fulfilled. Gender inequality, for example, persists. One of the main obstacles to the fulfilment of the related goal is violence against women in many forms and the denial of women's right to decent employment. The ILO should ensure gender mainstreaming in all international programmes, with the aim of securing growth, prosperity, development and social justice for all.

Original Spanish: Mr SANTALI TORREZ (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare, Plurinational State of Bolivia)

First and foremost, let me thank the Director-General for his Report. I should also like to thank him for his statement to the opening sitting of this year's session of the International Labour Conference. Looking at migration, we, in Bolivia, are firmly committed to the implementation, promotion and protection of migrant workers' rights and those of their families.

We welcome the debate on forced labour to prevent and eradicate it, since it is a grave violation of fundamental human rights and an obstacle to social and economic development. This is a subject that we are working on very seriously in our country, with a particular emphasis on the indigenous populations affected.

Looking at the transition from the informal to the formal economy, this includes a number of national realities which must be reflected in the texts for negotiation, for example, taking account of the fact that an employment relationship is not the only way to guarantee social protection.

We are much concerned that, in the wake of the global financial crisis, some countries and regions have managed to pass the buck of the crisis onto the workers. This is characterized by greater unemployment and cuts in social benefits, which is contrary to social justice and the decent work concept

promoted by the ILO. Bolivia believes that this is not the right approach.

From the point of view of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, we are firmly convinced that governments' action must be geared to respecting the needs of Mother Earth while eradicating poverty and seeking a better quality of life for our populations. We are setting up a plural economy which embraces a state sector, a private sector, social co-operatives and a community sector – this can be an alternative.

Under the stewardship of President Eva Morales Yama, for the last nine years, my Government has made considerable headway in favour of workers on the basis of an employment policy which is based on dignity and the restoration of social and labour rights. The State has won back its role and protective and normative capacities, with respect to the regulation of the labour market. The neoliberal labour laws, which led to instability and the free contracting and firing of workers, have been repealed. We have abolished the regulations penalizing the exercise and defence of workers' rights and union leadership; at the same time, we have helped strengthen trade union organizations. We are building social dialogue and tripartism. On this basis we are promoting the ratification of the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), in the interests of construction workers. In 2013, a decree on social enterprises was approved, which gives preference to workers as regards the purchase of companies faced with bankruptcy. Municipal workers dismissed according to the neoliberalism of the General Labour Act were reinstated.

These state policies are bearing fruit. Let me quote a few figures. Unemployment fell from 8.2 per cent in 2005 (before our Government was in place) to 3.2 per cent in 2013; the continuing rise of the national minimum wage reached 227 per cent; in 2013 we also introduced a second bonus called "Effort for Bolivia", which is granted when our economic growth exceeds 4.5 per cent. All this has led to sustainable growth of the Bolivian economy; in 2013 it reached 6.8 per cent.

We are going through a historic period of democratic and cultural revolution. This consolidates the plurinational culture of our State in the fields of the economy and politics, social inclusion and equity.

This long and complex path of transformations was in fact spearheaded by our indigenous and original peoples, enabling us to regain the dreams, aspirations and courage of our ancestors and opening up a future filled with hope. Our progress and the obstacles overcome in the process have affected a number of social sectors. It is a significant period which has brought workers closer to their dreams. Consequently, and of key importance in this process, is the organic integration of the Bolivian labour movement, represented by the traditional Bolivian Workers' Confederation (COB). This is a landmark achievement to strengthen the strategy and consolidation of the revolutionary process in democracy.

Fifty years after the establishment of the Group of 77 (G77), whose meetings now include China, Bolivia is very proud that it was entrusted, in New York, by the international community with leading the summit. This important group of developing countries – 133 brother countries – will meet on 14 and 15 June at the Presidential Summit in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again invite all member States present to participate in the summit.

At the last visit of ex-President Luis Ignacio Lula to Bolivia, President Morales said in his speech: “Political liberation guarantees dignity and sovereignty, ... we would all like equality, to reduce the major asymmetries found between families and regions ... to revive the experience of our ancestors in our collective communities, but we do not only want to show solidarity with human beings; we want to live in harmony with Mother Earth ... we have concluded that, not only do human beings have economic, political, and human and social rights, over and above human rights, it is more important to consider the rights of Mother Earth, the planet, the environment, which can live better without humans but humans cannot live without our Mother Earth ...”.

We reaffirm that an alternative development model can be constructed, holding the human in harmony with nature at its core, based on the paradigm to “live well”. We will share our modest experience in the G77 and China summit and in other forums as our contribution to overcoming the global crisis.

(Ms Mugo takes the Chair.)

*Original Portuguese: Ms HOFFER ARMADA
(Minister of Youth, Employment and Human Resources
Development, Cabot Verde)*

In the year that brings us together for this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, in Cabot Verde we are also halfway through our eighth legislative assembly. At the same time, the world continues to suffer from the perverse effects of one of the worst recessions in the past 75 years, the impacts of which are forecast to continue indefinitely, affecting low-income countries in particular.

On behalf of the Government of Cabot Verde, I would like to congratulate the Organization and the Director-General for their choice of labour migration as the central theme of this session of the Conference, thereby engaging in a useful and constructive discussion on the relevance of this topic in the current international context.

In the current context of the international economic and financial crisis, along with the world economy, the Cabot Verdean economy has felt the serious effects of the crisis. However, through perseverance, the Government has adopted a series of policies that are essential for promoting competitiveness and jobs. In response to a long-standing need, it established the national minimum wage through dialogue and consensus with the social partners. This has had a positive impact on the national economy and on society as a whole, providing a point of reference for the national social and employment context.

Bearing in mind the challenges that Cabot Verde will have to face in coming years, and taking a long-term view, my country has developed a growth and poverty reduction strategy. Continuing on from the implementation of the Agenda for Economic Change, this instrument provides a multi-annual structure for measures and actions to implement the objectives of the government programme for the eighth legislative assembly, seeking to continue building an inclusive, fair and prosperous nation, offering opportunities for all.

Indeed, despite the fragile situation and vulnerabilities of the economy of Cabot Verde, it has performed well over the period 2002–11, with a solid GDP directly impacting per capita income. GDP growth has also brought changes to the structure of the economy, with substantial growth in all sectors, in particular the service sector. The impact of increased growth over the past decade has had an important knock-on effect and it has provided the Government with the means to implement anti-cyclical measures to combat poverty, thereby offsetting some of the effects of the global slowdown, and bringing significant improvements to the volume of income and its distribution across the population.

Income distribution has improved, with a rapid fall in the Gini coefficient between 2002 and 2008, after which it slowed down. However, despite continuous improvements in income distribution since 2002, the Gini coefficient still remains high.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a constant reduction in poverty levels, going from 49 per cent in 1988–89, to 26.6 per cent in 2007. This success over the past ten years has been the result of solid economic growth, and in particular of investment in the agribusiness sector, in social programmes and in technical and vocational training.

However, an analysis of the internal and external environment needs to be carried out, with regard to their impact on the strategic challenges that we face, in particular unemployment and poverty, which, as cross-cutting concerns, should be incorporated into all sectoral policies and other key areas, such as gender, youth and the environment.

Cabot Verde has had a satisfactory growth rate in recent years despite the adverse external context, and this is a result of significant efforts made in terms of public investment as a means of offsetting the impact of the global slowdown on national demand and investment. However, the economy is still threatened by the effects of the continued slowdown in the construction sector, the persistent financial crisis in Europe, and the rapid rise in the price of raw materials. In order to mitigate these external risks it is essential to mobilize our internal capacity to fund development. The challenge we therefore face is that of building an economy with a high level of sustainable and inclusive growth, with a view to overcoming structural vulnerability, external dependence, unemployment, poverty, income distribution gaps, reduced opportunities for emigration and the consequent fall in remittances.

Our agenda for change provides a comprehensive long-term vision for the development of Cabot Verde, bearing in mind the potential for capitalizing on its comparative and natural advantages.

This vision requires Cabot Verde to expedite, strengthen and expand its reforms, with a view to building an efficient and effective State, seeking to create an institutional environment which will stimulate and strengthen the role of the private sector in the country’s economic development and, therefore, in the generation of wealth and employment.

Before I conclude, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Cabot Verde to do everything in its power to comply with the obligations arising from the implementation of ILO Conventions and Recommendations. We therefore hope that we will shortly have the consensus required for the revision of our Labour Code and for the introduction of unemployment benefits.

To conclude, on behalf of the Government of Cabot Verde, I would like to express my best wishes to this ILO assembly and my hopes that the objectives of this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference will be fully achieved.

Mr MUSIC (*Minister of Labour and Pension System, Croatia*)

It is an honour for me to address this session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and of the Croatian delegation. We greatly appreciate every opportunity for open discussion on the major challenges that we are facing today, such as sustainable growth, employment and social security. We consider that the ILO is one of the leading organizations in promoting decent living and working standards, and that it provides an essential forum for that discussion.

On the economic front, Croatia continues to struggle with recession due to the strong impact of the global economic and financial crisis. In response to the crisis, the Croatian Government has carried out a major policy overhaul to shape policies for recovery. Reforms are oriented towards improving the business environment, increasing the flexibility of the labour market, ensuring the sustainability of the pension system and increasing the efficiency of the public sector. The social consequences of the crisis are clearly visible and the real challenge is to manage the restructuring process in a socially responsible way, focusing not only on financial targets but also taking into account the social and human dimensions of the crisis.

Saving jobs, protecting the most vulnerable, reducing poverty and combating unemployment and social exclusion, especially among young people, are given the highest priority across the programmes of the Croatian Government. As a full member of the EU, Croatia has an obligation to follow the European strategy and goals in the area of employment, preserving the EU social model with the aim of achieving the Europe 2020 targets. Recent country-specific recommendations for Croatia give us reason to believe that Croatia is on the right path as regards the reforms that have been undertaken, and the reforms which the Government is planning to carry out in the future. Croatia has been especially successful in implementing the Youth Guarantee programme at a national level. With the financial support of the EU, this is contributing towards significantly reducing the high rate of unemployment among young people.

I believe that only an integrated approach will result in an appropriate legislative framework to make the labour regulation system more flexible, influencing business customization, while at the same time providing workers with adequate protection and security. Transforming informal work into formal work is also part of our policy package to support job creation and provide social protection for workers and protection for their working conditions. In order to improve measures against undeclared work, the labour inspectorate has been brought under the Ministry of Labour and Pension System. We also decided to carry out a campaign against undeclared employment in 2014. The Ministry has called on our social partners to make a concrete effort to raise awareness among employers and workers of how harmful this phenomenon is.

In our experience, finding a way out of the crisis starts with a change of awareness and accepting the

fact that it is not possible to tackle the crisis and prosper by maintaining the status quo. Necessary public spending, the reduction of wages, pensions and jobs, changes in labour legislation, and increased social tension have affected the quality of social dialogue. We, however, recognize that continuous social dialogue is a part of successful change management and we remain open to such dialogue. The Croatian Government is determined to build on these steps and to deliver economic and social welfare for the future.

Lastly, I would like to say that we firmly believe that a stable economic model must ensure social justice, decent work standards, solidarity and better standards of living for all. These are fundamental values that are promoted and shared by the ILO and to which Croatia is fully committed. 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.

Original Russian: Ms ELUSIVE (Government, Russian Federation)

The Report of the ILO Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, comprehensively reflects the issues surrounding migration policy as a driver for global economic development and social cohesion.

It rightly notes that a programme to ensure fair migration must be based on the mutual interests of countries of origin and destination, as well as meeting the needs of migrant and Russian workers.

The Russian Federation is committed to the *ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration*, and takes into account the outcomes of the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in October 2013.

The issue of migration is becoming particularly acute today for a number of reasons. The first is the demographic situation, and above all else, population ageing and the shrinking proportion of working-age people. The second is economic growth and economic modernization. Economic development and a rise in the standard of living over the past ten years have caused a four-fold increase in annual migration to Russia, from 119,000 people in 2004 to 482,000 in 2013.

The demand for foreign workers in Russia equates to just over 2 per cent of the employed, or around 1.1 million people. As a rule, foreign workers do jobs that Russian nationals do not want. The presence of foreign workers does not cause tension in the labour market.

However, we must recognize the fact that a significant proportion of people who come to Russia from post-Soviet countries are working in a wide variety of illegal conditions.

The Russian Migration Service estimates that every year, between 3 and 5 million foreign nationals work in Russia without an official permit. This illegal migration supplies the informal economy with workers, and is one of the main factors behind the conflicts that sometimes arise between migrant and Russian workers.

We support the Report's conclusion that migration must be legal and that measures must be undertaken to put an end to the illegal migration of unregistered workers. This is the major problem when it

comes to migration, and a matter on which the Government of the Russian Federation is working.

In 2012, Russia for the first time adopted a State Migration Policy Concept for the Russian Federation covering the period up to 2025. This document was developed taking into account both domestic and international experience of labour migration management. It sets out the strategic objectives of migration policy in the light of economic, social and demographic forecasts for the Russian Federation, processes of integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Belarus–Kazakhstan–Russia Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, as well as worldwide trends towards globalization.

Our strategic aim is to put in place the conditions and mechanisms necessary for the long-term recruitment of the various highly skilled and skilled professionals required by our economy. We have hence established migration policy legislative mechanisms to this end.

The Russian Federation is particularly focusing on preparations for ratification of ILO Conventions on the rights of migrant workers. We are taking steps to adapt our labour legislation to the Conventions. In particular, in May this year, Russia passed a law prohibiting staff leasing and regulating work by employees who are sent by their employers to work for other natural or legal persons under an employment contract. The law also sets out a mechanism by which private employment agencies may supply workers. A bill is currently under preparation that would grant foreign nationals who may enter the Russian Federation without visas the right to receive simplified permits allowing them to work for a legal entity or individual entrepreneur. A bill is also now under consideration that would make social and health insurance mandatory for foreign nationals who are visiting Russia.

We should note that the question of migration is of key importance to decisions on economic and employment matters and requires unflagging attention.

ILO initiatives to mark its centenary that aim to achieve decent work and standards of living, fairer globalization, and balanced and sustainable economic growth are reflected in the actions taken by the Russian Federation to improve the situation of workers and prospects in the world of work.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia. Its objectives with regard to labour, freedom and the eradication of poverty remain just as relevant today.

If we are to achieve the goals that we have set ourselves, hard work will be needed over the next five years under the auspices of the ILO.

Original Turkish: Mr EXTREMES (Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security, Turkey)

Allow me to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the Conference. I would also like to express our deep concern at the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We greatly appreciate the Report presented by the Director-General in this regard and hope that an immediate solution to the problems can be found through mutual understanding and collaboration.

I also extend my thanks to the Director-General for his Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, an issue which is a top priority for almost all countries. As was clearly stated in the Report,

the number of migrants in the world has reached 232 million, making migration a reality that can no longer be ignored. We are well aware of the importance of the contribution made by migrants to the economies of the countries where they reside. However, we are deeply concerned by the discrimination and social exclusion that migrants face. They are considered to be the source of problems in some countries and this is an issue of great concern for all of us. Nevertheless, proper management of migration will inevitably lead to a win–win situation, both for migrants and for the receiving countries. Based on this situation, I am convinced that countries should not only take on the responsibility of improving the living and working conditions of migrants, but should also work to eradicate xenophobia. As a country which sent migrant workers to many destinations around the world 50 years ago, above all to Europe, Turkey now has 6 million citizens living abroad. However, Turkey has become both a transit and a destination country as far as migration is concerned.

The multifaceted experience of Turkey has made us one of the most competent countries in terms of migration management. The General Directorate of Migration Administration was recently established and began operations with the entry into force last year of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which governs migration management in Turkey. Furthermore, migration management was integrated and facilitated with the merging of the residence permits issued by the Ministry of the Interior with the work permits issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Those fleeing from the worsening conflict in our region seek shelter in Turkey, a country they see as a safe haven. The number of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey has risen to 1.5 million since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. The issue of forced labour is another essential problem related to working life. I fully believe that the global efforts to end the suffering of the victims of forced labour, who, according to ILO figures, number 21 million, are very important. Turkey has ratified Conventions Nos 29, 105 and 182. The problem has now been resolved to a great extent, in particular by means of the measures taken within the framework of the fight against child labour.

Another issue that Turkey fully commits itself to is the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Our Government has reduced informal employment by 30 per cent and we are determined to further cut the rate of informal employment, which is currently around 33 per cent.

In this part of my speech, let me share with you a couple of important and recent issues related to the labour market in Turkey. The National Employment Strategy was launched at the end of May this year and contains comprehensive actions concerning the labour market in Turkey. Through this document, we aim to achieve significant progress. Over the last four years, we have created 5 million additional jobs against a background of rampant job losses worldwide. I would also like to announce that we will be hosting the World Congress of the World Association of Public Employment Services (WIPES). I hereby invite the public employment agencies of your countries to this Congress, to be held in Istanbul in May 2015.

Turkey recently suffered one of the most dramatic occupational accidents of its history, in the mining

sector. Many miners unfortunately lost their lives as a result of this disaster. In paying respect and tribute to the memories of our miners, I would like to thank the ILO and the Director-General for sharing their condolences with us. Before ending my remarks, please allow me to express my gratitude concerning Turkey's election to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office for the period 2014–17 with the highest number of votes. I extend my thanks to all delegates for their support for Turkey's membership. In addition to this position at the ILO, we will also assume the presidency of the G20 next year. As we have done so far, we will be working closely with the ILO in the coming period. We have already begun work to place the issues of employment and working life at the top of the G20 agenda.

Original Russian: Ms DYANKOVA (Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria)

I should like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to join in the discussion on such an important aspect of the globalized economy, something which concerns virtually all the member States of our Organization. The figures on the number of migrant workers around the world are impressive, as are the figures on the economic benefits of labour migration. However, what is also impressive and, I would venture to say, shocking for the twenty-first century is the number of migrants who fall victim to labour exploitation, including through human trafficking. It is not fortuitous that our work this year focuses, *inter alia*, on the problems related to the implementation of Convention No. 29. In this regard, I support the need to set an agenda for fair migration, as the Director-General is calling for.

It is undoubtedly true, in our view, that such an agenda will feed into the ILO's efforts to achieve a social dimension to globalization. Bulgaria has supported such efforts from the very outset. We also supported the idea of strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) of the Economic Union.

We share the vision that the fair migration dimension means social justice in all its aspects, including equal access to the labour market, the right to decent wages, health and safety at work, protection against discrimination, family reunification and freedom of association. In that respect, the EU could serve as a good example, since the issues related to the fair treatment of migrants have been reflected in the EU primary and secondary legislation.

Conversely, the inclusion of fair migration on the agenda of all governments will contribute towards increasing the economic benefits of legal migration on a global scale. National, bilateral and international initiatives can be launched to unite efforts to create a global framework for labour migration, which, at the same time, could enhance the current system of workers' fundamental rights and respond to existing and future challenges.

Issues of fair migration are extremely important for Bulgaria. The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria has always supported the position on the legal application of the right of the free movement of workers, as far as the EU is concerned. Our position is fully in line with the position of the European Parliament and the European Commission, and is also in line with assessments of the positive impact of labour mobility on the economies of receiving States. Furthermore, supporting such a position is a

decisive response to extremely radical, sometimes racist and xenophobic opinions that principally oppose labour mobility. As of the beginning of this year, following the lifting of restrictions on the free movement of Bulgarian workers in the remaining EU Member States that still applied them, emerging trends prove that we were right in our consistent position with regard to protecting such a fundamental freedom.

Returning now to the Report of the Director-General, I can only support the argument put forward that social dialogue plays a key role in the process of formulating global and national priorities and policies. In that regard, I should like to inform you that policy on legal migration in Bulgaria is developed within the bodies established for tripartite cooperation, including the National Council for Labour Migration.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you, once again, that Bulgaria as a newly elected, regular member of the ILO Governing Body will continue to support all the measures to set an agenda for fair migration because we consider all the components mentioned in the Report of the Director-General to be highly relevant.

Original Portuguese: Mr FURLAN (Employer, Brazil)

Labour relations are a determining factor in terms of national productive capacity and wealth distribution. Where interests are well regulated and balanced, labour relations can encourage corporate investment and employment creation, in addition to stimulating excellence and productivity. In the absence of such a balance, labour relations can threaten the survival of enterprises, creating bureaucracy, ever-changing regulations, legal uncertainty and, consequently, conflict and a lack of protection that affects all stakeholders. Modern labour relations must guarantee a healthy, balanced business environment that is conducive to economic and social growth.

At a time when it is vital to maintain and create jobs, competitiveness and the stimulation of investment are, naturally, on the global agenda.

At this moment in time, the economies and societies of countries worldwide are becoming increasingly integrated and this integration includes labour relations. There are no doubts about the social importance of work, the growing need to improve working conditions and the positive impacts of these developments on the quality of life of workers. Nevertheless, informality and low productivity decoupled from wages are issues of concern that, looking at the topics of the discussions on the agenda for the Conference this year affect not only Brazil but other countries as well. Modernizing labour laws is certainly one way of reducing informal labour, a phenomenon which mainly affects lower-income workers. The workers most in need of the protection of legislation are those who are least protected. Where is the logic in that? There is a growing need to establish conditions favourable to productive activities, as well as a unifying agenda that will promote economic growth and increase opportunities to maintain, create and improve job quality.

When faced with globalization, various countries across the world have found it difficult to keep pace with, and adapt to, the new labour models established in this modern environment. There needs to be balance – labour relations must contribute to the sustainability and competitiveness of companies, as

well as to productive labour and to improvements in terms of job creation opportunities and working conditions.

The situation in Brazil is no different. It is true that much progress has been made over the last few decades. Democracy has been consolidated, our currency has been stabilized and thousands of people have moved up into the middle class. All of these achievements are invaluable. However, if we consider the strategic goals in terms of labour promotion and the ideal employment policies for the current context in Brazil, we find that we have moved forward but that pre-existing challenges remain and new ones have emerged.

We need to develop labour regulations in order to ensure that workers' rights continue to be protected, boost the country's growth, and safeguard the continued generation of jobs and opportunities for all.

Brazilian enterprises have faced a variety of structural obstacles in the field of business, obstacles which have a direct and negative impact on their competitiveness, including bureaucracy, insecurity in terms of investments and difficulties concerning innovation, poor infrastructure and an inflexible labour regulatory framework which does not do enough to promote bargaining.

Therefore, when dealing with labour relations, we need to focus on sustainable enterprises and their competitiveness in national and international markets, as well as on productive work and trade union freedoms, among other things.

Brazil is a large and heterogeneous economy, with an extremely complex labour market. It is not possible to adopt one-size-fits-all legislation for widely different situations in terms of enterprises, regions, competition, circumstances and the workers themselves.

The encouragement of social dialogue, the development and promotion of collective bargaining, and the recognition of collective freedom of choice by the state authorities are essential to the success of a new labour relations model that will allow us to face the challenges of the strategic objective of labour, productivity and sustainability.

Disputes can be avoided and resolved by encouraging social dialogue, promoting and recognizing collective bargaining, and taking into account adjusting and balancing interests.

There is no place for easy, miraculous solutions. We must, as a matter of urgency, remove the obstacles hindering full development, both in Brazil and across the world.

In order for labour relations truly to be of benefit to workers, enterprises and Brazil itself, as well as to the various economies worldwide, we strongly believe that the social actors, government and representative organizations must make a joint effort to ensure the continuity of economic activity, while respecting the social values of labour, competitiveness and legal certainty.

I am certain that here at the ILO, an organization that seeks to protect employee-employer relations at the international level, we can be sure that all the parties are committed to examining the current situation and to making every effort to bring about fair, balanced and sustainable labour relations.

Original Turkish: Mr ATALAY (Worker, Turkey)

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session of the Conference. I would also like to thank

the Director-General of the ILO for his successful work so far. I would like to take this opportunity to report, from this podium, on improvements in my country. On 13 May 2014, however, a tragedy in the Soma coal mine resulted in the deaths of 301 miners, which deeply affected us all. Negligent practices in the Soma coal mine completely violated workers' fundamental rights and freedoms and 432 children were orphaned as a result.

Following this incident, we have mapped out working conditions, negligence and violations at coal mines in our reports and we have received technical assistance from the ILO. Previously, after a number of amendments were made, the Occupational Health and Safety Act had been adopted. However, all those steps did not help us to save the lives of hundreds of miners and Turkey has still not ratified Convention No. 176. Business profits are not more important than the lives of our miners.

The practice of subcontracting has become very widespread in our country. It creates very low-paid workers who are not unionized and who do not benefit from the rights granted by the Labour Act. This is really paid slave labour, rather than work. Legal arrangements intended to solve this problem are actually taking us back in time, which is why, last week, the presidents of three workers' confederations came together to agree proposals for submission to our Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

I do believe that we have now reached a positive stage. The bill is before Parliament and will be debated soon, and we hope that the outcome will meet the workers' demands. We need to ensure that privatized enterprises are regulated, especially thermal power plants, coal mines and quarries, and we should put a stop to privatization.

Public servants are deprived of the right to strike and are also restricted with regard to collective bargaining. The Reconciliation Board handles disputes or conflicts with workers in the public sector. Union density in our country is very low and, in particular, unionization in the private sector is limited.

Turkey has maintained its economic growth in recent years, although difficulties remain with creating decent and productive jobs. Unemployment rates are particularly high among young people and the educated. Female participation in the labour force is limited.

The Decent Work Agenda and labour rights for all should be the common goals of all social partners. The social partners have implemented a project on undocumented employment with the support of the ILO. Despite positive developments in recent years, one in three workers in the country works in the informal sector.

Today, democratic values are under attack in many countries. It is, of course, difficult to talk about workers' rights in countries where democracy is in crisis. Such problems affect the countries neighbouring Turkey, which also has a significant impact on our country.

I would like to note that we all want to see a world free of homicide, labour exploitation and political executions. All of Turkey, including employers, workers and the Government, should reflect seriously on this, otherwise we will all suffer the consequences of poor workplaces, like the 432 orphans of the disaster in Soma. I also hope that the entire world will positively contribute to resolving these problems.

I would like to wish the ILO every success in all its future activities.

Ms FREDERIKSEN (*Minister of Employment, Denmark*)

Let me start by expressing my full commitment to the ILO. The unique tripartite structure of the Organization and the core values it is built upon, such as social dialogue, give it clear relevance in the world community and in our common objective of promoting decent work for all.

So, clearly, I am very concerned by the recent events in the Committee on the Application of Standards. The Committee is the cornerstone of the ILO system and, therefore, in promotion of international labour standards throughout the world. Freedom of association is a basic human right, and it is crucial that the ILO supervisory system is able to monitor and promote this and other labour standards.

I hope that all parties involved will find a lasting solution, and I would like today to underline the Danish, and my own, full support to the Director-General in finding a way forward.

I would also like to thank the Director-General for choosing a very important subject for his Report this year. Fair migration should be a topic of importance to us all.

Labour migration basically stems from the wish of one person to find a better job and, with that, a better life. This personal aspect is important to keep in mind when we discuss the worldwide effects of migration.

The Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, addresses a topic that is very relevant for all of us in a modern and globalized world. It should be clear that globalization should be linked to greater welfare for all, better working conditions and more decent jobs, not a race to the bottom. In this respect, the work of the ILO in framing and protecting fundamental rights is crucial.

Rates of migration are growing and will continue to do so. This is a challenge for labour markets and for societies but, of course, also for the individuals themselves.

People moving in search of a job may be at risk of abuse. In this way, there is a link to two other topics at this year's session: the transition from the informal to formal economy, and the challenges of forced labour. Of course it goes without saying that forced labour and trafficking of people for forced labour is totally unacceptable.

Labour migration must be fair and, if labour migration is to be a success for the individual workers as well as for society, we need to ensure decent working conditions and real employment opportunities for all workers, including migrant workers.

Migrant workers must operate on the same terms and conditions as the other workers in a given country, otherwise we risk abuse and destruction of our labour markets and our labour market models.

As Minister of Employment in Denmark, I cannot accept indecent working conditions or undercutting of agreed wage levels. This constitutes unfair competition, and neither individual workers nor society as a whole should accept this.

Of course, our social partners have a crucial role to play in achieving this, and I am very thankful that we have a good and well-functioning tripartite system in Denmark.

In this connection, I note from the Report that the social partners at our international level have al-

ready made efforts to address the unwanted side effects of migration.

In closing, let me stress that the Danish Government is committed to taking part in the global work to improve the working conditions of migrant workers as well as workers in general.

It is the job of governments and ministers such as myself to ensure the framework conditions for labour migration are on decent terms but, of course, our social partners play a very important role in helping us to ensure a fair and proper labour market for all workers, both nationals and migrants.

Original Russian: Ms DUISSENOVA
(*Government, Kazakhstan*)

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I would like to greet participants at this the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I know that the issues being discussed in accordance with the agenda of this session of the Conference are particularly relevant matters for all of us and I would like, in that context, to draw your attention to the policy Kazakhstan is following to promote the principles of decent work and to ensure that we can improve our Government's regulation of labour and employment.

We fully share the conclusions of the report entitled *World of Work Report 2014: Developing with jobs*. The report clearly demonstrates that investment in quality jobs means that we can indeed reduce unprotected employment and overcome problems of the working poor to drive economic growth.

The Kazakh model for state regulation of the labour market is based on the key provisions of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy and is one that focuses on industrialization and innovation in our country. This year, the Government has decided to focus further on the industrialization of our country by crafting a second five-year plan of industrialization going up to 2019.

We must realize the fact that the growing demands made on workers, by employers, often do not match the workers' level of training and professional skills.

Due to the start of the second stage of industrial and innovative development, and the state of labour resources in the country, the Government has undertaken the following measures.

First, a new national system for skilling focused on the link between production and training is being established. A national skilling framework has been defined and professional standards are being drawn up that have to be met when training human resources. On the basis of these we are also refashioning our education system. All of this work is being done with the direct involvement of employers, representatives of workers and authorized state bodies.

Second, a new type of forecasting system is being introduced, which, in addition to macroeconomic indicators, will also predict the human resource needs of projects implemented as part of industrial and innovation programmes, that is the number of jobs created by such projects and the employers' need for workers from each profession. These indicators will dictate the number of people trained and how many need to be recruited both from Kazakhstan and abroad.

Third, there is a large-scale government programme – the Roadmap for Employment 2020. This was launched in 2011. The key challenge here is to ensure that people who are self-employed, unem-

ployed or underemployed can be got fully into productive employment through retraining, micro-credits and appropriate training allowing them to set up their own businesses – all of this driving economic growth for our country.

With this in mind, every year our Government allocates around US\$550 million to this programme. Over the past two-and-a-half years, the programme has helped 300,000 people – of those, over 50 per cent have taken up permanent working positions.

Fourth, the Government is focusing on attracting a foreign workforce. This year we are preparing to open the labour market to highly qualified experts. In addition to this, we will try to ensure that qualified foreign specialists can independently find employment in Kazakhstan in areas where they are needed.

Fifth, there is focus on social protection for those who are in employment in Kazakhstan. We have carried out the first stage of modernizing our pension system. At the start of this year we introduced subsidies for compulsory pension contributions paid by employed women on maternity leave, which allows them to look after their children for up to one year after birth. We have also introduced 5 per cent compulsory professional pension contributions for workers in harmful working conditions, which are paid by their employers.

We plan to begin using new technologies to provide social assistance. We will continue to give assistance to those who, on objective grounds, cannot overcome poverty by themselves.

Working conditions and occupational safety have a direct effect on labour motivation. Unfortunately, the number of occupational accidents still remains high according to international standards. We plan to improve the situation by introducing new approaches to protecting the workforce, which include educating workers on their rights and encouraging employers to create a safe workplace.

At present, the global economy is recovering slowly but we are channelling labour and employment policies to create a “Society of Universal Labour”.

To achieve targeted policies for labour and employment in our country, special measures must be crafted that can be targeted at different groups of the working population. High labour productivity can be ensured by: developing the qualifications of employees; transferring self-employed workers from the informal to the formal economy; and helping self-employed workers who are not in productive employment and those who are unemployed to work in the formal sector and, in particular, to involve them in entrepreneurship.

The model of social protection focuses on three key approaches: income protection for the most socially vulnerable groups; encouraging social activity on the part of the individual by concluding a social contract between the State and the individual which reflects the mutual commitment of both parties; and an integrated and comprehensive approach to the provision of social services by all state bodies across the board.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that in the course of our discussion we will find common answers to the challenges that we all face.

Original Italian: Mr BELLUZZI (Minister of Labour, Cooperation and Information, San Marino)

This is the second time that I have taken part in this Conference. I would like to thank the ILO for its commitment in this international context characterized by complex issues and considerable challenges for us all.

The Government of San Marino is pursuing its efforts to adopt concrete measures to ensure that the rules governing the welfare state are observed by the world of work, always taking into account, first of all, the needs of the most vulnerable groups of society affected by unemployment or by other adverse consequences of the economic crisis, which unfortunately continues to have a negative impact on the economy and social life of our country.

Our Parliament adopted an important measure in April to facilitate access to the job market for unemployed young people, who, at this time of economic crisis, are the most disadvantaged group of the population. By adopting this measure, the Government of San Marino has committed itself to creating equal opportunities for all unemployed persons, so they can participate in the labour market on equal terms. The available data show that in the first period of application of the measure some results have already been achieved. We welcome this progress and hope that the positive effects of the measure will exceed our greatest expectations.

In addition, we are going to implement a comprehensive reform of the labour market to effectively respond to the economic and employment crisis. The aim is to boost the economy by promoting occupational integration and employment. This will also be achieved through a series of legislative measures capable of attracting new investment, which can have an important impact on the economy of San Marino's neighbouring areas by introducing rules favourable to enterprises.

In the context of the labour market reform, the Ministry of Labour is working on draft legislation which would consolidate in one single text all regulations relating to employment, in accordance with the principles of rationalization and simplification, with a view to providing a definite frame of reference for both enterprises and workers.

Moreover, the Government of San Marino has adopted rules and urgent measures to protect workers with the aim of consolidating and guaranteeing instruments of social protection, paying particular attention to workers involved in mobility procedures who are not covered by adequate income support instruments.

The Republic of San Marino particularly welcomes the fact that Italy has recently removed it from its “blacklist”. This event, together with the ratification of the bilateral double taxation agreement between Italy and San Marino, has produced a revival of the country's economy through reliance on our most important economic partner, with which we intend to collaborate in a spirit of real and effective cooperation. These are positive events, reaffirming once again the friendship and good relations between Italy and San Marino, which have always been based on collaboration and mutual respect.

In a broader context, I would like to express my country's readiness to facilitate foreign investment in San Marino. Such investments are supported by the economic and financial transparency character-

izing my country, as I mentioned in my speech to this assembly a year ago.

I would also like to reiterate the crucial role played by trade union representatives and the representatives of professional associations, which significantly contributes to major decision-making in the labour sphere in San Marino. In fact, without the cooperation of all partners involved, it would be impossible to speak of genuine democracy in our country.

The second century of the Organization's existence may be characterized by continuity in the features which have defined its achievements in the past, while always looking to the future and taking account of the major challenges and changes in the modern world. Although these challenges relate to labour, they are also concerned with major social and economic change. The prime goal must therefore be to achieve economic growth based on equity and the promotion of social progress in which the most vulnerable groups of our communities are protected.

For this reason, it is necessary to implement a global strategy, while taking account of the fact that such action should be based on a fairer globalization. Indeed, without this condition, it would not be possible to achieve balanced and sustainable development.

In conclusion, our action must always be based on the affirmation of social justice and the rejection, not just in theory, of all forms of inequality and discrimination.

Mr ONDRUŠ (*Government, Slovakia*)

At its 97th Session in 2008, the International Labour Conference adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which calls upon all ILO member States to adopt policies on the basis of the ILO's strategic objectives: employment; social protection; social dialogue; and fundamental principles and rights at work. The strategic objective of employment launched the first seven-year cycle of recurrent discussions in 2010. The first round of all strategic objectives was concluded in 2013 and the second discussion on the strategic objective of employment is taking place in 2014.

In the framework of the Europe 2020 growth strategy (a key EU programme document) and its National Reform Programme, the Slovak Republic has set a national objective to increase the level of employment of women and men aged 20–64 to 72 per cent by 2020 and, at the same time, lower the level of long-term unemployment to 3 per cent. The Slovak Republic aims to support social inclusion mainly by reducing poverty, with the intention of reducing by at least 170,000 the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

In labour legislation, the Slovak Republic promotes a balance between the need for flexibility for employers and ensuring employee protection within the changing requirements of the global economy and the increasing demands of competition. The Slovak Republic considers measures aimed at removing barriers to employment growth to be crucial to this.

In order to achieve the goals of the Government's policy statement for the period 2012–16, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family prepared an amendment to the Labour Code in 2012. This amendment is based not only on the Government's policy statement, but also on EU Directives, ILO

Conventions, analyses of labour relations, labour inspectorate proposals and examples of good practice. Its objective was to promote the application of a balance of employee and employer rights and corresponding obligations, as well as to create decent working conditions for employees, with special emphasis on discussing these conditions with the social partners.

Current legislation enables employees and employers to use, very sensibly, atypical and flexible forms of contractual arrangements, in addition to employment based on weekly working hours and indefinite time periods. Flexibility of employment arrangements may be achieved in several different ways, each of which is further specified in the Labour Code, such as job sharing, zero-hours working, flexible working hours, appropriate adjustments to working hours, or even a combination of the above. Zero-hours contracts allow for job stability not only during periods when there is a higher demand for work by a particular employer, but also when the demand for work is lower or none at all.

Very careful usage of atypical forms of employment and flexible working hours, based on agreements between employers and trade unions, and active labour market measures contribute to the flexibility of employment relationships, better-quality jobs and the efficiency of the work process. They represent an important aspect of employment, but not a dominant one.

We place emphasis on optimization and regulatory compliance in order to ensure OSH in the workplace and its enforcement by employers. They are a prerequisite for decent work and, in a broader sense, for the effective development of the economic and social aspects of society.

The Slovak Republic realizes that, in order to achieve the strategic objective of employment, proper cooperation between all stakeholders and the ILO is necessary. This is why we involve the social partners and self-governing regions in making amendments to employment policies. We consider cooperation with the ILO to be of crucial importance when amending labour and social protection policies and we thank the International Labour Office for the valuable expertise it has shared with the Slovak Republic.

Mr GURUNG (*State Minister, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Nepal*)

We take note, with appreciation of the Reports of both the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General. As the world confronts multiple challenges, our efforts need to be focused more on productive and decent work. We believe this would contribute to ensuring peace and prosperity, as well as taking care of vulnerable and socially deprived people. In this context, we strongly support the initiatives for the elimination of forced labour and promotion of secure and dignified labour migration.

Nepal has ratified 11 ILO Conventions. The Government of Nepal has made efforts to translate the provisions of those instruments into national policies, laws and regulations. While believing in tripartite social dialogue to resolve industrial disputes, it has been focusing on smooth and peaceful industrial relations, as well as more secure, productive and dignified employment.

The Government of Nepal has signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Nepal DWCP

2013–17 with the ILO Country Office. Tripartite consultations are under way to prepare a new employment policy and social security act and an amendment to the Labour Act, 1992. The Government of Nepal has been doing its utmost to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and all forms of child labour by 2020.

Nepal has been facing a multitude of development challenges, generated primarily by poverty. As more than 400,000 people enter the labour market each year, underemployment has become a major challenge. We consider that investment in productive sectors is essential to promote broad-based and inclusive growth. The Government remains committed to creating an investment-friendly environment to encourage greater involvement of the private sector in the country's development process.

Owing to a lack of adequate employment opportunities at home, labour migration has become a primary source of employment for Nepalese youth. Nepal is one of the major labour-supplying countries in the world, with around 1,500 to 1,800 workers flying to destination countries daily for employment opportunities.

The Government of Nepal remains fully committed to making the foreign employment sector secure, dignified and worker-friendly. It has been focusing on enhancing the skills of potential migrant workers to meet the demand of international markets and reducing the cost of migration, while ensuring decent work in the countries of employment. We are taking important initiatives to address issues relating to the protection of Nepalese migrant workers, including from forced labour, and the trafficking of women workers.

Both sending and receiving countries have benefited from foreign labour migration. The contribution of migrant workers, including those working as domestic workers, in nation building must be acknowledged by all. As human beings, they are entitled to all rights and privileges. Their rights and dignity must, therefore, be protected and respected in all situations. While remaining committed to ensuring such rights through requisite measures at the national level, we call for more coordination efforts and commitment at bilateral, regional and international levels in this regard.

It may be pertinent to mention here that Nepal has been engaged in drafting a new democratic Constitution for a year. We remain committed to ensuring that labour-related fundamental rights as enshrined in the interim Constitution are also accommodated in the new one.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, I wish to reiterate our full commitment to the principles and goals of the ILO and strong support for its work.

*Original Spanish: Mr GUILARTE DE NACIMIENTO
(Worker, Cuba)*

We are living through one of the worst moments in our history; workers in the majority of countries are being affected by neoliberal reforms that have given rise to a crisis of insecurity, unemployment and low wages.

Examination of the documents before us allows us to appreciate that, today, approximately 202 million unemployed people live in a difficult situation; 231.5 million international migrants do not enjoy full labour rights; 20.9 million people worldwide

are victims of forced labour; and more than 900 million people live on the poverty threshold.

It is hair-raising to think of the uncertain future that awaits tens of millions of young people who enter the labour market each year, but do not find jobs and cannot even hope to find jobs. Young people are one of the most vulnerable groups in the face of the crisis.

Workers in European countries are seeing their social and labour rights crumbling. Public services, pensions and the so-called “welfare state” are being eroded. Workers in the “third world” face a similar situation: immigrants are victims of discrimination on the basis of race and gender and receive unfavourable contracts, while the major dividends are paid into the hands of a powerful capitalist minority.

Faced with this reality, Latin American and Caribbean countries have embarked on a process of integration, and are developing policies to improve living conditions, reduce unemployment, create decent jobs and implement various social programmes.

The statistics on employment and job quality mentioned earlier make us question whether: the constant cuts; the elimination, by decree, of established achievements in the labour sector; and the brutal repression of citizens in various countries who take to the streets in order to claim their most fundamental rights, can continue to be called “democracy” and “human rights”. The crisis we are facing, and all its consequences, are not economic in nature. It is a systemic crisis and it is the system that must be changed.

For this to happen, the unity of all the planet's workers is more necessary than ever; only together will we be able to confront the unjust capitalist system that is responsible for the disastrous world in which we live today.

The Cuban trade unions will continue to work in a constructive manner within the ILO, collaborating to achieve its laudable objectives and fighting for its continual improvement. Nonetheless, we will not cease to call for the democratization of the working mechanisms of this institution; it should be made genuinely pluralistic and representative of all strands of society.

Cubans are facing economic difficulties due to the effects of the global crises and the measures imposed for years by the United States' genocidal and unjust economic, financial and commercial blockade.

Notwithstanding, we are introducing the changes we believe necessary to improve our economy and our socialist system. The labour reorganization we have undertaken has created new non-state forms of employment, which, however, are not informal. Work is organized individually and in cooperatives, and already there have been positive results, generating new trade union memberships in sectors which enjoy full rights under Cuban labour law.

The 20th Congress of the Workers' Central Union of Cuba (CTC), celebrated this year, was an opportunity for wide debates at its different union headquarters, which allowed us to discuss work conditions, wages, employment, OSH, as well as the collective agreements through which Cuban trade unionism continues its efforts to perfect our society. With this approach, the Cuban people and workers ensure the promotion and preservation of the labour

and trade union rights that our country's revolution helped us to win.

Original Portuguese: Mr MURARGY (Representative, Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries)

It is a pleasure for me to be taking the floor in this august assembly on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), which is grateful for the invitation to participate in this session of the Conference.

Ten years ago, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the ILO and the CPLP. We would like to express our appreciation of the excellent co-operation that we have enjoyed in our dealings with the ILO, which has promoted our work and given support to the agenda of our community in issues relating to labour and social affairs.

The CPLP agrees with the ILO Director-General regarding the importance to be given in the international agenda to the issue of migration. The CPLP countries have been addressing matters relating to migration, working with the ILO Office in Lisbon to draw up joint projects aimed at developing and strengthening migration policy in the CPLP member States. Within our organization, we have acquired a great deal of experience through our work in this field. One example is that we have been able to establish an observatory on migration, an electronic platform which is currently being installed in the office of the CPLP Executive Secretary.

We welcome the emphasis placed by the Director-General on the rights of migrant workers. On our side, under the mandate that we were given at the summit of CPLP Heads of State and Government held in Maputo, we will continue to strengthen our contacts with the ILO in this area.

The CPLP is a grouping of countries which share a common language, heritage and culture. It is thus a prime forum for dialogue and the exchange of experience and good practices, with a view to strengthening the links of solidarity and cooperation which unite our member States and bring us closer to our development partners. The CPLP is thus an international actor with capacity and competence for establishing mutually advantageous partnerships.

In this context, our organization has been promoting South-South and triangular cooperation activities as a contribution to implementing the Decent Work Agenda and its four strategic objectives, with a special emphasis on combating child labour, strengthening labour inspection and promoting social protection.

The CPLP has now been in existence for 18 years and has made significant progress in the areas of labour policy and social affairs. With regard to the matters under discussion at the current session of the Conference, we should underline the efforts of the member States of our community to adopt public policies aimed at the creation and consolidation of social protection systems, systems which take account of basic needs in the area of social security, in accordance with the concept of the social protection floor adopted by the ILO.

The CPLP has also reaffirmed the will of its member States to act in a coordinated way to continue to reinforce policies and programmes that aim to extend social protection within our community and at the international level through its activities in the wider context of labour and social affairs. Accordingly, the CPLP member States will tomorrow

sign a multilateral social welfare agreement, which will extend social protection coverage to migrant workers within the community area.

Our organization strives to be an example of good practice in some of the most important areas of the global development agenda, particularly in the promotion of human rights, including the elimination of child labour. In this way, with the aid of the ILO, the CPLP has implemented operational programmes to combat the worst forms of child labour.

We are pleased that all member States of our Community have ratified Convention No. 182. In addition, seven of our eight member States have ratified Convention No. 138. The elimination of child labour should be an economic, social and political objective for governments, social partners and other civil society organizations within our Community. We believe that ongoing social dialogue is a key component in achieving this.

The CPLP is aware of the need to reinforce coordination among its member States, and between them and the international community, sharing methodologies and models for global governance of public policy concerning labour and social affairs.

Accordingly, we would like to announce the CPLP's commitment to promoting political and technical partnerships with various international development partners so that we can streamline joint efforts in terms of dialogue, exchange of information, coordination and harmonization of good practices relating to global labour and social affairs policies.

We would hope that the conclusions emerging from the Conference will inspire and result in the formulation of the policies and programmes that we all aspire to achieve.

Mr RIAK (Employer, South Sudan)

Let me take this opportunity to pass my congratulations to the President of the International Labour Conference, the newly elected members of the Governing Body and the delegates who have made their valuable contributions.

The agenda of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, as set by the Governing Body and consolidated by the Report of the Director-General, addresses issues that concern all governments and social partners. The strategic objectives of employment, the informal economy, forced labour and migration are issues of importance and a policy priority in most of our countries. Employment-driven migration is a phenomenon that has fostered an environment for trafficking and smuggling in countries of origin and transit, and for abuse, exploitation and forced labour in intended destinations.

South Sudan is a destination for labour migrants. Since the establishment of the Government of South Sudan in July 2005, South Sudan has become a destination for investors, businesses and migrant workers. Cases of abuse, exploitation and immoral behaviour associated with this situation have been informally reported by some individuals.

Let me share with you some of these stories, which have been investigated and certified by my institution. The first case relates to women brought to South Sudan by their employers. They are held as slaves until they pay back the cost of processing their travel documents which have been paid by the employers, and the transport costs from the country of origin to South Sudan. The second case relates to

the sex industry. Sex work is 100 per cent dominated by migrants, 80 per cent of whom are self-employed and 20 per cent are hosted by hotels or other venue providers. Sex workers report being forced by their clients to engage in sexual activity without using condoms, which increases the risk of exposure of this group of people to HIV/AIDS.

Through these words, I wish to illustrate the need for South Sudan to join in efforts for a fair migration. To do so, your assistance is needed in the following areas: guidance to improve skills and employment of young people to reduce the rate of their migration; development of a migrant labour bill to regulate and mainstream issues related to migrant

workers; development of a national employment strategy, taking into consideration the strategic objectives of employment; and projects for skills development to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy, increase employment opportunities and reduce loss of government revenue. Although many difficult challenges lie before us, together, as Members of the ILO, we have a collective resolve which, if well-placed and used to achieve a fair migration, will lead us to ensure that migration is free from trafficking, smuggling, abuse and exploitation.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.25 p.m.)

Tenth sitting

Tuesday, 10 June 2014, 10 a.m.

Presidents: Ms Mugo and Mr Alexandris

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

Mr MODORI (*Deputy State Secretary, Hungary*)

Please allow me, on behalf of the Government of Hungary, to congratulate the Officers of this year's session of the Conference, and in particular Mr Funes de Rioja, on their election and the excellent job they have done of running this session of the International Labour Conference.

Within the framework of this session, we have reviewed the progress made concerning the implementation of the strategic objective of employment at the national and global levels and provided strategic guidance for the future. In this regard, I would like to note that in Hungary there have been significant improvements over the past few years. The employment rate has reached 63 per cent, the level at which it stood just before the crises, and the unemployment rate is continually decreasing, following a sharp increase in 2010.

However, much remains to be done. The primary objective of Hungary's employment policy is to promote sustainable job creation and employability by stimulating both the supply and the demand sides of the labour market. Improving the labour market situation of youth is still one of the major concerns. This year, we will start progressively to introduce a youth guarantee scheme, including a wide range of targeted instruments, in order to allow young people to enter the labour market and acquire skills that meet the market's needs.

Activation of those least connected to the labour market is also an important objective for the Government. One of the tools employed in that regard is public employment, which provides employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups in society and those living in disadvantaged areas. We are currently making a special effort to strengthen the activation aspects of these tools. As highlighted by several speakers during the plenary discussions, rather than austerity, what is required is new economic policy approaches focusing on the stimulation of the economy and, through that, on employment. Hungary achieved the results referred to above thanks to such non-traditional arrangements.

Effective social dialogue is essential to the efficient implementation of employment policy measures. In Hungary, there are adequate forums available for consultation, both in the private and the public sectors. This year, we paid special atten-

tion to the Conference discussions on implementation gaps concerning Convention No. 29. The ILO has to address new challenges as they arise and our work this year relating to one of the fundamental Conventions also underlines the importance of having an effective standards review mechanism within the Organization.

I would like to emphasize the Government of Hungary's full support for the ILO supervisory system, operating on the basis of tripartite commitment. We are fully confident that the Director-General will strive for an appropriate solution which addresses all the concerns raised by the constituents during this session with regard to ILO supervisory activities.

As far as the facilitation of the transition from the informal to the formal economy is concerned, urgent action is required through the cooperation of the governments and the social partners. There is large-scale informality across the world, resulting in poverty, deficits in terms of decent working conditions and unfair competition in the formal economy.

Let me turn briefly to the issue of labour migration. In the last couple of years, the wider multilateral system has devoted considerable attention to migration. We welcome the fact that the ILO is keeping up with these improvements and has adequately committed itself to the task of drawing up an appropriate response. Hungary, being primarily a country of transit, recently adopted a new strategic framework on migration, which also deals with the aspects and potential positive consequences of labour migration in our country. In our view, sharing good practices and strengthening the ILO's analysis and research capacities in this field would enable the Organization to assist its constituents in developing adequate responses at the national level.

Finally, let me highlight the fact that Hungary pays close attention to the evaluation and the results of the reform process managed by the Director-General. Although Hungary will not be a member of the Governing Body for the next three years, we are committed to following closely its work in guiding the Office to make the ILO more relevant and more responsive to the needs of the constituents. We are looking forward to the introduction of a two-week session of the Conference in 2015.

Mr KUDATGOBİLİK (*Employer, Turkey*)

First, I would like to express our gratitude to all our friends, all nations and to the ILO Director-General, who kindly extended their heartfelt condolences and shared our deep sorrow concerning the

accident that occurred in Soma; the worst such event in the history of the Turkish mining sector, in which more than 300 of our friends and workers lost their lives.

As the Director-General correctly pointed out, that tragedy is a reminder for everybody of the paramount importance of OSH issues, in particular in the mining sector. As Turkish employers, we yet again pay tribute to the noble memories of those miners throughout the world who have lost their lives in accidents similar to that which occurred in Soma. Over the last decade, my country has carried out intensive work on OSH legislation and has undergone a broad process of reform designed to update labour legislation, while taking into account developments in terms of labour law. These reforms were undertaken in order to comply with both ILO and EU standards. As the sole representative of the Turkish employers in the field of industrial relations, the Turkish Confederation of Employers' Associations (TİSK) has contributed positively to these reforms, providing balance and a local perspective. During the relevant negotiations, we avoided making counter-productive proposals and took a realistic stance, based on mutual interest and common denominators. The outcome was a number of new laws, enjoying 98 per cent support, in line with Convention No. 144.

As Turkish employers, we are very much aware of the phenomenon of migration, the subject of Report I(B) of the Director-General. Since the late 1980s, Turkey has moved from being a country of emigration to one of immigration. Political tensions in the Middle East have led to an increase in the number of refugees. According to official sources, there are nearly 1.5 million refugees in Turkey; most of whom are from the Syrian Arab Republic. Migration of this size has created serious economic problems and is an issue that requires close attention.

Let me conclude with a few words on an upcoming international event, to be held in 2015. Turkey has been chosen to assume the presidency of the G20 countries. This year, the G20 Summit is going to take place in Australia and, next year, Turkey will be the host. Moreover, TİSK will play a very positive and active role in the organization of the event and will be cooperating closely with the workers in that regard. Turkey is the 16th largest economy in the world, a fact in which I take great pride. We hope that the ILO will play a crucial role in contributing to future development.

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

First of all, it is a privilege to be able to congratulate Mr Funes de Rioja on his election as the President of this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would also like to express our satisfaction at seeing the ILO chairing the GMG.

We have examined with interest the Report of the Director-General *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. We appreciated the interesting opinions that it presents on migration and the guidelines and solutions that it proposes. We agree that migration currently constitutes a complex issue, full of contradictions, and that a new approach must be taken to ensure that policies on migration provide a positive contribution to social and economic development and a bridge between peoples.

Tunisia supports the Report's proposal concerning the development of a programme for fair migration, but we are mindful of the challenges that this Organization faces in addressing such a complex issue. I believe that greater solidarity and cooperation are essential in serving the interests of all the parties concerned, be they countries of origin, destination or transit, in guaranteeing the rights of migrants, and protecting them from all forms of exploitation, including forced labour and discrimination.

In line with the guidance provided by the ILO, and despite the difficulties encountered since the Revolution, Tunisia is working to improve employment mechanisms, reduce unemployment, and promote decent work and the integration of migrant workers. Efforts are also being made to combat illegal migration through bilateral agreements with various destination countries for Tunisian migrant workers, in order to lay the foundations for fair and well-organized migration that benefits all the parties involved.

In this regard, I would also like to inform you of the measures taken by Tunisia to promote migration structures through the creation of the National Observatory for Migration and the National Migration Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my country's commitment to follow ILO policies, especially those that aim to develop its standard-setting activities. Accordingly, since we joined the Organization in 1956, we have ratified 61 international labour Conventions, including the eight fundamental Conventions referred to in the ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, thereby promoting fundamental rights at work, creating opportunities for decent work and reducing inequalities between different social groups.

Furthermore, our new Constitution, which was enacted on 26 January 2014, enshrines the State's will to realize social justice and guarantee the right of every individual to live with dignity, and to work in decent conditions, which include receiving a fair wage, and to enjoy their rights to freedom of association and to strike.

Our country believes that it is impossible to improve industrial relations and maintain social peace unless we adopt social dialogue as the means of achieving our development objectives and consolidating the foundations of social justice. It is in this light that a social contract has been signed by the Government, the Tunisian General Union of Labour and the Tunisian Trade Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts.

With a view to guaranteeing effective, tripartite social dialogue, we have created the National Tripartite Council within the framework of the social contract and with a balanced tripartite membership.

I must take this opportunity to thank the ILO, which has participated effectively in the formulation and implementation of our social contract. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Ryder, who made a point of personally attending the signing of the social contract by the tripartite partners.

The successive reviews of collective agreements have brought improvements to working conditions in my country and have boosted the purchasing power of workers by increasing wages in both the public and private sectors. It should be noted that, despite the economic and social difficulties that we have encountered in Tunisia, the minimum wage

has been systematically raised, as was the case this year.

Negotiations in 2014 have addressed a number of important subjects, such as production, productivity and purchasing power. This has enabled a qualitative leap, taking the interests of both enterprises and workers into consideration.

Finally, I would like to commend the role played by professional organizations, and in particular by the Tunisian General Union of Labour and the Tunisian Trade Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, which have contributed to ensuring the success of the democratic transition process in our country. They have also been successful in uniting the various political parties behind a roadmap for the transition period, prior to achieving consensus on the new national Constitution and a Government made up of competent individuals, who have been entrusted with managing the country's affairs over this period.

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

Allow me to convey greetings on behalf of the whole of democratic Ukraine and to express the deep gratitude of the Government and people of Ukraine for the support that has been shown to us by the world and the whole international community.

In November 2013, the previous Government of Ukraine decided to suspend the process of signing the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement. The dictatorship that took hold in our country in recent years sought to prevent Ukrainians from choosing Europe. However, the citizens of Ukraine, at Maidan, Independence Square, stood up for their right to be members of the European family.

A revolution has taken place in our country to uphold our honour and Ukraine now has a Parliament, a new Government and a President. On 25 May, Ukraine held free and fair presidential elections, and on 7 June, the new President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, was sworn into office. This important event in our country's history will undoubtedly facilitate the stabilization of the situation in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the situation in our country remains extremely difficult. The annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, which is still going on, has drawn a very strong response around the world. On behalf of the Government of Ukraine, I would like, once again, to convey our deep gratitude for the fact that, by a majority of votes, the UN member States co-sponsored and supported United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine".

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine is now unable to support those of its citizens living in this occupied territory. The banking system is not working in Crimea and post offices are unable to complete money transfers. We are unable to pay pensions, family allowances and other social benefits. Crimeans are forced to leave their homes and to move to mainland Ukraine.

In the eastern region of our country, an undeclared war is being waged against Ukraine.

Peace is the overriding goal of the Ukrainian people. The President of Ukraine has stated that Crimea will always be Ukrainian and that Ukraine itself will remain a unitary State. The Government has already initiated constitutional reform based on the decentralization of power and greater autonomy for the

regions. We guarantee the upholding and the strengthening of the status of the Russian language. The regional authorities will themselves define the scope of the rights granted to Russian or any other language. The Government of Ukraine firmly condemns all forms of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance.

We are working to stabilize the financial situation of the country, to restore investor confidence in Ukraine and to establish a coherent state humanitarian policy. The Government is fulfilling all its social obligations under extremely difficult financial circumstances: pensions, social benefits and allowances, and civil service salaries are being paid in full. The difficult situation on the labour market is being exacerbated by the breakdown of industrial production, market restrictions and expected mass layoffs in the real economy, especially in the eastern region of the country. Given these factors, it is inevitable that structural unemployment will grow this year.

Resolving these problems clearly requires new communication platforms and a new form of social dialogue. Given the increase in migratory flows of workers, the Government sees its main task as developing and introducing new instruments for stimulating business, in particular to create new jobs with decent wages and to guarantee employment, especially for young people and other socially vulnerable groups. We greatly need the experience of European countries that have been able to successfully implement programmes to prevent unemployment, to increase mobility and competitiveness of the labour force and to overcome the worst forms of long-term unemployment. We also need public–private partnerships on the labour market. We would be very happy to adopt the best innovations in Ukraine.

Ukraine is grateful to the ILO for providing technical support over the many years of our cooperation and for supporting our efforts to overcome the pressing problems pertaining to employment.

On behalf of the Government of Ukraine, I would also like to call for a mission of experts to be sent by the ILO to Ukraine to study the depth and consequences of the political, economic and social crisis, which is being sorely felt by the citizens of Ukraine. We would be grateful for recommendations based on its findings, which, I am convinced, will provide a strong foundation for the process of socio-economic stabilization for the benefit of the citizens of Ukraine.

I would like to reaffirm our interest and readiness to cooperate in promoting decent work and fair social protection in Ukraine.

Ms LEITCH (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, Canada)

I am honoured to be here and to have the opportunity to address the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Canada appreciates and supports the reforms being implemented by the Director-General aimed at achieving a more efficient and effective ILO and ensuring the continuing relevance of this Organization.

We are all aware of the current challenges in the world of work.

Almost five years into the recovery from the global recession, the international economy is still fragile.

Governments still need to support enterprises as well as working people and their families. This year, the Conference discussion provided an opportunity to take stock, identify successful initiatives and consider future directions.

Let me share with you a few examples of how the Government of Canada is ensuring the Canadians have the skills and opportunities to contribute, to innovate and to succeed.

Canada's federal budget, otherwise known as our Economic Action Plan, aims to connect Canadians with jobs, strengthen our labour market and invest in the workforce of tomorrow. Job creation and economic growth have been, and continue to be, the focal point of our Prime Minister, Stephen Harper.

The Government of Canada is working to better align job training with the employers' needs and to increase the number of skilled workers through numerous initiatives, including our Canada Job Grant.

We have initiatives to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities and for unemployed older workers. We are enhancing our job-matching services so that Canadians have a better chance at getting available jobs that match their skills in their local areas, a simple but critical programme considering the scope of Canada's geography.

We are helping employers by supporting advanced research and innovation. We are providing entrepreneurs with intensive mentoring and reducing red tape. Through our Youth Employment Strategy, our young people, particularly those facing barriers to employment, can gain the skills, abilities and experience they need for a successful transition to the workplace or to go back to school.

We have established programmes to give students better access to ICT, to fund internships for post-secondary graduates in high-demand fields, to support small and medium-sized businesses and to make it easier for apprentices to get loans and technical training.

That is what we are doing domestically in the area of employment.

It is also timely that, this week, we mark the World Day Against Child Labour. As a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon myself, I see first-hand broken bones and broken spirits of children and their families as they deal with the outcomes of accidents and happenstance. These experiences have shown me the importance of protecting all of our children from harm. This is why our Government is committed to protecting children's rights and to eliminating child labour around the world.

In the area of labour standards, we welcome the Conference discussion aimed at protecting the most vulnerable.

We know that globally millions of men, women and children work in the informal economy, where they lack basic protection and are vulnerable to exploitation.

A new standard to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy will provide a framework for legislation, policies and programmes and for concrete measures that the ILO can undertake to assist governments, workers and employers in this transition.

We also welcome the development of new international instruments to supplement Convention No. 29.

It is shocking that in the twenty-first century forced labour continues, both in its traditional guise

and in new forms that are emerging under globalization.

Even more shocking are the findings of the recent ILO report that show that the number of victims and the illegal profits from forced labour are actually increasing.

The ILO must lend its expertise to strengthening global efforts to eliminate forced labour in all its forms and to protect its many victims, in particular women and children.

Canada is pleased with the Report of the Director-General that outlines global trends and challenges in labour migration.

We believe migration is a process to be managed, not a problem to be solved.

For Canada, managing migration requires a balanced approach to facilitation and control at the national level. It also requires the implementation of plans for both temporary and permanent labour flows, delivered through programmes and policies that govern entry and stay in our country.

Canada is interested in exploring with partners innovative approaches to strengthen the efforts of governments in order to ensure safe and orderly labour migration for the benefit of all.

A key challenge in maximizing the benefits of labour mobility is the need to protect the human and labour rights of migrants.

This should include promoting ethical recruitment. In particular, more efforts must be geared towards lowering recruitment costs and combating abusive and exploitive practices, such as charging migrant workers excess fees.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. It is incumbent on all member States to take appropriate actions at home and in partnership with ILO social partners and relevant national stakeholders to achieve this end.

This will support the well-being and rights of migrants and contribute to building prosperous and harmonious societies.

On another issue, it is unfortunate that the Committee on the Application of Standards has not been able to fulfil its constitutional obligations this year as they relate to the supervision and application of ratified Conventions by member States. We encourage the tripartite parties to find a lasting solution that will ensure the effective functioning of the Committee on its ongoing basis.

The Government of Canada looks forward to continuing work with the ILO and its constituents to protect the vulnerable, especially women and children, and ensuring the Organization remains strong and relevant.

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

I would like to start by congratulating Mr Funes de Rioja and the Vice-Presidents on being appointed to lead this session of the Conference.

The Jordanian Prime Minister, Dr Abdullah Ensour, underlined in his address the difficult situation that Jordan has been going through as a result of the Syrian crisis and the arrival of almost 640,000 Syrian refugees in our country. As Minister of Labour and Minister of Tourism, I can tell you that the consequences of the Syrian crisis on those two sectors are devastating. We have made every effort to mitigate the effects of the problem of Syrian refugees on the two sectors. However, we are losing the battle because international assistance is very limited and is failing to respond to the scale and scope of

this humanitarian catastrophe. We can only hope that the appeal launched by our Prime Minister from this podium, urging the ILO to intervene, will spur on the international community to fulfil its obligations and provide my country as quickly as possible with the support and assistance needed to enable it to face the crisis imposed on it. This will also help ensure, in step with the Report presented to the Conference this year, fair migration.

With regard to the Jordanian Labour Code, in collaboration with the ILO, we have implemented measures and proposals for modernization. An amendments bill will be adopted soon, after completion of the requisite constitutional procedure. The bill includes provisions on: ensuring the principle of gender pay equity; combating forced labour; providing protection against child labour; reforming the informal sector; improving worker housing; ensuring social security coverage; granting support to workers and employers; providing workplace crèches; providing the necessary health and safety at work safeguards, in line with existing international labour standards; increasing the minimum wage; providing compensation in cases of arbitrary dismissal; and providing medical and social protection.

We have implemented support programmes, including the Better Work Jordan programme. It aims to develop appropriate terms and conditions for international cooperation in the field of labour inspection. We have also strengthened capacities in the Human Trafficking Unit, in collaboration with the Jordanian security services, to ensure that this unit is in a position to better address cases of forced labour, or of restrictions on freedoms imposed by employers on migrant workers, confiscation of their official documents, or denying them their right to annual leave, particularly concerning domestic workers. Provision is also made under our legislation for overtime payments and the mandatory implementation of the minimum wage for migrant workers.

I observe that the world remains powerless in the face of high levels of unemployment, especially among young people, who are looking for work that will give them a decent life. It is mainly developing countries that are affected by unemployment, and in particular those experiencing civil wars, emerging from a civil war, or which are the scene of protest movements demanding democratic power. These countries need you and your assistance in the following areas: the organization of migrant labour; the employment of persons with special needs; women's employment; child labour; work in remote and rural areas; and work and professional training for refugees, in line with the Report on fair migration.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Report of the Director-General on Palestine and the occupied territories testifies to the serious and unacceptable plight of Palestinian workers and employers. This Report emphasizes that the living conditions of Palestinians are getting worse because of the occupation, unemployment has reached very high levels and working conditions continue to deteriorate. The expansion of settlements has obstructed the peace process and increased tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. We hope, however, that a comprehensive and just peace will reign one day, with the existence of two States side-by-side. In this connection, I would like to extend my

thanks and appreciation to the Director-General, Mr Ryder, who concluded his Report by recalling that: "The ILO's commitment to the building of a sovereign Palestinian state with an effective social dimension remains as strong as ever."

We would also like to congratulate the Director-General on the subject addressed in his Report this year, namely fair migration. This is a subject that deserves to be discussed and addressed. The Director-General is hopeful that the Conference will set out clear principles and guidelines for the development of a strategic plan for fair migration. I would like to affirm to the Director-General my country's readiness to support all the efforts of the Organization to achieve this goal.

Original French: Mr REBSAMEN (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue, France)

This is the first time I have addressed you and I must say that I am both proud and honoured to be bringing you a message from my country, France.

For every nation and for the people of those nations, work is a precious asset and, in times of crisis, undoubtedly one of the most precious. This is why we have to combat practices that demean it and turn it into the worst forms of human exploitation. I am thinking in particular of forced labour. This trend can be seen everywhere, including in France, so I welcome the progress made by the ILO in this area.

The Committee on Forced Labour has chosen an ambitious Protocol – that is, a process that goes beyond a mere Recommendation. France was a driving force behind that choice and will continue to support this crucial fight.

The fact that work is such a valuable asset is precisely why there should be a second phase of globalization. The globalization of goods and capital must give way to the globalization of social rights and, quite simply, to human rights. That is why together we must call for the social dimension of globalization to be at the heart of the multilateral agenda.

The ILO should take its rightful place in global governance to ensure that economic and social development go hand in hand. It should develop its capacity, through quality and recognized research, to influence socio-economic debates in the same way as the IMF and the World Bank.

Finally, the ILO should reaffirm its vital role in the G20 and the necessary involvement of the social partners. It is tripartism that gives the Organization its originality and strength and, as I said last night, it is social dialogue that will move the social dimension of globalization forward. Moreover, I view the fact that the ILO assumed the chairmanship for 2014 of the GMG as a sign of its growing importance.

I would like to take this opportunity to underline that France fully supports the efforts of the Director-General, Guy Ryder. Nevertheless, the ILO itself has to make progress. Our first hurdle is to adapt the standards system to today's challenges and we must do so quickly. This is necessary to ensure the credibility of the ILO, whose standards are its core activity. Next year, global supply chains will be at the heart of standard-setting discussions. The Rana Plaza tragedy demonstrates the urgent need for action.

Both the world of work and responsible enterprises, which may be undermined by the unfair compe-

tition of indecent or forced labour, are looking to the ILO. The issue of the interpretation of standards must therefore be clarified and a tripartite consensual solution found. Let us find ways to move forward by the end of the year. France reaffirms its preference for an interpretation mechanism within the Organization, with flexible and cost-effective procedures.

Our second challenge is to overhaul the ILO. Significant efforts are being made, including increasing analysis and research capacities and establishing the Enterprises Department to support CSR strategies. France is, and will remain, actively engaged in supporting ILO capacities, with the renewal of its co-operation agreement in 2015 and the organization of a conference on the development of academic partnerships. It will also strive for active multilingualism within the Organization.

We all know that unemployment, widening inequalities, the shock of restructuring and global economic imbalances affect workers, particularly the most vulnerable. The battle for employment must be fought and won, but this battle should not be at the expense of the quality of work.

Mr YTZHAKI (*Government, Israel*)

First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Conference. The Conference took the right course in 2012 in adopting Recommendation No. 202, which specified the need for social protection floors at national level in a wide range of areas.

Israel has implemented a number of standard floors in the following areas: A statutory minimum wage with strengthened enforcement measures; a national health law, which provides for a mandatory health-basket for every resident; child allowance; old-age pension; unemployment benefit; and income allowance, which is the ultimate safety net for households whose earnings are less than the minimum level.

I would like to refer to the four pillars of another important principle in which the ILO is taking the lead, the Decent Work Agenda. Concerning the first, job creation, the unemployment rate in Israel is around 5.6 per cent, which is a relatively low rate. The labour market is creating jobs at a reasonable pace, but the challenge facing the national economy is that of dealing with the low rate of participation in the labour market of two specific sectors – the ultra-orthodox Jewish population and Arab women. The programmes being offered by the Ministry of Economy attempt to provide a solution to these problems.

Referring to the second pillar, rights at work, legislation on strengthening labour law enforcement, which came into force in June 2012, has brought about a number of dramatic changes in the following areas: increased administrative penalties against employers who infringe employees' rights; widening the scope of employer liability with respect to employees engaged by a subcontractor; and a significant increase in the number of inspectors enforcing labour laws. The number of inspectors is currently at the ILO recommended level.

It should also be noted in this regard that collective agreements were signed only recently in the public and private sectors, which specify the employer's obligations concerning working conditions for employees engaged by a subcontractor in the cleaning sector. The two agreements raised the

wages of these workers and granted them additional social benefits.

A significant step forward in social protection, the third pillar, is the revolution that began in 2008 with the establishment of a mandatory occupational pension. Out of about 3 million persons employed in the national economy, as a result of that agreement and an extension order applicable to all employees in the economy, almost 50 per cent of employees were added to an employment-related pension scheme.

Regarding social dialogue, the fourth pillar, a significant number of workers became members of unions. It followed several amendments to the Collective Agreements Law that strengthened the obligation to engage in collective bargaining.

In 2013, another 10 per cent of employees were incorporated into the private sector. What is strikingly clear is that the majority of these employees were unionized in sectors where this had never happened previously. This is a testimony to the increased degree of employees' awareness of the need for collective bargaining in order to safeguard and improve their labour conditions and employment security. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the unique judgment handed down by the National Labour Court in the Pelephone case. The judgment strengthened trade union autonomy by prohibiting any interference by employers in freedom of association activities.

Fulfilment of all of these Decent Work Agenda goals will boost the whole economy and benefit employees as well as businesses.

Mr TAN (*Minister of Manpower, Singapore*)

Today we are here to discuss how countries can work together to achieve our common objective of promoting decent work for the well-being of workers around the world and I would like to take this opportunity to share Singapore's perspective.

Let me start with a brief update on our labour market. In 2013, the Singapore economy grew by about 4.1 per cent, with the overall unemployment rate remaining low at 1.9 per cent. This year there have been modest improvements in the global economic outlook although much uncertainty remains. Against this backdrop, we expect our economy to grow by 2–4 per cent. Our job market is likely to remain tight in the light of strong labour demand. Now, our key challenge continues to be the creation of good jobs so that all workers can benefit from economic growth. We see restructuring for higher productivity as the only way to ensure sustainable wage increases. We have, therefore, embarked on a productivity drive to create better jobs as a means of achieving sustainable growth which will benefit all segments of our society. The Singapore Government is working closely with our tripartite partners, the Singapore National Employers' Federation and the National Trade Unions Congress, to help businesses innovate and move up the value chain, while helping workers to improve their skills and thereby improve their employability.

In the future, the economy will be driven by rapid technological change and shorter skill cycles. There will be new job opportunities but workers will need to master new skills to stay relevant and to take these on. At the same time, the composition of our workforce is changing, our population is becoming more educated with professionals, managers and

executives constituting a growing proportion of our workforce in Singapore.

To address these challenges we are focusing on three areas: first, making workplaces safer and better; second, creating better jobs and raising workers' incomes through skills upgrading; and third, achieving inclusive growth and supporting lower-wage workers.

In 2013, Singapore expanded the Employment Act to enhance the protection of professionals, managers and executives. We are looking into how we can provide this group with more avenues of representation and how we can provide all workers with access to affordable and expeditious mechanisms for resolving employment disputes. We are also stepping up enforcement efforts against those responsible for workplace safety and health infringements. We will also undertake a further review of our regulatory and legislative framework to help entrench a mindset that sees all occupational injuries and ill health as preventable.

A globalized economy, where people move freely across borders in search of economic opportunities, also provides traffickers with opportunities to exploit vulnerable individuals with empty promises of good jobs and economic opportunities. We are therefore working on a dedicated legislative text, the Prevention of Human Trafficking Bill, to deal with human trafficking in a comprehensive and holistic manner. In addition, we regularly review our legislation to ensure that foreign workers are adequately and appropriately protected from undesirable employment practices.

As I mentioned earlier, workers need to continually upgrade their skills. This is critical to our efforts to raise productivity and achieve sustainable wage increases for all workers. We are therefore embarking on a major review of our continuing education and training system to make it more relevant to the evolving needs of our workers and businesses. This includes providing greater support for self-initiated upgrading in order to better empower individuals to pursue their career goals and to ensure that companies are able to tap into a more skilled workforce.

Inclusive growth has always been our priority. For example, apart from supplementing incomes and supporting skills upgrading among lower-wage Singaporeans, we recently made it mandatory for cleaning companies to pay their cleaners' wages which are commensurate to their skills, training and productivity. Our tripartite partners have worked closely to develop a progressive wage model which establishes a clear progression path for cleaners to upgrade and secure higher incomes. Tripartism plays an important role in tackling economic and employment challenges in Singapore. As we press on with our restructuring and productivity efforts, we will leverage on our history of strong tripartite cooperation to balance the interests of employers and workers. We will continue to work closely with our tripartite partners to build a productive and skilled labour force which can respond quickly to global competition.

Singapore's efforts to create better and safer workplaces, create better jobs and achieve sustainable wage increases for our workers is fully aligned with the ILO's objective of providing decent work for all.

In 2011, Singapore signed a partnership agreement with the ILO to develop and implement a joint cooperation programme on progressive labour and

workplace practices in South-East Asia. We have since conducted a number of activities under this agreement to promote OSH, tripartism and social dialogue.

Today, I am pleased to announce that Singapore and the ILO have renewed their partnership agreement for another two years. We will continue to work closely with the ILO, our social partners and our fellow member States of ASEAN to promote decent work in our region.

I am confident that under the able leadership of the President, the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference will be a success and, on behalf of the Singapore delegation, I wish all Conference participants a fruitful time.

*Original Spanish: Mr LLORENTE CACHORRO
(Government, Spain)*

Another year on, and I am very happy to extend my warmest greetings to all the tripartite delegations attending this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to commend the ILO and the Director-General on the relevance of the issues that have been chosen for the agenda of this session of the Conference.

As the Director-General says in his Report, migration is one of the main issues in the current world of work and it constitutes a complex challenge. The Kingdom of Spain has been a country of both origin and destination in these migratory flows, acting as a bridge between Latin America, Africa and Europe. We are therefore well aware of illegal migration and of its serious consequences, both in host countries, and in countries of origin, when it breaches international standards by violating the minimum standards for the protection of fundamental rights. A large part of the solution to this problem lies in regulating migration flows.

Spain has a lot of experience in harnessing the regulation and management of such flows. We have bilateral agreements to this end with Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Morocco, Mauritania and Ukraine; we have promoted mobility agreements for young people with Canada and New Zealand; and we have been involved in the partnerships between the EU and Tunisia and Morocco; not forgetting mobility within the EU, which as you know, is a right for the workers and citizens of EU Member States.

Together with other countries of the OECD, we support the arrival and retention of investors and entrepreneurs in Spain, through a package of measures on international mobility which was recently enshrined in a law approved by the Spanish Parliament.

We also support the philosophy and objectives of the Protocol and Recommendation on forced labour, resulting from intense work during this session of the Conference.

Another priority, which requires both national and international action, is the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and the campaign against irregular work. Undeclared work endangers the economic resources of our social security systems; it undermines workers' rights; and, as we see it, creates unfair competition between companies that comply with their obligations and those that do not.

In 2012, Spain developed a plan to tackle irregular employment and social security fraud. For its implementation, we have increased administrative

sanctions for violations in this regard, and we have reformed the legal framework under the Criminal Code, increasing sanctions for serious violations deserving the strongest social rebuke, such as the exploitation of workers. Accordingly, certain violations are now punishable by prison sentences.

Institutionally, we have reached agreements with our regions, armed forces, state security services, police and tax authorities, to provide a better response to potential cases of fraud. We have also strengthened our human resources services, the labour inspection system responsible for supervising the implementation of labour standards and elimination of irregular employment in Spain. During the first two years of this plan, from 2012 to 2014, it has resulted in more than €7.6 million in public savings and the transfer of more than 170,000 informal jobs to the formal economy. We will publish these figures and ensure transparency by submitting them before Parliament.

In the EU, Spain uses its position to support decisions and initiatives including the creation of a European platform on undeclared work and the adoption of the Posting of Workers Directive, which sets out the obligations of States with regard to the protection of posted workers and cross-border services.

Finally, before concluding, I would like to tell you about the recent measures taken by my Government to boost the economy and to create jobs. For a number of months now, the macroeconomic figures for Spain point to an upturn in the economy and in job creation. The reforms undertaken over the last two years are starting to bear their first fruits and the European Commission growth forecast for 2014–15 predicts an above average rate for Spain within the Eurozone.

I would like to finish by reiterating my Government's commitment to finding joint and effective solutions to the challenges that we face in a globalized world of work, and by announcing that the Second International Forum: Public Policies on Employment and Social Protection, will be held in Madrid on 24 and 25 July, with the support of the ILO and the OECD, providing yet another opportunity to develop public policies for integration and job creation.

Original French: Mr SCHMIT (Minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy, Luxembourg)

The 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference focuses on the theme of building a future with decent work. This choice is all the more justified as the number of unemployed around the world is at an exceptionally high level and the nature and quality of jobs are undergoing major transformation. All too often, work and those who work are considered, quite simply, as a cost factor. Productivity gains are no longer fairly distributed. Financial income and bonuses are soaring and wages are stagnating, even declining as recently pointed out by the OECD. Working conditions are often deteriorating. Occupational safety is neglected as illustrated by the tragic and fatal accident in a mine in Turkey.

The social consequences of these developments are harmful. The impact on our economies is also extremely negative. The IMF notes that greater inequality curbs economic development, leading to sluggish growth. The ILO is in the best position to promote decent work, which has to be a major com-

ponent of a more stable and fairer economic and social future.

We must go back to the spirit of the Declaration of Philadelphia, the fundamental principles of which are as topical as ever 70 years after their adoption. The dignity of all human beings is far from being guaranteed, in particular in the world of work. In this spirit, we support all the efforts to counter more effectively all forms of forced labour, which mainly affect women and children. It is urgent to update Convention No. 29 and we hope that the Conference will reach agreement on this issue. Similarly, it is necessary to reduce the scope of the informal economy, which is sometimes presented as having great employment potential. What is neglected is the fact that the informal economy creates vulnerable, poor workers who are deprived of their rights to security and social protection. They live in a state of permanent precariousness, which is the very negation of decent work. These jobs are particularly widespread in developing countries and also on the rise in industrial societies, especially due to the crisis. Social cohesion suffers as a result. A whole generation has only the prospect of precariousness and marginalization in poverty to look forward to.

However, I would like to advocate a more active development of the social and solidarity economy that provides goods and services, as well as the establishment of SMEs that create jobs by promoting entrepreneurship, in particular among young people. It is vital to reconcile economic and social issues by stressing the social responsibility of businesses and the importance of social dialogue.

Decent work has to be at the heart of our policies. There have been 15 million new unemployed persons since 2007 in the so-called developed economies. Millions of households do not have any income. Approximately 6 million young people are jobless in the EU. We must strengthen the discussions on the strategic goal of employment because policy issues are also very harmful for our democratic systems. The Youth Guarantee promoted by the EU needs to be implemented and given more resources. The Director-General was quite right to see this as a concrete measure to connect young people with the labour market and society. Training and education must not be subject to the spending cuts imposed by austerity policies. Social investments must not simply be considered as expenses, but as a key component of promoting balanced growth and social justice.

I wish to commend the Director-General for having flagged the role of the ILO regarding the sensitive issue of migration. Migrants who are victims of poverty and who lack prospects in their countries of origin often become particularly vulnerable workers in countries of destination. The international community must engage more actively in favour of migration policies that respect human rights by addressing the reasons behind migration flows.

Decent work, social rights and the fight against poverty have to be the main focus of the UN post-2015 development agenda.

The Director-General, Guy Ryder, has our full support and confidence in contributing to an effective ILO with the legitimacy to implement successfully its agenda for a fairer globalization.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of this session of the International Labour Conference. I am sure that this choice will ensure a successful conclusion to the work of this session of the Conference and allow us to reach agreements concerning the important issues before us. Such issues include the subject of the Report of the Director-General entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. The Director-General is to be congratulated on his choice of this topic and on the ideas contained in the Report.

However, this document limits itself to raising the issue of migration in its various forms, as well as its causes and consequences. The Conference is left to seek objective responses and practical solutions to the questions posed and we must make every effort to carry out that task.

The Report states that there are around 232 million migrants worldwide. However, I believe that figure to be much higher, given the growing number of irregular migrants prepared to risk their lives in search of better living conditions. I wish, here, to highlight the repressive measures and strict legislation adopted by northern countries over the past two decades, with the aim of restricting migration. It is that very approach that has encouraged the development of irregular migration, a phenomenon that has reached tragic proportions.

I agree with the Director-General on the need to adopt a common international approach concerning migration and to set up practical mechanisms that will establish the right of all to seek decent work and a dignified life, even abroad. Thus, I urge the ILO to hold a global summit on migration, with a view to examining potential mechanisms for the reactivation of the relevant international instruments and Conventions, in order to respond both to the wishes of the migrants and to the interests of the countries of origin and destination. It should be pointed out here that migrant workers should enjoy the same rights as all other groups. Consequently, there is a particular need to focus on the situation of the immigrant workforce in the countries of the Gulf region and to establish a serious dialogue with said countries in order to ensure the abolition of the *kafala* system of sponsorship and to allow migrant workers to join the trade union organizations in those countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General, Mr Ryder, the staff of the International Labour Office and the ILO Decent Work Team for North Africa and ILO Country Office for Egypt, Eritrea and Sudan for the support provided to the Tunisian social partners with a view to promoting their role in the democratic transition and the establishment of social justice in Tunisia in the wake of the fall of the dictatorship. The signing of a social stability pact in Tunisia, on 14 July 2013, in the presence of the Director-General, is additional proof of the support provided to us by the International Labour Office in these trying times.

Alongside the social dialogue that we are currently building following the signing of the aforementioned social stability pact, the Tunisian General Union of Labour is working with the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, the Tunisian League for the Defence of Human Rights and the National Order of Lawyers of Tunisia, as

part of a social dialogue initiative which brings together all the political parties, without any exceptions. The aim of this process is to reach agreement concerning the management of the final part of the transitional phase, involving constitutional, governmental and electoral processes, as well as the search for joint solutions to the issues of violence, terrorism, social instability and economic stagnation. Events have proved this approach to be a valid one, given that Tunisia now has a new Constitution, the Independent Electoral Commission, a new electoral law and an independent Government. We are currently in the final phase prior to the organization of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections, which will take place before the end of the year, in line with the agreed roadmap.

We count on the ILO to provide support and to intensify work concerning its programmes and projects in Tunisia.

The Appendix to the Report of the Director-General entitled *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories* contains a significant amount of information, which highlights, once again, that the political, economic and social situation of the Palestinians continues to deteriorate as a result of the ongoing occupation and the intransigence of Israel, a country which flouts international legitimacy and the resolutions of the United Nations without fear of sanctions. Consequently, decisive and effective action must be taken at the international level, in order to put an end to the double standards at work and to establish the will of the international community to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to free themselves and obtain their independence, as well as their legitimate right to build an independent State, with Al-Quds as its capital.

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

Speaking both personally and on behalf of the Government of Angola and the delegation of Angola present here today, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of this session of the International Labour Conference and to wish him every success in his efforts.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Members of this Organization for the trust they placed in the Government of the Republic of Angola when they elected my country as a titular member of the ILO Governing Body.

You can be sure that Angola will spare no effort in the performance of its appointed task and will remain available and open to consensus in the search for the best possible solutions for our Organization, thus justifying the trust that has been placed in us.

As you will be aware, Angola is a post-conflict society, which has enjoyed a mere 12 years of peace in the wake of a cycle of violence and destruction that lasted for more than two decades.

Various sections of our society still bear the deep scars left by that terrible period in our history.

Consequently, the Government of Angola's public policies, plans and action programmes are based on stability, growth and employment and every effort is made, in particular in the field of labour relations and working conditions, to ensure that they are implemented in constant cooperation with the social partners and through the legally established structures and mechanisms.

Within the context of the work of this session of the Conference, we, therefore, welcome the decision to address the issue of the transition from the informal to the formal economy in our countries. Indeed, one of the gravest consequences of the armed conflict, after the spiritual damage and destruction visited upon Angolan society and the psychological and physical harm wrought upon the country's citizens, is unemployment.

The armed conflict fragmented the Angolan economy, reducing productive activity to a dangerously low level, in particular in the agricultural sector, leading to internal migration and a rise in unemployment.

For those citizens of our country affected by this scourge, in particular young people, the informal economy serves as a kind of safety net, or marginal escape route, that provides work and income for many families and communities who, as a result of the difficult conditions prevailing in their regions of origin, have been forced to move to the outskirts of the cities.

The Government of Angola has adopted policies and programmes that reflect a vision in which the most effective and sustainable path forward consists of the following elements: macroeconomic stability; education and training programmes targeting both managerial staff and the national workforce; active employment measures adapted to our specific economic situation; actions to promote and boost the livestock sector, agro-industry and trade and services through incentive measures linked to infrastructure and the legal sphere; and business security for MSMEs.

In this regard, we are currently implementing the following measures: a wide-ranging national training plan for managerial staff, targeting the main sectors and fields of the Angolan economy; programmes designed to boost and diversify economic and productive activity throughout all of Angola's provinces; an action plan designed to strengthen, assess and broaden the vocational training scheme, focusing, in particular, on young people in outlying urban districts and rural areas and on women and girls; the revitalization and adaptation of employment services, with a greater role being assigned to employment placement agents; the revision of the General Labour Law, in order to convert it into an instrument which will facilitate employment generation and boost the workforce for the good of the economy and enterprises, while consolidating social justice; the construction, at various locations, of centres for entrepreneurship, business incubators and rural training schools providing vocational skills; and specific programmes for the identification and formalization of professionals and economic agents working in the informal economy, through practical and simple actions involving training, registration with the social security system, enrolment and employment.

We are sure that, with the dedication and understanding of the Angolan people, and with the invaluable support of the international community and, in particular, the ILO, we can continue along the path of sustainable development and decent work.

Original Russian: Mr SHMAKOV (Worker, Russian Federation)

Building a future with decent work is the main thrust of this Conference and the key theme of the Report of the Director-General. In the modern world, the future can only be a shared future. Pov-

erty, injustice, the oppression of individuals and peoples for the sake of profit and power everywhere are a threat to prosperity and peace. Today, exactly 70 years on, one of the main ideas of the Declaration of Philadelphia is particularly relevant.

The basis for global prosperity lies in each individual society. The Russian trade unions are determined to uphold the social agreement that has emerged in recent years between the Government, trade unions and employers. Today, the only opponents of this agreement are the new liberal forces, who wish to pit a liberal capitalist approach against constructive social dialogue.

The main thrust of our struggle is to observe labour laws and to normalize socio-labour relations. Increasing wages, including the minimum wage, amending pension laws, effectively regulating the activities of migrant workers in Russia and forbidding the practice of labour leasing are at the heart of this struggle.

First, pursuant to ILO principles, the minimum wage needs to be increased to a minimum subsistence level for the working population. By failing to increase the minimum wage, the State condemns some of its own citizens to degeneration and starvation. The State is encouraging employers to not pay their taxes and make social security contributions, thereby undermining the very foundation of socio-economic stability of the largest State in Eurasia.

Second, it is essential to increase wages in the public sector in Russia. The decisions made by the President in the spring of 2012 sought to substantially increase wages in education, health, culture and social services. Against the backdrop of the recession, our task is to ensure that the Government implements these decisions.

Third, it is essential to change state fiscal policy. For a long time, liberal economists have been trying to convince us that reducing the fiscal burden of the wage bill would lead to unprecedented wage increases. Following measures imposed upon them, employers have enjoyed sky-high profits to the tune of US\$10 billion, yet almost none of this has fed through into wage increases or job creation. The same applies to personal income tax, which should be progressive. Those who are the most successful should contribute more to society.

Another challenge to decent work is the use of labour leasing services, which have become a source of human rights violations. Those persons whose labour is "leased out", so to speak, do not have the status of a worker, do not enjoy the guarantees stemming from labour laws and do not receive their wages in full for their labour. Under pressure from us, this form of human exploitation is now illegal in Russia. This is a major breakthrough on a global scale and we hope that other countries will follow our example.

An effective response to the challenges of change can only be provided by fully strengthening the ILO and by upholding its fundamental values.

We welcome the increase in social activities of a broad range of NGOs as an important democratic and peacekeeping factor. So far it is only the trade unions and employer organizations that are playing this outstanding, irreplaceable role in the labour market regarding socio-labour relations. At the same time, overextending cooperation with NGOs could undermine the Organization.

Moreover, we emphasize that the ILO is the place for cooperation between genuine social partners that

are ready to take on a real share of the responsibility in their own countries and worldwide. The tendency to use various experts who are not, in fact, employers means that long-standing agreements which were reached through revolutionary processes and which are the fruit of extensive negotiations within the tripartite Governing Body of the ILO, are being ignored.

The principles of social justice and decent work are being sorely tested in neighbouring Ukraine. The inhumane policies of oligarchic circles have brought untold suffering to the people of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the prerequisites for providing assistance to Ukraine, as stipulated by international financial institutions, will only exacerbate the crisis. The conditions of the IMF include: raising the retirement age; scraping the right to early retirement; increasing gas and electricity prices; privatizing businesses; and putting an end to free meals for school children.

The Russian trade unions back the Ukrainian workers and trade unions. We believe that only the people of Ukraine themselves can and should determine the future of their own country.

Our urgent and joint task is to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to all the suffering people of Ukraine.

It is only through joint efforts that we will be able to implement the policy objectives and aims of the ILO in each and every country worldwide.

Ms PIER (*Government, United States*)

It is my pleasure to represent the Government of the United States at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. On behalf of our Secretary of Labor, Mr Thomas Perez, I would like to congratulate the Director-General, Mr Ryder, for his important, insightful, timely and pragmatic Report on labour migration.

The rapid transformation of the global economy in the past two decades has included a transformation of the global workforce and the employment methods used. Significant and complex international migration flows have resulted in fast-changing patterns of worker relocation. Increasing pressure to “cut the bottom line” has led to unprecedented growth in outsourcing, flexibilization and the obfuscation of direct employment relationships. These global market trends have enormous ramifications for working people, communities and labour markets.

Labour migration unquestionably has many benefits and we, in the United States, celebrate and are deeply proud of our immigrant heritage. We are indebted to migrant workers for their incredible contributions to our country. However, labour migration can also create a population of workers that is more susceptible to labour abuse, especially when they do not enjoy the same protection as nationals.

Migrants are not the only ones who frequently find themselves in what has become, to a large extent, a global, second-tier workforce, often lacking adequate legal protection of their basic labour rights, clear terms of employment, recognized contracts, benefits, access to social programmes, and other forms of social and labour protection. This vulnerable workforce of adults and sometimes children, both migrants and nationals, includes domestic workers, temporary workers and workers labouring for informal enterprises. It also often includes

the millions employed by third-party contractors, employment agencies or other intermediaries.

Such indirect employment increasingly creates in-house workforces which work side-by-side with directly hired, permanent workers, often doing the same jobs while receiving lower wages, fewer benefits and protections, and little or no job security. Oftentimes, these positions are created not only to cut costs but to circumvent labour law obligations, side-step inspections and undermine workers’ rights, in particular freedom of association.

In the United States, for example, some unscrupulous firms deliberately misclassify workers, a practice that Secretary Perez has called “nothing short of workplace fraud”, resulting in workers “being denied the minimum wage, overtime pay, unemployment insurance and worker compensation benefits”.

Despite a universal commitment to decent work, labour laws and enforcement methods have simply not kept pace with this transformation of the global workforce and the increasingly precarious forms of employment. As a result, the second-tier, inadequately protected workforce of vulnerable workers has mushroomed.

All of us, as ILO Members, must work to address this problem. The ILO, in turn, must be prepared to help provide legal guidance and technical assistance to enable governments to tighten their labour laws and improve their enforcement capabilities.

In this spirit, we warmly welcome the clear identification by the Director-General’s Report of areas where the ILO can bring added value in the area of labour migration. As the only international agency dedicated exclusively to employment, labour rights and working conditions, and in the light of its constitutional mandate for the “protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own”, the ILO has a major role in the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers.

Finally, I want to emphasize the central importance of the ILO’s supervisory machinery, including the Committee on the Application of Standards, in ensuring that labour standards are not only ratified and celebrated, but also applied in law and practice, especially on behalf of our most vulnerable population groups. The transformation of the global workforce underscores the importance of such universal labour standards. A failure to uphold this system is a failure to honour our core belief, so perfectly expressed in the Declaration of Philadelphia, that “all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity”.

Ms KNUPPERT (*Worker, Denmark*)

Let me start by focusing on the Report of the Director-General entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. In view of the estimated 232 million migrant workers around the world, this Report points out that ever more people are crossing borders in search of employment. Migration is too often associated with the abuse of vulnerable workers and is taking place on a large and growing scale. In too many cases, migration is also associated with the unacceptable treatment and abuse of some of the most vulnerable women and men in our labour markets.

However, we agree that migration has the potential to contribute considerably to growth and development. Therefore, there is a need for fair migration policies and stronger measures against forced labour.

Much has changed this last century, including the face of forced and compulsory labour. When the International Labour Conference adopted Convention No. 29 the main concern was forced labour imposed by state authorities. Today, almost half of the victims of forced labour have migrated prior to being exploited. They are not put in chains but they end up in situations of forced labour because employers exploit them. Many of those exploited are women and children. New forms of forced labour have appeared: trafficking people across borders, using dubious recruiters to cover up the traces, and luring, threatening and pushing men, women, boys and girls into forced labour and sexual exploitation. This new enemy has to be eliminated. Therefore, I urge you all to support, adopt and implement the new, legally binding Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, as submitted to plenary. I believe that such a Protocol and the related Recommendation on supplementary measures for the effective suppression of forced labour will make a difference.

It is indeed encouraging that the ILO has put transitioning from the informal to the formal economy on the agenda. When we get a Recommendation next year, it will be a major step towards improving the conditions of millions of workers who struggle to survive in the informal economy. This also includes all those workers who are employed informally in subcontracting and in supply chains. The vast majority of these workers are women, who all need to be recognized and covered by labour laws and social protection measures. The Decent Work Agenda must apply to them, as well as to all other workers.

At the same time, we are convinced that the formalization of the informal economy will contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation in developing countries. It is now up to all of us to ensure that social dialogue is strengthened and to develop new policies and strategies to deal with the informal economy. The Recommendation is just the basis; we have to ensure that it is implemented at the national level. There is certainly a lot of work to be done by governments and the social partners in preparation for next year's session of the Conference.

In 2012, we witnessed two historic events: first, the election of a new Director-General; and, second the lack of an agreement concerning the list of cases in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. The stance taken by the Employers' group concerning the situation within the Committee back in 2012 was unbelievable. The Employers questioned not only the interpretation by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations' of Convention No. 87, but also the right to strike itself. The Employers turned the difference of opinion into a dispute about the entire ILO supervisory system and blocked the list of cases. Last year, the Employers again questioned the mandate of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the right to strike in strong terms, not only in internal discussions, but also with regard to specific Convention No. 87 cases.

We reached an agreement on the list but the Employers continued to challenge the whole Organization. Various consultations resulted in an ILO Governing Body decision in March of this year. At the current session of the International Labour Conference, the Employers' group decided to employ intimidation concerning the agreed consultation process outside this Committee. The Employers' attack on the whole supervisory system is not acceptable. We are, therefore, this year faced with even greater challenges. Social dialogue and tripartism constitute the ILO governance priority for promoting social justice and peaceful workplace relations and decent work.

Finally, I therefore, once again, urge all governments and, in particular, the Government members of the Governing Body, to defend, protect and respect this Organization, its integrity and our universal principles in the world of work.

Original Russian: Mr MIROSHNYCHENKO (Employer, Ukraine)

Ukraine is now going through the most difficult period in the history of its independence.

I think that of all of you, one way or another, are following the events unfolding in our country. I would like to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to all our foreign partners for the unwavering and firm support that they have shown to the people of Ukraine at this difficult time.

The major domestic crisis in Ukraine, which has triggered mass protest and claimed many lives, has led to a change of government in our country and required a complete political reset of the whole system of government.

However, the reasons for this social crisis in Ukraine and its consequences are far deeper and cannot be settled through a simple change of government. It is encouraging that the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, understands this as reflected in his first political statements as the new leader of the Government of Ukraine.

Here are a few lessons to be drawn from the Ukrainian crisis, a full appreciation of which may be relevant for other countries.

The first lesson is that when a government pretends to participate in social dialogue, sooner or later this will lead to a social explosion. In the case of Ukraine, the main mistake of the previous Government was that it deliberately avoided social dialogue and, ultimately, formed a very primitive understanding of the needs of its people.

The second lesson lies in the universal truth that the fight against corruption is not simply a matter of ritual. Essentially the mafia-like system of government, which gained footing under the previous Government, in actual fact stifled entrepreneurship and formed an atrocious investment climate, deterring foreign investors and compelling many local enterprises to shift their business abroad. All this led to a sharp decline in macroeconomic indicators, which in the real world meant a decline in the standard of living.

We hope that Ukraine will not waste this exceptional historical opportunity to defeat corruption strategically. This is one of the main and most decisive demands of the people of Ukraine.

The third lesson is, in our view, that at a critical period of its history, society did not have the effective instruments to influence the decisions of the Government. Maidan – or Independence Square – was an extreme measure which the people were

forced to take because of the ineffectiveness of the existing democratic institutions. Thus, the civil society platform, to be established under the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement, is called upon to become one of these structures and Ukrainian employers will participate actively in its creation.

The fourth and most important lesson in terms of Ukraine’s future is our attitude towards young people. Even though, during all the years that the previous Government was in power, we may not have witnessed young people being brutally beaten, as was the case on Maidan, on 30 November 2013, we did witness the Government’s essentially heartless disregard for their problems. For many years, Ukrainian employers consistently tried to draw the Government’s attention to the problems of youth employment, vocational training, and the need to create conditions for youth entrepreneurship. The social energy of Ukrainian young people, so clearly exhibited on Maidan, should be put to good use in creative labour. The Government of Ukraine has the task of creating the necessary conditions to do so.

For obvious reasons, the attention of Ukrainian society is focused on solving our pressing issues. However, this does not mean that Ukraine is no longer part of global development.

We are closely following the processes under way within the ILO and we carefully read the Report of the Director-General, Guy Ryder, on the problems and prospects of labour migration in the twenty-first century. For Ukraine, with its major labour potential, a significant portion of which is seeking employment, including overseas, the theme put forward for our consideration is extremely relevant.

At the same time, I should like to express the wish that the work of the ILO and of the IOM in this field should be coordinated in order to prevent unnecessary duplication of functions.

We also fully share the view expressed by the IOE, stressing the important role of employers in regulating migratory processes and related practical matters.

In conclusion, I would like, once again, to convey our gratitude for the sympathy and support that the international community has shown to Ukraine, which we particularly appreciate during the trying times that our people are now going through.

(Mr Alexandris takes the Chair.)

Original Portuguese: Mr MOTA SOARES (Minister of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, Portugal)

Allow me on behalf of the Government of Portugal to pay tribute to the achievements of the ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder, and all his team. We have to recognize the considerable efforts that they have constantly invested in defending tripartite social dialogue. I would also like to congratulate the new members of the Governing Body, to whom I wish every success.

Portugal successfully underwent a difficult financial rescue process which lasted three hard years for all the Portuguese people. Thanks to the country’s resilience, we got through this difficult period and revealed a vitality that surprised many people in our country and abroad. There was an increase in GDP and exports, a drop in unemployment, stabilization in consumption, recovery in investment and creation of new businesses. All of this bore witness to the great capacity of Portuguese workers and busi-

nesses to face up to the challenges and overcome them.

The rising trend in unemployment figures was reversed and that has been the case for 15 months. Since January 2013, there has been a 2.8 percentage point drop in unemployment. Employment is still high at 14.6 per cent but there are hopes of adding to the total of 147,000 Portuguese who re-entered the job market during the last year.

In the framework of tripartite dialogue in Portugal, it was possible in January 2012 to reach an agreement concerning growth, competitiveness and employment. Such a fundamental, far-reaching agreement with the social partners was unprecedented, and it has also played a large part in the economic recovery and the creation of jobs. Social dialogue was responsible for more, and better, sustainable growth. In the short term, it will strengthen collective bargaining, increase the representativeness of unions and employers’ organizations, and contribute to efforts to increase the minimum wage.

Thanks to an emergency social programme that we launched as soon as we formed our Government, it was possible to reduce the effects of the crisis on those who were most exposed to it, in particular people on the lowest incomes. We increased pensions for 1 million retirees in the lowest pension group, raised unemployment benefits for unemployed couples, and created a new social response model in partnership with social institutions.

The Director-General urged the constituents to express their views on migration policies at this session of the Conference and in this context we recall Portugal’s good practices in migration policies. This had become clear from the international results of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) and the OECD International Migration Outlook reports, which demonstrate that Portugal has been constantly working to welcome and integrate everyone coming to Portugal, past and present, to live and work.

We are fully aware of the fruitful partnerships that exist in the GMG and of the work done since the Group has been chaired by the ILO. The situation in Portugal regarding migratory movements leaves us well placed to understand the problems in this area. Accordingly, we have ratified Convention No. 97, the Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86), and Convention No. 143. In addition, Portugal long ago gave foreign workers the same rights and duties as Portuguese nationals to prevent them being subjected to any kind of discrimination on the grounds of being immigrant workers.

The Portuguese Government is committed to: the Decent Work Agenda; a sustainable economic system; promoting entrepreneurship; boosting business activity and making it more flexible; promoting social cohesion and fostering intensive social dialogue; increasing reforms to benefit the most vulnerable and needy people; maintaining emergency social programmes where necessary; enhancing youth employability, turning the “youth guarantee” to best effect; and expanding access to protection for workers in atypical forms of employment and for those who are unemployed.

In the light of all the above, we underline the significance of the Director-General’s Report and the strategy that it outlines for the ILO in the future. The documents presented are of great quality and set out an important programme of work for deepening and widening tripartite social dialogue. If

there is close solidarity between nations, we can overcome all forms of adversity.

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

It is a great honour to speak on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, the tripartite delegation accompanying me, and on my own behalf to present our greetings to this great assembly.

Mozambique welcomes and associates itself with the intervention by the Executive Secretary of the CPLP, Ambassador Murade Murargy, speaking for the first time at a session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the countries of the CPLP.

It is also a pleasure to be able to express my gratitude to the Director-General of the ILO for his recent visit to our country, which was marked by the launch of an ILO-led study entitled *Towards a Mozambican Social Protection Floor: Consolidating a comprehensive social protection system in Mozambique: Analysis of policy alternatives and costs*.

We have looked very closely at the Director-General's Report, which addresses the issue of labour migration. This is a phenomenon of current interest, and we congratulate him on his brilliant presentation.

The region of SADC has been one of the major focuses of migratory flows, both internationally and interregionally. In this context, in May last year, SADC ministers and social partners responsible for employment and labour meeting in Maputo approved a regional action plan on labour migration for the period 2013–15 with a view to developing a harmonized regional policy for labour migration, recognizing the economic and social role of migrant workers in their countries of origin and destination.

Mozambique has been seeing fairly positive growth, stimulated by the investments of multinational companies. However, the translation of this growth into the creation of decent work is still a great challenge since it chiefly concerns capital-intensive projects that create few direct jobs. Multinational companies must assume increased responsibility in the places in which they carry out their business, to reduce the potential for social conflict with local communities by respecting national legislation and facing up to their social obligations. In view of the challenges of harnessing this growth and the exploitation of mineral resources to improve the quality of life of our citizens through employment, we recently held a high-level conference on employment with the support of the ILO, bringing together social partners, academics, and national and international experts. The conference was inaugurated by Mr Armando Guebuza, the President of the Republic of Mozambique, and aimed to develop a series of recommendations which will contribute to develop a national employment policy.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our satisfaction with the availability of the Regional Director for Africa, as demonstrated in his recent visit to our country, and in his meeting with Mr Guebuza to assist in the development of that policy.

We cannot achieve sustainable development unless it is focused on local human capital. The value of investments lies in the quality of workers, who must be equipped to promote production and productivity. In Mozambique, we are acutely aware

of this challenge and the Government has therefore been implementing reforms on vocational training, to adapt this to the needs of the market.

Following the discovery of huge reserves of mineral resources, multinational companies are increasingly interested in setting themselves up in our country. Accordingly, another component in our activities to integrate our young people has therefore been the establishment of vocational training partnerships with these companies. This exercise has contributed to increased professionalization among young people, reinforcing our belief that direct foreign investment needs to be sustainable.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the Parliament of Mozambique this year adopted legislation regarding the unionization of civil servants, thereby establishing the right of all Mozambican workers to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

We believe that people should be at the heart of the development process, enabling them to respond to the needs of the market by drawing on their skills to work efficiently and effectively, for the promotion of sustainable and inclusive economic development and the creation of a culture of work.

Mr JAEM (Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia)

Please allow me from the outset, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia, to sincerely congratulate Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja, President of the IOE, on his election as President of this august forum, the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. Let me also congratulate Mr Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, and his Office for the very successful preparation of a comprehensive Report, which addresses challenges and highlights various twenty-first century initiatives.

Since 2010, the Malaysian Government has, under the visionary leadership of the honourable Prime Minister, made landmark strides, in line with its current government transformation plans, to leapfrog the country to a high-income nation and achieve fully developed country status by the year 2020. To this end, the sustained implementation of various initiatives, in line with these transformation programmes, has brought to fruition visible steps forward and today the country is on track in its ongoing pursuit of economic transformation. Complementing and sustaining this transformative agenda is the total inclusiveness of Malaysians, a strong belief in regular and constructive social dialogue, sustainable development and provisions for better social protection for its people.

The Government of Malaysia, in strategic partnership and regular consultation with its key tripartite social constituents, values democratic consensus building and such efforts are evident through the institution of different tripartite consultative bodies at the national level such as the National Labour Advisory Council, the National Joint Council for the Civil Service and the recently established National Wages Consultative Council. At the private enterprise level, social dialogue has been successful and has been recognized as a central and binding instrument in facilitating the promotion of sound industrial harmony and quality industrial relations, which has had a significant bearing on national development.

Demographic profiling has shown that, by the year 2030, Malaysia is forecasted to face an ageing population. In addressing this issue, the Malaysian

Government has instituted a national health initiative for continuous public health-status monitoring, including the early detection of non-communicable diseases. A healthy lifestyle, a quality health-care system and awareness programmes are vigorously pursued to prolong worker employment prospects, even in old age. As a demonstration of its commitment to this agenda, the Malaysian Government has recently endorsed increasing the age limit to 60 years, thereby extending coverage of the Malaysian labour force by the Social Security Organization and realigning social security protection with the national minimum retirement age. Besides old-age protection for workers, social protection in Malaysia has been further transformed with the introduction of the national minimum wage and the national minimum retirement age, benefiting 13 million employees in the private sector.

Complementing the implementation of the Malaysian Government's transformative agenda and its firm focus on its objective of developing Malaysian human capital, technical, educational and vocational training continues to play an important role in providing highly skilled labour to meet current and emerging industry needs. In the context of a rapidly changing global economic scenario, the development of knowledge and skills is critical in maintaining the competitiveness of its various industries and sustaining the growth of the country as a whole to ensure the continued development of a skilled and knowledgeable labour force.

SkillsMalaysia's international technical education and vocational training programme (INVITE programme) was designed on the basis of the National Occupational Skill Standard, which is a framework developed by industry experts, outlining the core competencies required for a range of occupations.

Mr MYINT (*Union Minister, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Myanmar*)

It is indeed an honour and pleasure for me to address this august assembly. And on behalf of my delegation as well as my own behalf, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the President for his well-deserved election as the President of this session of the Conference. I am also confident that his able guidance, wisdom and leadership will lead our deliberations to a great success.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Mr Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, for choosing the subject of migration as a key feature of today's world of work and bringing it to the attention of this session of the Conference. I would also like to commend the Director-General for his Report *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. I believe that it is very timely to enlighten the issue and, as such, it deserves the serious consideration of our tripartite constituency. The Report recognizes the need to promote decent work opportunities for migrant workers and labour mobility in the twenty-first century. It also highlights the key factors of migration, the terms of migration and the role of governments and private agencies in labour migration.

Myanmar shares the view that promoting fair migration practices is of paramount importance in ensuring decent treatment of the workers concerned and equitable interests of sending and receiving States. In the same vein, fair recruitment processes and practices are to be strengthened to address abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices affecting migrant workers. I believe that the ILO should be in

a position to provide technical assistance and further guidance on both challenges in the future.

Migrant workers contribute significantly to the socio-economic development and cultural richness of both the sending and receiving countries. As such, we should redouble our efforts to effectively promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants. In this regard, labour inspection systems in destination countries play a crucial role.

Myanmar believes that promoting decent work opportunities at home is equally important in addressing the migrant issue. In this context, allow me to touch very briefly on what Myanmar is undertaking. Myanmar's migrant workers are being dispatched through the Government Overseas Employment Agency and also private agencies. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is making every effort to ensure that they have decent work abroad and to protect their rights in their destination countries. Labour attachés are assigned in countries where most of the Myanmar workers are working to protect their rights and privileges and to deal with the labour disputes and issues arising in receiving countries according to the relevant laws.

In order to address the needs and issues of workers who are working in the country and abroad, the complaint mechanism centres are open for receiving complaints and providing 24-hour services in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. Moreover, we are trying to establish migrant workers resource centres in the capitals of the regions and States where most of the migrant workers are working.

Advocacy is also high on our agenda. Workshops, seminars and programmes on safe and legal migration, decent jobs, protection from exploitation, and the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers are being conducted in Myanmar.

Creating fair migration is a daunting challenge for all of us. However, it is not insurmountable. If we take a step today, we will be much closer to this objective than yesterday. Myanmar stands ready to work together with you all to achieve this goal.

Mr KELLIER (*Minister of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica*)

I am indeed honoured to deliver this address on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica. I wish to congratulate the President on his election to preside at this assembly. My tripartite delegation is convinced that with his excellent leadership we will accomplish the tasks of this session of the Conference.

Permit me also to commend our Director-General, Guy Ryder, for his dynamic leadership of the ILO in these difficult times, and to thank the able staff of the ILO secretariat and, in particular, the subregional office in Port of Spain for their valuable support.

Working men and women, families and communities across the globe continue to face hardships arising from the impact of the 2008 financial crisis. This crisis has unmasked the underlying structural deficiencies in our global economic arrangements that have contributed to widening social gaps, growing income disparity, rising poverty, and high unemployment. These downward risks to sustainable growth and meaningful development must be tackled with urgency. Indeed, the ILO has painted an alarming picture of the increasing jobs gap as global unemployment continues to rise, especially among the young people. This is compounded by high lev-

els of underemployment and vulnerable employment in countries like my own, Jamaica.

A World Bank report indicates that a slow and tedious recovery in high-income countries is under way. The report suggests that stronger growth from high-income countries and an increase in import demand will spur greater exports from developing countries.

Here at the International Labour Conference, we recognize that growth is not an end in itself – it must be part of a new development agenda that contributes significantly to improving living standards around the world. We must turn the crisis and its effects into an important opportunity for sustained development and not simply seek to recover to the pre-crisis conditions.

Simply put, we must understand the linkages between unemployment, the informal economy, migrant work and forced labour so that we can better identify the policies that will drive higher rates of economic growth with job creation and a more equitable path to economic and social development.

As Jamaica works to achieve macroeconomic stability, fiscal sustainability and debt reduction, we remain firmly committed to a policy of securing growth with jobs. We are taking a holistic approach to the policy in order to ensure that we drive jobs by promoting micro- and small enterprise development, providing a pro-investment business climate and laying the foundation for greater public-private partnerships. We will complement these efforts with the establishment of a sustainable social protection floor.

We are talking practical steps to achieve this dynamic efficiency of the economy by improving access to credit, facilitating the ease of business establishment, pursuing labour market reform, developing a venture capital framework, promoting innovation and reducing bureaucracy.

These efforts will complement specific growth projects, including the development of a logistics hub, agricultural diversification, enhancing socio-economic and cultural tourism, and promoting business process outsourcing opportunities.

In this vital national effort, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is leading the charge to promote enhanced productivity, ensure full compliance with our labour laws, advance education and training to develop the skills required, and address the needs of persons with disabilities. These measures will help to ensure that jobs to be created will be of good quality and growth will be truly inclusive.

These steps are critical as we seek to attract and sustain investments and meet the demands of our people for improvements in their standards of living.

We are also working to regularize and formalize our significant informal economy, estimated to be approximately 45 per cent of GDP. Tax reform and enhanced social protection measures are an important part of this initiative.

The world has come to recognize the implications of jobless growth and the significant impact of the informal economy. We need to take decisive action to move from the neoliberal model of economic development amid jobless growth and put people and jobs at the centre of our social and economic policies. If we are truly committed to sustainable development, there is no option. Only through sustained effort and unwavering commitment will this goal be achieved. This is our duty.

Mr ABRIANDI (*Worker, Indonesia*)

I am the President of the Confederation of All Indonesian Labour Unions (KSPSI), which is the largest workers' confederation in Indonesia with 4 million members. I am here as the head of my delegation to this year's session of the Conference.

The struggle to achieve decent work for all throughout the world is a precious task which requires cooperation among governments, employers and workers. This is a priority for human sustainability, and we therefore need to continue working to motivate people and to address all the items raised by the Conference this year, thereby delivering a universal commitment. The struggle for decent wages is shared by all labour unions in Indonesia because we are sure that success is impossible unless we work together.

On behalf of all Indonesian workers, we would like to thank all those who have supported our struggle to uphold justice with regard to labour issues in our country. We also wish to express our sympathy and support for our brothers and sisters around the world who still suffer unjust treatment, as in the case of certain countries in the Middle East and in South-East Asia, and in other developing countries in Africa and South America.

We are delighted to see our struggle for social security, over more than four years, brought to fruition with the enactment of social security provisions by the Indonesian Government on 1 January 2014, through the implementation of Act No. 24/2011. This shows the effectiveness of our tripartite social dialogue and gives us hope that the resolution of industrial disputes in Indonesia will improve.

The issues addressed this year and in previous sessions of the Conference prove that workers are still facing injustices. We therefore need to focus on the main issues in this regard, which are decent work, minimum wages, OSH, the protection of union rights, social security and the informal sector. We welcome the discussion on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, which is necessary in order to strengthen the role of governments in providing sufficient protection for their people throughout all sectors of the economy, and in preventing discriminatory treatment.

In Indonesia, we are working to encourage the Government's immediate ratification of Convention No. 189 and its development of legislation to that end. With regard to development, Indonesia has achieved some encouraging results, ranking second in the world in terms of economic growth and 13th in terms of GDP. This is concrete proof of the contribution that Indonesian labour is making.

However, those achievements do not yet fully benefit Indonesian workers. In that regard, there are five areas which continue to require our attention: first, narrowing the wage gap between workers and employers; second, improving social security services; third, putting a stop to the illegal outsourcing of work; fourth, adopting a law on the right to unionization; and fifth, achieving decent work in the informal sector.

Social dialogue should address the means of building trust in order to achieve a win-win solution for all. We can therefore conclude that employers and workers are leading actors in the development of a country, and in ensuring justice, prosperity and dignity for the peoples of this world. Solidarity forever!

The themes put forward for consideration at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference merit our attention and are topical both for the international community and for Russia. First, I would like to dwell on two of these themes, namely the transition from the informal to the formal economy and fair migration.

Informal employment is dangerous for workers and employers because it creates unequal conditions for honest and dishonest businesses. The size of the informal economy and the number of people working in it restrict countries' development opportunities and lead to a reduction of a country's tax revenue. According to official statistics, approximately 20 per cent of the total working population is engaged in the informal sector.

However, the dishonesty of employers is not the only reason for the existence of informal employment; other reasons include high taxes, high social security contributions and red tape. Repressive measures will not solve this problem, however. It is essential to encourage businesses to create jobs, to transform informal employment into formal employment. At the same time, it is equally important to encourage workers themselves to make the transition to the formal sector.

The formalization of the economy must lead to greater labour productivity. For Russia, this is a major challenge, requiring the creation of 25 million jobs in the near future. Companies will need huge inflows of investment in order to modernize their production, to move to new technologies and to ensure decent jobs.

By the same token, it is essential to improve the quality of the vocational training system, including retraining, so that laid-off workers are not forced into the informal economy by staff downsizing measures. Solving this problem will largely determine the attainment of specific targets both to create and upgrade jobs, and also to improve labour productivity and the well-being of workers.

The creation of a modern national qualifications system in Russia is a nationwide undertaking. In this regard, a key role is played by the Presidential National Council for Professional Qualifications, which is presided over by the head of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. This demonstrates the recognition of the significance of the problem and the importance of involving the business community in its solution.

We see the key areas of the policy on encouraging entrepreneurship as: reducing (or at least preventing any increase in) the tax burden on businesses; improving the effectiveness of investment incentives; ensuring access to long-term and affordable loans, including the bank system of long-term funding; removing administrative barriers and preventing new barriers from emerging; supporting SMEs as a key component of economic development and job creation; improving the quality and range of social services provided under a mandatory social security system (encouraging citizens to make the transition from the informal sector to the formal sector); improving the flexibility of the labour market; and upgrading the vocational training system.

An inevitable consequence of the informal sector is the existence of a large number of illegal immigrants. In 2013, the Federal Migration Service is-

sued 3 million work permits to foreign nationals, enabling them to work in Russia. The scale of illegal labour migration significantly exceeds legal labour migration.

Unregulated labour migration heightens the risk of unemployment. It increases informal employment and helps maintain the pool of cheap labour. Such migrants, as a rule, are deprived of all legal and social protection and easily fall prey to criminal elements.

Migration problems take pride of place in the labour market policy of the Russian Federation. In 2012, the Outline Plan for the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation through to 2025 was approved, the development of which saw the active participation of employers. The main principles on which our migration policy is based are: guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of migrants; preventing all forms of discrimination; observing national and international standards; and ensuring the convergence of the interests of migrants, society and businesses.

Foreign labour migration policy ought to be more closely linked to the real demands of the labour market. We support the ILO initiatives to draft Recommendations to facilitate the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy. They should be comprehensive and should contain measures to encourage businesses to formalize, including ensuring fair migration.

*Mr HAQUE (State Minister of Labour and
Employment, Bangladesh)*

I would like to congratulate the President on his election. I am happy to inform you that, since the last session of the Conference, the Government has carried out substantive legal and institutional reforms to promote labour rights, safety and welfare in Bangladesh. We amended the Bangladesh Labour Act last July. After a wide range of consultations among the tripartite stakeholders, the amended Act is having a particular impact on issues like workers' well-being and dignity, rights and safety, industrial safety, transparency in trade union registration and the wage payment system, and promoting trade unionism and collective bargaining.

Obviously effective implementation would require comprehensive rules. In this regard, we have already developed draft rules in other areas of focus. We are strengthening our implementation and monitoring mechanisms through institutional reforms. In 2014, the Government has upgraded its system of inspection for factories and establishments, creating a department with 679 new staff, which is almost three-quarters of its previous human resources.

Under newly devised recruitment rules, the recruitment of inspectors registered newly created posts in the process. The Government is working to ensure the necessary resources and logistics for restructuring the department. We are developing two publicly accessible databases for both the Department of Labour and the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments. One of the databases will include information related to trade unions; the other, containing information related to factory complaints, was launched in March 2014. We are also upgrading the listing of all manufacturing industry across the country.

I thank the ILO for its technical support to develop these databases. The Government is committed

to ensuring an improved working environment in the ready-made garment sector. In this regard, a national tripartite plan of action on fire safety and structural integrity has been developed. In line with this action plan, the Government adopted a national OSH policy in 2013 and, again with the support of the World Bank, we are establishing a training institute camp and dormitories for woman workers in export processing zones.

The Better Work programme has already been launched in Bangladesh with the support of the ILO. Bangladesh considers this programme would be very effective in instituting a moral and functional architecture in promoting labour resources. On the basis of tripartite consultations, wage structures for both public and private sectors are determined. Last year, the Government declared a 76 per cent increase in the minimum wage for the ready-made garment sector.

The formalized and informal sectors, and also some new sectors, have already been brought under the coverage of the amended Act. Recently, Bangladesh has initiated a group insurance scheme for informal sector workers, starting with construction sector workers and motor mechanics. We believe the present session of the Conference will look at realities on the ground and at possible ways and means of transforming the informal economy.

Bangladesh ratified Conventions Nos 29 and 105 immediately after its independence in 1972. The Constitution clearly prohibits all forms of forced labour and makes it a punishable offence. This year, two ILO Conventions have been ratified, namely, the MLC, 2006, and Convention No. 185. With this, Bangladesh has ratified 35 ILO Conventions, including seven core Conventions. The Government of Bangladesh drafted the Overseas Employment and Migration Act and adopted an overseas employment policy in 2013. We are working towards achieving decent work for all. We are trying to promote social justice and equity as set out in the Government's "Vision 2021" document. We firmly believe that effective social dialogue among the stakeholders can greatly accelerate this process. In this effort we would continue working with the ILO and other development partners. The world of work is changing and so are we in Bangladesh. Over the past year, industrial relations have undergone significant changes in Bangladesh. We are confident that there are better times ahead.

Original Persian: Mr RABIEI (Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, Islamic Republic of Iran)

We consider that the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, is very relevant and timely at this juncture. It is self-evident that migration which takes place outside regular channels leaves the persons concerned vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They account for an estimated 10–15 per cent of the total of 232 million migrants.

I believe that we need to take a more holistic approach to move forward and open promising prospects in this regard. The reality is that there have been some global achievements but progress on decent work for immigrants has been marginal in terms of the efforts made. To create a new outlook on the issue, we have to assess both supply and demand in relation to the migrant labour market.

Most instruments are mainly designed to support the rights of migrant workers in countries of desti-

nation. But as long as conditions of work are not favourable to the migrant workforce in countries of origin, many jobseekers remain on the outside of the labour markets of more affluent countries. The implementation of the Conventions concerning migrant workers also remains a big concern.

I would like to refer to some other important issues. To begin with, the developed countries never highlight the realities of the contribution that migrant workers can make to the economic growth and well-being of their communities. Therefore it is always possible to shape public opinion to ignore invisible and voiceless migrant workers.

Moreover, part of the demand for migration stems from policies being implemented by migrant-receiving countries. Currently there are difficulties relating to the demand for African migrant workers, which is fuelled in the countries of origin by political instability, civil war and extreme poverty. Past and present attitudes in receiving countries also play a role.

Having enforced a range of policies, the developed countries put pressure on the economies of the developing countries, creating barriers, limiting technology transfer and, of course, in the case of my own country, imposing harsh and unjustified sanctions. The natural result of such actions is destabilization of the economy and scarcity of employment opportunities, thereby fuelling migration to the developed countries. It can be said that a significant proportion of migration results from greed and overindulgence in the developed world.

Moreover, during the last 30 years my country has been a receiving country for some 3 million workers from neighbouring countries. The population of migrant workers could be the result of something other than the wrong actions of the developed countries. Might not the incidents and cases affecting many Palestinian workers be the result of inappropriate policies? The most developed countries must act more responsibly towards migrant workers.

Owing to global trends, new challenges have emerged which have had a disruptive impact on developed and non-developed countries alike. Not only the economy but also areas of culture and society come up against contradictory changes and movements. The elimination of poverty, the fight against inequality and access to social justice are being strongly challenged today, and even traditions of peaceful living, in accordance with local cultures, are called into question. These problems stem from the dominance of technology and those who possess it.

Despite the economic sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to social protection for all, and in this regard my Ministry has supported social protection initiatives and networks. The new Government is taking action in this sphere. For the developing countries, data and information and the strategies of countries for resolving these problems are highly ineffective. To address this, the ILO should take the lead and reinforce the sharing of information, at least on a par with its efforts to improve legal and institutional frameworks.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope that the achievements that result from such exchanges will make it possible to create a better and more equitable future for workers everywhere.

It is an honour for me to address the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

We consider the ILO's committed participation in the agenda for fair migration very important. Many areas of the work of the ILO are directly related to migration and we believe that the Organization can actively contribute in facilitating safe, orderly and regular labour migration.

We believe that a more consistent, wide-ranging and carefully coordinated approach to migration is necessary in order to adapt to the new global economic conditions and address the rapidly evolving realities of the world of work. The full range of the impact that migration can have on sustainable economic and social development needs to be further assessed and evaluated. Also, particular attention should be given to providing protection to vulnerable migrants such as unaccompanied minors, children, refugees and victims of trafficking. These present significant challenges for host countries, which should be effectively addressed through long-term development planning and well-designed, targeted initiatives.

As regards Cyprus, we are in a difficult economic situation with severe consequences on the labour market, resulting in high unemployment rates. Therefore, the specific conditions of our labour market need to be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of policies. Migration is a major challenge for Cyprus. We have in place a strong legislative framework and policy measures that attempt to successfully manage the issue of migration. There is a continuous effort aiming at monitoring and safeguarding the working conditions of all migrant workers through contracts of employment and other measures in an effort to eliminate any risk of trafficking and exploitation. Other measures include the legislative regulation of the establishment and operation of private employment agencies, training programmes, a national action plan on human trafficking, and action against all forms of exploitative employment, including the implementation of sanctions against employers of irregular foreign workers.

Cyprus has also signed a cooperation agreement with the IOM, which will operate an office in Cyprus, providing advisory and technical services.

At the EU level, the newly approved directives regulating access of certain categories of third-country workers to European labour markets set up an enhanced legal framework as regards migration.

On such a broad-ranging subject as migration policy, the effective involvement of the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations and civil society is paramount, especially since they are often an implementing partner of this policy.

The ILO can help deepen knowledge, identify shared priorities and address challenges in the field of labour migration, successfully incorporating it into policies of promoting decent work for all. It can contribute to developing a more coherent global policy on migration by working closely with all relevant UN agencies and other international organizations.

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I bring good tidings from the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, on this auspicious occasion of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. We have examined the Report of the activities of the ILO for the period 2012–13. It is a job well done and is highly commendable.

Permit me to endorse in particular the ILO focus on migration, which has assumed great importance to stakeholders all over the world. Our interest in this subject is informed by the large number of Nigerian young people that are globally mobile. There is no doubt that we have benefited from this phenomenon, especially in diaspora remittances, but we have also experienced the challenges of discrimination, harassment and other forms of social exclusion in the world of work.

Despite these challenges, I am happy to say that, in the last two years, the administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan adopted a paradigm shift within the framework of the Transformation Agenda, with a strong emphasis on, and commitment, to managing the challenges of migration as a sending, transit and destination country.

Nigeria has, within the above framework, recorded significant successes in its strategic and holistic approach to migration management. These successes include: the evolution, development and ownership of the Labour Migration Policy for Nigeria; the adoption and implementation within the ECOWAS subregion of the Passport to Safe Migration project and the national Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme (known as "settlement assistance"); the entry into bilateral and multilateral Memoranda of Understanding with several European and African countries for the mutual management of labour migration; high-level participation in, and implementation of, the resolutions of the UN round-table discussions on international migration; and the implementation in the workplace of activities that affect migrants in Nigeria. With regard to the latter, activities include: strengthening labour inspection, social security, skills and entrepreneurial development, including productivity and workers' education, in view of the current challenges of child labour, forced labour and the extension of labour protection services into the informal economy; upgrading the National Electronic Labour Exchange; and reviewing the National Employment Policy and implementation of the National Action Plan on Employment Creation.

Finally, Nigeria requests the ILO to galvanize its pacesetting potential for the building of national capacities and partnerships, promotion of collaboration in reintegration programmes and other forms of interventions for the effective mitigation of the challenges of migration in a largely prismatic world.

Original Spanish: Mr MADERO ERAZO (Secretary of State for Labour and Social Security, Honduras)

On behalf of my Government, I would like to convey our warmest greetings to the Director-General, Mr Ryder, who, in a short period of time, has transformed the ILO and contributed towards major international decisions.

The new Government of Honduras, led by President Juan Orlando Hernández, has adopted an agenda made up of fundamental changes to the econom-

ic and social structure of the country, with a view to reaching a higher level of sustainable social and economic development in a rapid and viable manner.

Progress has already been made in this regard in the first 100 days of the new Government's term in office. A number of measures have been implemented which are designed to improve the national economy through employment generation, tax collection and the "Vida Mejor" (Better Life) social programme; a government initiative offering solidarity to more than 835,000 Honduran families, with the aim of improving their quality of life and boosting economic and social development.

Furthermore, the Government has promoted a new and inclusive social security model that provides the majority of the economically active population with health care, social welfare and pensions. The aim here is to increase the number of rights' holders, ensuring that workers in the informal economy, farm labourers, domestic workers, private security agents, *maquila* (export processing zone) workers and members of NGOs can enjoy access to health care and pensions.

Honduras welcomes the inclusion on the agenda of this session of the Conference of the recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment. In Honduras, a presidential programme entitled "Con Chamba Vivis Mejor" (Jobs mean better lives) plays a vital role in terms of employment placement in private enterprises. Within 100 days of its launch, the programme had generated at least 11,010 jobs at the national level. Alongside this initiative, we now have a mechanism for cooperation between the private sector and the national employment service, through which private enterprises provide jobs at the national level. Once the positions in question are filled, the Government pays the workers concerned half the minimum wage for three months.

Moreover, efforts are being made to generate sources of employment through the law on employment on an hourly basis, which was approved by the National Congress at the beginning of this year and which, in the first 100 days of the new Government's term in office, generated at least 14,644 jobs across the country.

This figure increases when you take into account the creation of 4,771 jobs by the National Employment Service.

The Government is also working to create rural jobs and is planning a programme to support the reactivation of the agro-food sector, in order to increase production and, as a consequence, generate employment. Our aim is to create at least 50,000 new jobs each year in rural areas. In order to achieve this goal, we intend to invest in programmes supporting the production of palm oil, sugar cane and staple grains, as well as in a programme to boost livestock breeding.

One of the main driving forces behind educational reform is President Juan Orlando Hernández, who, through the Basic Law on Education, together with a law on strengthening public education and community participation, has brought students and responsible teachers back into the classroom, with over 200 days' worth of classes being provided so far. Moreover, a roadmap for organizational change and the integration of the policies and programme of the decentralized education system has been

drawn up based on equitable, high-quality outcomes.

In order to ensure transparency in terms of the tax and customs services and to tackle the tax deficit, we have set up a national unit to combat tax evasion, involving the administration of the affairs of major tax payers listed with the Executive Directorate of Revenue. In addition to these measures, we have applied the tax base, introduced electronic invoicing and set up branches of the preventive audit service in each department of the country.

As a result of the establishment of the Zones for Economic Development and Employment, Honduras is now highly attractive in terms of national and foreign investment. The prevailing conditions now allow the country to enter world markets governed by highly competitive and stable rules.

The Government of Honduras is careful to apply international labour standards and calls on the ILO to provide technical assistance and advice, in order to ensure that the provisions of the Conventions in force, in particular Convention No. 98, continue to be respected within the Zones for Economic Development and Employment.

It should be highlighted that the Committee on the Application of Standards requested the Government to accept a direct contacts mission in order to achieve application. The mission went ahead and discussions are currently under way concerning application within the Zones for Economic Development and Employment.

Finally, we wish to point out that Honduras will continue to work in partnership with the ILO on issues of common concern and that we share values and interests concerning the protection of the most vulnerable groups in Honduran society.

Mr MAVRIKOS (*Representative, World Federation of Trade Unions*)

On behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), today representing more than 90 million workers in 120 countries, we consider that, on a global level, the situation of the working class is continuing to deteriorate. The deep and prolonged crisis of the capitalist system is generating poverty, unemployment and suffering for the workers and big profits for the capitalists. We are very worried about the rise of neo-fascist political parties in Europe and increasing racism and xenophobia. It is the duty of all unions to isolate their fascists in every sector and in all workplaces.

At the same time, rivalries within the imperialist system generate wars, conflicts and imperialist interventions. Imperialists intervene in order to gain control of spheres of influence and energy transport routes and steal the natural and economic resources that belong to the people of the third world.

That is the situation today. Faced with this situation, the WFTU would like to stress the following five points. First, we call for a fight against unemployment. Unemployment kills the dreams of young people. Unemployment is an enemy of the trade union movement and an ally of the capitalists. The WFTU has declared 3 October 2014 an international action day against unemployment.

Second, the right to strike is in danger. Governments and the bourgeoisie have their own interpretation of Convention No. 87. Their aim is to abolish the right to strike and impose conditions that make strikes impossible. It is the duty of us all to defend the right to strike. Striking is a unique weapon in

the class struggle and even more so in our times, when attacks against workers' rights are constant. For us, it is wrong to refer this issue to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Third, about a month ago, on 13 May 2014, in the town of Soma in Turkey, more than 300 of our brothers lost their lives because the mine in which they were working did not have the necessary health and safety measures in place. The employer's thirst for bigger profits killed more than 300 workers. For the WFTU, the struggle for health and safety measures is a fundamental priority. For the international class-oriented trade union movement, workers' lives are the most important principle. So the struggle for health and safety measures is a top priority, along with the struggles for salaries and against unemployment.

Fourth, today, all over the world, thousands of our brothers, our colleagues, are in prison. In Colombia, for example, 9,500 militants are in prison. They include WFTU union leader Huber Ballesteros, a unionist in the agricultural sector. In Paraguay, Rubén Villalba, union leader of our affiliate, the Agrarian Movement of Paraguay (MOAPA), is in jail. We see the persecution of trade unionists in Malaysia, Kazakhstan and Greece. In Chile, lockout is still in force; unionists are laid off every day. Again in Chile, for example, a transport worker recently set himself on fire. Because of this, we are seeking support to secure the release of our union leaders.

The fifth and final point we would like to stress to you is the lack of representativeness in the ILO. Today, the WFTU has 90 million members. In accordance with proportional representation, it should have five titular members in the Governing Body. These seats are occupied by others.

Finally, from this podium, we would like to send an international message to the heroic Palestinian people, the Cuban people, the peoples of Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Lebanon and all people. We would also like to assure the workers of Portugal and Greece that we will remain at their side in their various struggles against austerity, the Troika and the EU.

Original Portuguese: Mr SIMÕES DA SILVA (Worker, Portugal)

Today – 10 June, the National Day of Portugal – I greet the President and all persons present at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Over the last three years, Portugal has been living through a completely new situation as a result of the economic adjustment programme that was negotiated between the Portuguese Government and various international bodies (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF).

Since June 2011, a wide range of rights have been blocked at the behest of these organizations now known as the Troika, including the right to collective bargaining between employers and trade unions.

Many of our existing rights, hard won following the revolution of 25 April 1974, were suspended as an essential condition for the success of that programme. The Portuguese people were promised that

such sacrifices would ultimately produce economic growth and employment.

Three years later, we have an employment rate that is above 14.6 per cent, the fifth highest among the 28 Member States of the EU; a public debt which, instead of falling, has increased and is now above 131 per cent of GDP; and a shameful level of economic growth – mainly due to exports – with the domestic market barely showing signs of life.

The Portuguese wage policy continues to be based on low wages. With the problem of competitiveness crushing any attempts to change the status quo, we stand in fear of economies where the rights of workers are only incipient or not respected at all. Suffice it to say that the Portuguese minimum wage is the lowest in the Eurozone at €485 per month.

Even so, the set of workers' rights was built over the course of the last 40 years on the basis of tripartite social dialogue under the guiding principles that underlie the ILO, where we are meeting today.

The Standing Council for Social Dialogue, which was set up in 1984, paved the way for finding solutions and common purpose between the social partners in order to resolve problems, whether structural or economic. But in the last three years we have seen stagnation in the search for such common purpose between the social partners and the Government, thanks to the blockage imposed by the Troika. This search could have come up with the necessary solutions for the development of the country.

If this search for solutions had not been called in question, we might have had different results today. The severe austerity measures imposed by the Troika mostly failed to achieve their objectives. Today, we have more unemployment, limited growth, emigration, poverty, more inequality and less social cohesion, thousands of bankruptcies among MSMEs, wage and pension cuts, freezing of professional careers in the public administration and reduced social programmes. These cannot be development goals for a nation. Were it not for the sense of responsibility and compromise among the social partners, the climate of relative peace that we enjoy would most certainly have been different.

Only last week an agreement was reached between the majority of the social partners regarding some changes to the labour legislation which promote collective bargaining and give new impetus to social dialogue between employers and workers. This is proof that tripartite dialogue is essential to finding solutions.

Immobility benefits only those who never wish to negotiate and who seek to turn social dialogue into monologue, and all that matters is what one party wants, with nothing left for the others. This is not dialogue, it is sophism.

We would like the ILO to maintain the necessary strategic vision and to bring together employers, workers and governments around the same table in order to find compromises and shared solutions. This is the great value of tripartite social dialogue. In my country, as in the ILO and in all democratic regimes, it is the spirit of compromise that will always triumph.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.10 p.m.)

Eleventh sitting

Tuesday, 10 June 2014, 2.30 p.m.

President: Mr Sakurada

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

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

First of all, I would like to express my sincerest congratulations to the President on his election as President of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. Under his wise leadership and great wisdom this important annual gathering will surely achieve its goals of examining pertinent global labour issues, and yield desired and valuable results.

It is indeed a great honour to stand here again in front of colleagues and friends from all ILO member States to reaffirm our enduring commitment to this auspicious Organization and to discuss again the topics that are relevant and common to all of us. The economic slowdown and current lack of quality employment are prevailing issues confronting most of us today, especially in light of the continuing and unpredictable economic and financial situation. This year's Conference agenda on the recurrent discussion on employment is thus very timely and appropriate.

All of us recognize the importance of relevant, proactive employment policies, where all levels of society, especially young jobseekers, are encouraged to attain valuable trade skills in order to facilitate their access into the job market. In Brunei Darussalam, His Majesty's government agencies, as well as the private sector, are making a concerted effort to tackle unemployment. This includes setting up regular career weeks for the young people, job fairs on oil and gas, ICT support services, transportation, hospitality, and wholesale and retail trade sectors. These initiatives are primarily aimed at overcoming long, drawn-out employment procedures by connecting jobseekers directly with potential employers, thereby expediting local participation in the private sector.

While there remain numerous domestic challenges that are common to all of us, policy-makers should actively endeavour to improve access to full employment, especially access for young persons. Brunei Darussalam sees this as an important contribution to our economic diversification and we look forward to learning more from the ILO and from the Members here today about best practices in promot-

ing employment in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention that Brunei Darussalam has dedicated US\$370,000, or nearly half a million Brunei dollars (BND), towards the development and implementation of a new analysis system for labour market information data with the support of the ILO. Permit me to express our deepest appreciation to the ILO. This technical cooperation agreement is another big step towards achieving our National Vision 2035 which ambitiously aims to create a highly skilled and educated society with wide-ranging access to educational and employment opportunities.

Also on the agenda is this year's standard-setting discussion to supplement Convention No. 29. We recognize its importance and support the work of constituents in the eradication of this heinous violation against human rights. We are pleased to know that the ILO is fully committed to supporting this work.

On the agenda topic of transitioning from the informal to the formal economy, I am glad to report that, as of August last year, Brunei Darussalam began the implementation of our Workplace Safety and Health Order, which covers all business premises in the country, including those of informal enterprises. We look forward to hearing from colleagues here today about best practices in improving unsafe working conditions as well as measures on extending social protection for those workers in informal sector enterprises.

I trust that the 103rd Session of the Conference will bring conclusive improvements that will further enhance our awareness of the needs of workers now and into the future.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our deepest gratitude and admiration of the esteemed ILO for its achievements in the pursuit of sustainable decent work and the overall betterment of the quality of working life for all peoples.

Mr MCLEOD (*Government, Trinidad and Tobago*)

The year ahead offers this august body an unprecedented and almost tangible opportunity to advance the imperative of decent work.

At a time when we are considering coherent responses to the jobs crisis and finalization of the post-2015 development agenda, there is a coalescing of ideas and commitments to which we and the ILO must contribute.

If we are to achieve decent work goals for workers in our countries – both nationals and those who choose to live and work in our respective countries – we must make some bold changes, principally to the way we think and to the way we do business. For the ILO, it is important that we begin to broaden and deepen our dialogue with our partners and stakeholders.

Already, we have noted the efforts of the ILO to lead side events at the United Nations in New York and I commended the Director-General for taking decent work to the site of the post-2015 development debate. It is there that we must challenge our colleagues to think outside of their proverbial boxes and to consider the mechanism by which quality jobs, sustainable livelihoods and inclusive growth could be achieved. We in the ILO know the answer. We have known it for years. The time has come to galvanize our efforts so that the message of decent work can be understood and embraced by other agencies and individuals involved in development discussions. The onus is on us – all of us – to promote decent work and rights-based sustainable employment as central planks of poverty eradication and development initiatives. We must speak more often with our development partners and enhance our efforts to demystify decent work for those who have not yet understood its elements and its merit. Indeed every effort we make brings us one step closer to generating sustainable livelihoods and improving the welfare of the global citizenry.

Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that as we grapple with the challenges of a more integrated world, the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, is both timely and instructive. Without a doubt the challenges of cross-border labour market issues – complex as they are – require particular attention. I go further to say that if we are to link migration to development it must not only be fair, it must also be managed. Moreover, it must be governed in a way that redounds to the benefit of all – the sending and receiving States as well as the workers and their families.

As the ILO seeks to enhance its contribution to human, social and economic development, consideration could be given to stepping out of traditional mode and convening intersectoral dialogues on fair migration among representatives of ministries of labour, planning, the economy, national security, culture, health, education, social services and finance. Such dialogue would provide an ILO-led forum for dialogue on the basic elements of fair, managed and rights-based migration and could facilitate more coordinated responses on migration issues, such as rights-based employment, child labour, human rights and social protection systems.

We will have failed in our efforts, though, if the enhancement of the conditions for migrant workers in regular status is not balanced by a decline in the number of undocumented workers. Indeed, our discussions this year on forced labour and informality align squarely with the migration debate. Common purpose, shared commitment and collective effort must be the platform on which we build a framework that offers protection to those migrating for employment and particularly for the vulnerable and the marginalized.

In Trinidad and Tobago, I am pleased to report that we are working towards, among other things, the development of a labour migration policy as well as an established social dialogue mechanism.

In closing, I wish to emphasize that the time to embrace diversity, welcome change, reform our approaches and build on the foundation we have is indeed now. As we advance work to build the future we want, in particular as it relates to ILO reform, we should also consider the synergies that could arise from constituent reform.

I take this opportunity to express appreciation for the overwhelming support for the re-election of Trinidad and Tobago to the Governing Body and reaffirm our commitment to working in the interest of all to advance the goals we set for ourselves. I wish also to express appreciation to the Director-General for his stewardship of this Organization and to the Director and staff of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean for their unwavering support to constituents. We in the Caribbean place high value on the work of this Office and look to the future with expectations of a sustained, fruitful relationship in the post-2015 development era.

It is by labour that we live and through labour that we will develop further.

Original French: Ms DE CONINCK (Minister of Employment, Belgium)

I have, for the third time, the honour of addressing the ILO here in Geneva. Today, more than ever, the Organization needs to demonstrate that a balanced path exists between economic necessities and the need to take into account social realities. The ILO's approach based on tripartite consensus has always been its added value in facing the challenge of globalization. More than ever before, we need social dialogue, based on consensus seeking rather than confrontation. As a member of the Governing Body, Belgium urges respect of the standards supervisory mechanism. Ms Doumbia-Henry and Mr Ryder must be fully supported in their attempts to reach a final agreement. This social dialogue, which should also be at the core of the institutional mechanisms of each member State, has become imperative. Before this body last year, I expressed the hope of harmonizing the status of blue- and white-collar workers in Belgium by means of social dialogue. This year, I am proud to announce that this objective has been realized.

We have also always emphasized the importance of social dialogue in our relationships with other countries. In March 2014, therefore, Belgium organized a seminar on social dialogue within the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting and with the support of Indonesia, the EU and the ILO. The participants highlighted several international initiatives, such as the ILO Better Work programme and cooperation between the various stakeholders with a view to improving working conditions in supply chains. In this context, I am grateful for the opportunity provided by the Conference this year to discuss Convention No. 29, and the issue of the transition to a formal economy.

Forced labour is on the increase as a result of globalization and entrenched informal work. The new forms of slavery which have evolved and which, contrary to preconceived notions, also affect industrialized countries, deserve our full attention. The phenomenon of social dumping, where work is carried out in pitiful conditions for minimum salaries, is also a practice which EU Member States can, and must, fight against more strongly. The drafting of a new Recommendation on the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy

is also a step forward. A framework of new initiatives should be established in order to make all stakeholders aware of their responsibilities and to give workers hope of an improvement to their economic and social environment.

We all know that this sector assures the mere survival of many women, migrants and young people without social protection or collective representation. This situation is also the result of subcontracting imposed by the formal sector. Efforts should be based on the MNE Declaration. The promotion of decent work is one of the essential measures to be taken. In addition, many obstacles to the formalization of work should be taken into account, namely taxation, corruption, lack of qualifications, access to markets and credit, and labour inspectors.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr Ryder for his Report. I particularly support paragraphs 130–131, in which he calls for our backing for the Office's efforts to establish an international agenda on migration. This agenda should become part of the new objectives set out by the international community for post-2015.

Mr MISKIN (*Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment, Suriname*)

It is, once again, an honour and privilege for me to address the International Labour Conference.

First, I wish to report on the progress made since the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2013. In the light of the topics on this year's agenda, the Government of Suriname is very pleased to report that there has been progress regarding social security for workers. The Government of Suriname has set a priority for this term, namely that a national social security scheme should become a reality. After more than 40 years of deliberations and, of course, tripartite consultations, proposals for an hourly minimum wage act, a national pension benefits act and a national health insurance act have gone through the Council of Ministers and the State Council, and have recently been submitted to the National Assembly for approval. These acts also serve to regulate the informal economy.

The Government of Suriname is also on the verge of signing a DWCP for Suriname with the ILO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean (Port of Spain). This programme has first to receive the approval of the Council of Ministers.

A few of the envisioned outcomes of the DWCP are: the modernization of labour legislation with a focus on the revision of the Safety Act and the amendment of termination procedures; the strengthening of the labour inspectorate; the establishment of a labour market information system; and the conducting of labour market surveys to identify trends and informalities. The Government of Suriname looks forward to collaboration with the ILO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean.

In addition, the Government of Suriname still has to ratify three fundamental Conventions: Conventions Nos 138, 100 and 111. These will be submitted to the Council of Ministers with a proposal for ratification.

I took note of the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, with great interest. As a member of CARICOM, realizing free movement of labour between the member States is one of the goals of the organization. This has been facilitated through procedures which have been put

into place, allowing various groups of skilled workers, such as university graduates, media workers, musicians, artists, sports persons, teachers, nurses, and technical and management staff of established companies, to move more easily through the Caribbean. Gradually, more groups of skilled and certified workers will be enabled to make use of the simplified procedures to live and work in CARICOM member States.

The Government of Suriname also wishes to harness the potential of persons of Surinamese origin living abroad. In January 2014, the National Assembly approved an act regarding the status of persons of Surinamese origin. The act was designed to grant persons of Surinamese origin holding foreign passports more rights and to simplify the procedures to live and work in Suriname.

As stated in the Report of the Director-General, fair migration can become very complex. On the one hand, you have to provide employment and social security for your nationals; on the other hand, migrant workers are also welcome because of their specific expertise or skills. The Government has the task of providing protection and equal treatment for all, and has to tackle the problems which come with new developments. The Government also welcomes the migration of employers; however, the Government regulates the preference of some migrant employers to employ labourers of their own origin instead of local personnel.

With regard to illegal migrant workers, the Government of Suriname has granted a general amnesty to illegal immigrants on several occasions in order to formalize their status.

Generally speaking, Suriname adopts a peaceful approach when it comes to resolving these issues, since Suriname has a history of migrant workers from different parts of the world and the Surinamese population is a result of the peaceful integration of the descendants of those migrant workers. However, at present, labour migration has different dimensions and needs to be dealt with differently. Given that labour migration is inevitable in the globalizing world, the Government of Suriname looks forward to guidance from the ILO on fair migration of labour.

Mr CHATTHA (*Government, Pakistan*)

I would like to congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I wish him success in steering us towards a constructive outcome to this session. I also congratulate the Director-General of the ILO and his team for presenting very comprehensive Reports to this session, in particular, on migration. We appreciate the efforts of the Director-General to reorient and readjust the ILO's footprint through an ambitious reform agenda. We are confident that his efforts will lead to setting new standards of efficiency and quality for the ILO.

We note with appreciation the efforts of the ILO to enhance working conditions for migrant workers. In this respect, the outcome of the November 2013 Tripartite Technical Meeting on Labour Migration is an important achievement. We need to promote it in its entirety and need to further consolidate progress in areas which were not fully addressed. In our view, the solution of the problem of migrant workers lies in the formulation of a better governance labour migration policy. This can be achieved

by promoting and implementing the rights of migrant workers, providing them with decent work and enhancing their capacity. We also believe that we need to enhance cooperation on recognition and equivalence of degrees and qualifications as it is an essential ingredient for cooperation on labour migration.

Pakistan supports the discussion on strengthening the action plan to end forced labour, and we also support the debate on a future form of standard setting to pursue this objective in accordance with mutual needs and through closer collaboration.

We also appreciate the vision of the Director-General and his team, taking timely cognizance of the issue of growing unemployment. It is heartening to note that the unemployment issue is attracting greater attention from the ILO and we hope that through concentrated and focused efforts by the international community we will be able to create new decent jobs for young people.

Pakistan fully shares the view that we need growth with jobs. Economic growth, focusing primarily on economic indicators without any real investment in labour, has only increased inequalities and has led to more deprivation and exploitation. Today, the gap between haves and have-nots has increased manifold, with negative repercussions for youth employment. To construct a new future with peaceful and productive societies, we will have to adopt a strategy built on a vision of decent work for all.

The growing informal economy is one of the major challenges restraining decent work and quality jobs. There is also the view that, while addressing formalization needs, the nature, size and level of an economy and particular circumstances of a country, should also be kept in mind. We therefore need to invest in developing the capacities of governments and States for the gradual formalization of economies.

My country has a long association with the ILO. We have ratified all the core Conventions of the ILO and, precisely for this reason, successive government in Pakistan and have given special attention to promoting workers' welfare and well-being.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to ILO values and principles, and the initiatives that are being taken to promote workers' welfare and well-being. We firmly believe that in the twenty-first century the prosperity and stability of any society lies in economic growth with jobs and decent work for all.

Lastly, on behalf of my delegation, I express our deepest gratitude to the organizers of this session of the Conference and assure them of our full commitment to promoting the standards of the International Labour Conference.

Original French: Mr HEDOUVILLE (Government, Haiti)

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Mr Charles Jean-Jacques, it is an honour for me to address you here at the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, which this year is focusing on the theme of "promoting jobs, protecting people".

I am delighted at the result of the election of the Officers of the Governing Body, who play a key role within the framework of this session.

Since 14 May 2011, when President Michel Joseph Martelly was elected to the highest office of the State, the Government of the Republic of Haiti

has made labour and, more specifically, employment, a priority. Consequently, the Government has launched a vast employment-creation programme covering the textiles, tourism, environment and infrastructure sectors, as well as a number of other sectors.

For example, more than 30,000 subcontracting jobs were created following the establishment of an industrial park in Caracol in the north of the country. The Government of the Republic of Haiti has taken a number of measures as part of efforts to establish a legal and institutional framework conducive to the creation of sustainable employment and poverty reduction, including: strengthening the Centre for Facilitation of Investments (CFI); simplifying investment procedures; and establishing private sector industrial micro-parks throughout the country.

I should emphasize, here, that the well-being of the workers, both in the private and public sectors, is duly taken into account. The budgetary resources available to the Government are used to implement social insurance projects through state social security bodies, such as the National Pensions Office (ONA) and the Insurance, Occupational Accidents, Sickness and Maternity Office (OFATMA). These projects focus on the most vulnerable social groups, in particular workers in the informal sector.

Thanks to the dynamism of our Head of State and the commitment of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Mr Laurent Salvador Lamothe, two important bodies, for which provision was first made in the Constitution of Haiti over 30 years ago, have now been established: the Governing Board of Social Security Agencies (CAOSS) and the Supreme Wages Council (CSS). The CAOSS has a mandate to modernize and rationalize social security, while the CSS focuses on the issue of wage fixing, in line with the law of September 2009 and Convention No. 131.

It should be noted that these two bodies are tripartite in nature, involving the participation of government representatives and representatives of employers' and workers' associations, in line with the tripartite approach that we are seeking to strengthen through social dialogue in Haiti.

With the support of the ILO, we are working with all relevant stakeholders and social partners to revise the Haitian Labour Code, in order to bring it more into line with the current situation in our country and with international standards, while ensuring that it takes into account the integration of persons living with disabilities.

Significant progress has been made in Haiti, particularly in the fields of labour administration, the strengthening of our legal framework and respect for freedom of association. However, we believe that it is vital to pursue our efforts in order to achieve a society in which everyone, without exception, has access to work.

In light of the above, we wish to reaffirm the willingness of the Government of the Republic of Haiti to continue to work with the International Labour Office to strengthen cooperation, focusing in particular on technical support for the CSS.

Let us work together to promote social justice and improve living and working conditions, both in our respective countries and worldwide.

Original Vietnamese: Mr DANG (Worker, Viet Nam)

I am addressing you on behalf of the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour. Let me begin by congratulating the President on his election. I am sure that under his guidance, this session of the International Labour Conference will achieve its aims.

The key agenda items for this session are of great importance to us.

We have studied, and we fully approve, the Reports submitted by the Chairperson of the Governing Body and by the Director-General to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, in particular those of the Director-General on *ILO programme implementation 2012–13* and *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. During this session the members of the Governing Body for 2014–17 will also be elected. We are sure that all this work will be done in a spirit of tripartite cooperation that will allow the ILO to perform its noble mission.

The Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour is extremely attached to the importance of representing and protecting the rights of its members and workers in general, which are of fundamental importance for our strategic action. We have more than 8.2 million trade union members with whom we are actively implementing the resolutions adopted by the 11th National Congress of the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour, held on the subject of the defence of the legal and lawful rights and interests of trade union members and workers.

No nation can develop without peace and stability. Being a country that has undergone various wars against foreign invaders, the Vietnamese people are, more than any other, familiar with the devastating consequences of war. Therefore, we always and ardently aspire to peace.

(A point of order having been raised by a delegate, the President interrupts the speaker and requests him to stick to the subject under discussion.)

Over the past years, Vietnamese trade unions have proactively coordinated with the social partners.

Mr MUREKEZI (Minister of Public Service and Labour, Rwanda)

On behalf of the Rwandan delegation, I wish to begin by expressing our appreciation of the way the session has been organized and chaired. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General of the ILO and the Africa regional and sub-regional leadership teams for the good work we are doing together.

The Government of Rwanda, together with the social partners, has developed a DWCP, which is built upon promoting employment for women and youth, extension of social protection to all, promotion of tripartite social dialogue and the promotion of rights at work. A new minimum wage is also being determined by sector.

In the context of social protection, a national community health insurance scheme for all, *Mutuelles de Santé*, was established in 2002, with the aim of covering 100 per cent of the population. In 2012, coverage stood at 93 per cent of the total population.

According to the 2012 Rwandan population and housing census, the total unemployment rate for Rwanda is 3.4 per cent, and 70 per cent of the Rwandan population are the youth.

The National Employment Programme (NEP) has been designed with the aim of increasing employability skills, developing an entrepreneurial mind-set and creating sufficient and decent jobs that are adequately remunerated and sustainable across the economy. The NEP will establish an effective labour market information system and help SMEs move from informal to formal status, taking into account their role in job creation.

In regard to promoting constructive social dialogue in tripartite consultations, the National Labour Council provides advice and guidance on all labour and employment matters. The Government of Rwanda, through the leadership of Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, abides with fundamental principles and rights at work, including the total prohibition of forced labour and child labour, both in law and in practice. Rwanda has to date ratified eight fundamental ILO Conventions, including Convention No. 29. We also support the proposed 2014 Protocol and Recommendation amending that Convention.

The Government of Rwanda is also highly committed to complying with its reporting obligations under the ILO Conventions that it has ratified and the African reporting mechanism, namely the Ouagadougou Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa. In the regional and global context, Rwanda is also open to free movement of labour and workers and firmly believes in the benefits of labour migration.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that the respect of workers' rights, labour productivity, and equitable and fair migration should be the pillars of global labour governance.

Original Portuguese: Mr ALMEIDA LOPES (Employer, Portugal)

The agenda for this session contains a number of important topics. However, I only have a few minutes to speak, so I shall focus on just two points: the Director-General's Report entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, and the issue of transitioning from the informal to the formal economy.

The first point, fair migration, is very relevant in today's world and, as pointed out in the Director-General's Report, has moved centre stage in global policy agendas.

I cannot help but recall that, historically, Portugal has always been a country of emigrant workers. However, over the last two decades, we have seen an unusual change, with Portugal first of all becoming a country that welcomed foreigner workers, only then, with the worsening crisis and growth in unemployment, reverting to its traditional role of a country of emigrants.

Consequently, the context in Portugal is twofold, with the country being affected by a global economy that is changing at an ever-faster pace, resulting in a need for swift policy responses.

The example provided by Portugal highlights the fact that the issues raised by migration require very complex solutions, involving human, social, economic, political and cultural aspects. These solutions must be provided without delay and in a pragmatic fashion, although not always uniformly so, and it is difficult to come up with a one-size-fits-all solution.

In a world that is, to a great extent, dominated by the principles of free trade, and in which mobility is a characteristic of modern societies, migratory

flows are an essential factor in terms of global development. In particular, it is through these flows that demographic pressures on labour markets and social security systems can be reduced, this fact being recognized as a key element of economic and social progress.

In his Report, the Director-General also draws our attention to one of the main challenges affecting migration policies today, the so-called “brain drain” from the countries of origin.

This warning is very timely. In our view, the shortage of highly qualified or potentially highly qualified labour constitutes a real restriction on the future growth of economies and the improvement of the capacities of enterprises in terms of competitiveness.

Without wishing, in any way, to question the added value of the migration of less well-qualified labour, given that there is a shortage of highly specialized workers at both the national and European levels, we believe that it is essential to draw up policies conducive to the retention and attraction of qualified migrant workers.

Such policies cover a vast range of measures, from the simplification and streamlining of immigration procedures for foreign students, teachers and workers, to action concerning teaching in the fields of science and technology, as well as the education system as a whole, and the creation of opportunities for access to accommodation, work and vocational training – including an appropriate qualification-recognition system.

Working through stable and attractive fiscal and legislative systems, we must also create an entrepreneurship-friendly environment for migrants, thus benefiting from their contributions in terms of investment, creativity and innovation.

Finally, we need to be ambitious. If we wish to continue to keep our enterprises competitive at the global level, we must view our region as being a modern and attractive Silicon Valley.

My second point concerns the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Alongside the loss of revenue for the State, which leads to increased public deficit, the informal economy has a direct impact on entrepreneurial activity. The issue of unfair competition, which affects the formal economy, and the weak framework of guarantees provided for workers within that economy, must be addressed as a matter of priority. In short, the fight against the parallel economy is also essential in terms of the competitiveness of our enterprises.

Policies implemented with a view to reducing the extent of the informal economy frequently become fragmented, sporadic and, above all, repressive. To date, no one has come forward with what is really required: a holistic, concerted approach to the issue.

Without a doubt, in order to persuade enterprises and workers operating in the informal economy to make the move to the formal economy, we need to facilitate the legalization of activities and, above all, create stable and supportive legal and fiscal frameworks.

Finally, we remain convinced that any plan or strategy adopted by the State must be the product of a process of social dialogue through which, working with the relevant stakeholders, we can find appropriate solutions. The best results can only be obtained through a combination of instruments and means.

Original Arabic: Mr HIJAZI (Minister of Labour, Syrian Arab Republic)

Allow me, at the outset, to extend my thanks to, and my high regard for, the friendly countries that have supported the Syrian Arab people in their fight against terrorism and have extended to it a range of political and economic support. At the same time, we denounce those countries that have supported terrorism and extremism and that have made assassination, destruction and sabotage the linchpins of their policy.

We would have been happy to discuss the Director-General's Report in detail if, given the crisis gripping my country and the suffering endured by our various population groups, the matters with which it deals did not represent an intellectual luxury quite unrelated to the reality of our situation. The Report is almost completely silent on the events in my country and confines itself to timidly mentioning, in one solitary paragraph, the horror and destruction sweeping across my beloved and resilient Syria. Our factories and facilities have been stolen and sold to neighbouring countries, while their workers have been abandoned and robbed of their source of income and livelihood. This terrorist war has caused immense human, economic and social catastrophes in our country which, in turn, have devastated the labour and employment sectors in industry, agriculture and tourism, have undermined social protection and simply annihilated a large swathe of the country's infrastructure and human resources, both workers and employers. That situation is further compounded by the unjust sanctions imposed by the West, which have forced the closure of enterprises and caused unemployment rates to spiral.

The housing estate of Adra best illustrates the suffering endured by our workers and their families. For those unfamiliar with this story, let me review the situation: this estate was built by the Government, in coordination with the General Federation of Workers, to provide housing for Syrian workers in the public, private and mixed sectors. The estate houses tens of thousands of workers and their families, which means that it is not home to any politicians, military or members of any groups involved in any of the conflicts. It is a neighbourhood of middle-class and even working-class citizens who earn a living from their work. This notwithstanding, it was subjected to a despicable attack. Its occupants and, in particular, the elderly, including the mothers and fathers of the workers, were the victims of barbaric acts such as decapitation or being set on fire, while the workers' children were burned alive. All this was played out before the eyes of the world, which stood by and watched, even with complacency, as workers and their families were slaughtered. I should point out that Adra remains under siege to this day.

Syria is committed to achieving its objectives, under its Constitution and the instruments of the ILO. Allow me to ask, however, from this international forum, why it is that the ILO has not taken a clear stance on the practices of this terrorist group and of all those who support it, despite the crimes perpetrated against workers and the terrorism being waged now for a fourth consecutive year?

At the same time, the Conference's topic for this year is the building of a future with decent work. How, we ask, can there be decent work, when our

workers and our employers are the victims of crimes committed by these terrorists?

We are studying the Director-General's Report with close attention and looking carefully at the challenges facing the ILO and the labour markets, including the poverty and layoffs consequent upon the new economic world order and the absence of decent work in the informal sector. We agree with the Report's conclusions and the suggestions by the Director-General regarding possible ways of surmounting these challenges, based on tripartism and social dialogue, key components in ensuring decent work in keeping with the standards and principles of the ILO. Social dialogue will be further enhanced in Syria following the re-election of President Bashar Al-Assad, which proceeded in an entirely democratic fashion as part of the process of national reconciliation promoted by the President, with the participation of the tripartite partners.

We welcome the visit by an ILO delegation to the occupied Syrian Golan, which drew attention to the practices of the Israeli occupation forces and the discrimination enacted against the Syrian Arab workers in relation to their wages, benefits, leave and medical insurance, the quantities of water allocated to farmers, the marketing of farm produce and job opportunities.

Despite the rising tide of hatred and surge of crimes against it by conspirators, Syria is still alive. It believes in a better future capable of fulfilling the hopes and dreams of its children. Every day its Government is opening up new workplaces; it is updating its legislation in response to the aspirations of its people for a better life. The Ministry of Labour has embarked on a programme to update the legislation, including the labour laws in the public and private sectors and the law on social insurance, with a view to setting in place a social protection system for all workers and their families. A few days before our session opened, Syria ratified the MLC, 2006, and adopted a law regulating domestic work, in line with the provisions of Convention No. 189. In 2013, it raised the minimum monthly wage. The Ministry has made a comprehensive survey of the labour situation in Syria and has developed a vision and blueprint for the future on this issue for the period to 2021.

I would like to thank all the staff of the ILO, and in particular the Director-General, and to express our hope that he will be able to find ways and means of constraining the Zionist entity to apply the rules laid down by international Conventions, to ensure that we return to international standards of fairness.

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm that Syria – referring here to its people, its Government and its leaders – believes in the primacy of law and that its people, inspired with the spirit of Arabism and committed to peace and security, will regain their unity.

*Original Spanish: Ms SIFUENTES DE HOLGUÍN
(Worker, Peru)*

On behalf of the workers' organizations of Peru, I welcome the Director-General's Report, which highlights the key outcomes in 2012–13 in 150 member States, a quarter of them in the Americas, with reference to matters such as promotion of employment, social security, OSH, freedom of association, forced labour, child labour, social dialogue and decent work.

Peru has posted sustained economic growth in recent years. Notwithstanding certain fluctuations, our GDP has been growing since the third quarter of 2009. The annual inflation rate is below 3 per cent. Unemployment in urban areas is around 3 per cent and informal employment stands at 56 per cent in urban areas and 70 per cent overall. The informal economy is expanding because of the unequal distribution of economic growth and the non-compliance with protective legislation. The rights of domestic workers have not been upheld because Convention No. 189, has not been ratified by the Peruvian Government.

Despite the stability of the macroeconomic framework for investment, the Government of President Ollanta Humala has not delivered concrete results in the social sphere, especially with regard to fundamental labour rights. The Government recently refused to increase the minimum wage for workers, which had been frozen at US\$270 since 2012. The Minister for the Economy said, as a pretext, that if the minimum wage was increased, it would lead to an expansion of the informal economy.

With regard to freedom of association and collective bargaining, the Government does not always ensure compliance with the law. Chronic delays in the collective bargaining process owing to lack of interest on the part of employers are an obstacle to ensuring that workers' rights are observed and collective bargaining is undertaken. Economic sanctions or fines imposed by the Ministry of Labour for violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining are rarely enforced. Employers persistently engage in anti-union practices, such as subcontracting to avoid direct employment relationships.

We, the trade unions, are most concerned about the labour reform in the public sector, which has been undertaken through laws that regulate the annual public budget. Above all, the Civil Service Act (No. 30057 of 4 July 2013) jeopardizes the rights of public sector workers established by international labour standards, human rights Conventions and the national Constitution. These include freedom of association, collective bargaining, the right to strike and tripartite consultation.

Despite the fact that the public sector workers and the unions affiliated to the federations challenged the Act, because it bans collective bargaining and reduces job stability, the Government is seeking to impose its will and ignore the workers' complaints. This has triggered a struggle at national level, which has started in the health sector and will soon spread to the mining sector.

On the other hand, there is veiled interest on the part of the Government and Parliament in making certain aspects of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (No. 29783 of 20 August 2011) more flexible, supposedly to remove any potential obstacle to investment. Despite the fact that more than 450 workers have died since this Act was adopted, the Government has not assigned sufficient staff, technical support or financial resources to secure enforcement of these standards, and there is reluctance on the part of enterprises, supposedly because of the cost of implementation.

The Government has also kept in force Act No. 28015, as amended by Legislative Decree No. 1086, which: reduces labour and social security rights for workers in micro- and small enterprises under a regime which keeps wages low; makes it

impossible for workers to organize in unions; and seeks to reduce by 50 per cent social benefits, vacations, bonuses and length of service payments for private sector workers. This abuse of labour rights must be exposed and an informed labour movement must be created to defend such rights.

Another source of great concern is violence in the civil construction sector, which throughout its history has had to struggle not only against “yellow” and employer-controlled unions but also against dictatorships and oligarchic governments that tried in vain to crush or undermine the unions of scaffolding workers, resulting in the detention of hundreds of colleagues and leaders. Today we are facing a new wave of violence. Since 2007, there have been many victims of lawless gangs which pretend to be unions but, in reality, are composed of convicted criminals and expelled former union leaders who are trying to take over the unions to use them for their own criminal aims. Moreover, some of them have even established a presence within the prisons, from where they give orders to assassinate leaders and workers who are opposed to their criminal activities. They are spreading fear and terror, murdering workers directly or through the use of hired killers, preventing workers from exercising the right to organize, boycotting collective bargaining and promoting non-compliance in exchange for quotas.

Against this depressing background, we would also highlight the existence of a Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion which is extremely weak and incapable of promoting forums for dialogue such as the National Labour Council, which is restricted in its function of effectively performing its supervisory duties via the National Labour Superintendency. In this situation more than 5,000 workers have been dismissed because they exercised their right to organize. They hope that their protests will be heard.

Mr ZAKIR (*Worker, Republic of Maldives*)

As General-Secretary of the Maldives Tourism Employees’ Association, I bring greetings from the workers of Maldives. At the outset, allow me to thank the ILO for ensuring technical support and creating awareness amongst stakeholders.

Maldives has a newly elected Government with majority seats in Parliament, after an unstable political situation. With this majority, I believe that the Government can do anything it wishes with political will. The Constitution includes basic trade union rights and recognizes the formation of trade unions, the right to strike, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, but it does not recognize the right to bargain collectively. This has made it a struggle for workers to form trade unions and has given the police the leeway to suppress and intimidate workers when they demonstrate peacefully on employment-related matters.

Even though Maldives has ratified all ILO core Conventions, no legislation has been passed to enact the Conventions into law. The current Employment Act only covers provisions for individual contracts between employee and employer. It does not cover matters of trade union recognition, collective bargaining and other issues related to basic collective agreements. It raises the question of how a worker can be perceived as committing an offence when the labour law does not address such an issue. Furthermore, an unconstitutional regulation under the Employment Act and the Freedom of Peaceful Assem-

bly Act of 2013 abolishes the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

In practice, workers become marginalized and employers utilize the latitude of the current law to bring further hardship to workers when there is no obligation to engage in good-faith bargaining and workers are at the mercy of the employers. Restrictions on trade union rights, discrimination against migrants and exploitation of workers are the norm.

Migrant workers represent a dilemma in Maldives. While the country is a source of employment for them, they are taking over jobs in the tourism industry and are given jobs ahead of locals because they are regarded as cheap labour. Unintentionally they contribute to a weakening of the trade union movement in general, whereas they cannot join trade unions in practice on account of the restrictions imposed by their contracts.

As regards the situation of resort workers, they live in the resort as their home. If the workers exercise trade union rights at the resort, employers terminate their contracts referring to the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Act. A clear example is last May Day; the union members of the Sheraton Resort were dismissed and arrested by the police just for holding a peaceful assembly. Today as I speak, the Government and the private sector in Maldives do not recognize trade union rights in good faith. Moreover, whoever joins a union and promotes labour rights faces discrimination, unfair dismissal and blacklisting with a police criminal record.

The newly elected Government has promised many things for young people, such as employment opportunities, a living wage and sharing in company benefits. Despite the fact that more than 25 per cent of the workforce is unemployed, many young persons are directly or indirectly involved in dangerous drugs. No minimum wage has been established and tribunal orders are not being enforced. With a high cost of living and low-income levels, there are many unresolved problems for most workers. In addition, there are various views regarding the independence of the judiciary in Maldives.

However, despite the fact that many of these labour-related matters remain unaddressed, sadly there is no specific government ministry to deal with them. Labour matters are dealt with in a department attached to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, with insufficient budget and capacity. On this occasion I might add that the Government of Maldives needs to establish a ministry covering only labour-related methods, as commonly practised everywhere else.

It is time for a serious rethink. Resort and hotel workers, in fact all workers in Maldives, need a proper law which protects their collective rights to participate in trade unions and collective bargaining. Maldivian workers are inexperienced in the development of trade unions. We need support in all aspects, we need training to promote trade union rights, we need training for strengthening trade unions, and we need support from the ILO.

I am grateful to have had this opportunity, the very first in the history of our country, to address the Conference on behalf of the workers of Maldives.

In the Report entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, that was submitted to the Conference this year, the Director-General highlights the issue of migration as being a key feature of today's world of work.

The Republic of Cabo Verde has always been a country of emigration and is now also a country of immigration. As a consequence, this issue is one of major importance to us.

A recent study on migration in Cabo Verde, carried out by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), reveals that immigrants make up 3.5 per cent of the population. Moreover, the study shows that more than half of the migrant workers employed in the trade and civil construction sectors have no employment relationship and 20 per cent of them have fixed-term contracts. The study does not contain any data on wages and social protection, but it is common knowledge that the overwhelming majority of workers without contracts are not covered by the social security system and that their wages are quite low.

Despite the current global crisis, the Government and the social partners in Cabo Verde have managed to sign a number of important agreements, including, in particular, agreements on: the fixing of the national minimum wage at 11,000 Cabo Verdean escudos (CVE) (around €100) per month, which came into force in January 2014; the participation of the trade unions in the work of the Steering Council of the National Social Security Institute (INPS), a right already enshrined in the new statutes of the Institution; and the implementation of a new positions, careers and wages plan (PCCS) for the public administration, resulting in a wage increase of around 3 per cent on average for public employees falling under the General Framework (*Quadro Comum*), to be applied retroactively back to January 2012.

Discussions are currently under way concerning the process covering public employees falling under the Specialist Framework (*Quadro Privativo*), who have been waiting for a long time for their statutes to be adapted to take into account the new PCCS.

However, the initial reactions of these workers, in particular teachers, indicate that social tension and conflict may well increase if the Government does not take a step back in this regard.

Rather than consolidating previously conceded benefits, or even granting new ones, as the teachers had hoped, the Government has put forward a proposal under which a number of the existing rights of this class of worker, more specifically, rights concerning reclassification and the retirement age, would be weakened and removed.

The unemployment rate in Cabo Verde is around 16.4 per cent, with young people being most affected. Indeed, the unemployment rate for the 15–24 age group stands at over 33 per cent. It is estimated that more than 6,000 trained young people are currently unemployed. This situation is made worse by the fact that, each year, the universities release more than 2,000 young, recent graduates onto the labour market without any hope of finding employment.

My country is currently affected by a social crisis brought on by unemployment in general, and, in particular, by unemployment among qualified young people. The Government must implement

concrete policy measures without delay, as well as cooperating with all the social partners.

In this context, the Government of Cabo Verde decided to present the social partners with a proposal for a radical reform of the Labour Code. The proposal involved the complete liberalization of fixed-term contracts, increases in working hours, lower overtime pay and measures to facilitate and streamline dismissal procedures.

A tripartite technical committee was set up for social conciliation. The committee has been meeting since March, with the aim of achieving the consensus required for an understanding between the parties. Given the importance of the issue of the drastic reduction in compensation payments, which is pending owing to the lack of a consensus, it may not be easy to reach an agreement.

The creation of an unemployment benefit, as proposed by our trade union confederation as a precondition to the beginning of discussions, should be neither viewed nor presented as a bargaining chip, given that, should this benefit be introduced, it will be funded by the workers themselves.

The National Workers' Union of Cabo Verde – Trade Union Confederation (UNTC–CS) wishes to reiterate that it is prepared to enter into a process of dialogue and conciliation, but also reaffirms its determination to fight and its refusal to compromise whenever the fundamental rights of the workers are called into question.

Mr JENNINGS (*Representative, UNI Global Union*)

I should like to convey special greetings to the President of this session of the Conference on behalf of UNI Global Union and its friends at the UNI Liaison Council Japan.

My message is straightforward: we have a global economy without equity. Workers of the world, men and women workers everywhere, need a pay rise.

As the wages share of wealth plummets, as CEO pay rockets, as the gender pay gap widens, inequality grows, our economies, our communities and individual well-being suffer.

I think it is time for the Employers' group here at the ILO to support the call of the Confederation of British Industry, Pope Francis and even the President of the United States, for a wage rise for all workers, and, indeed, to support Peter Drucker's pay ceiling of 25 times the average company pay for CEOs and not the hundreds it is today. We can reduce inequality by bringing CEO pay back down to earth.

The ILO conducts brilliant work on wages, jobs and work trends. You are the canary in the mine.

At the World Economic Forum, in the IMF, the OECD and the G20, the inequality coin has dropped.

ILO warnings, yes, but with positive ILO proposals for quality jobs, strong labour market institutions, strong unions and collective bargaining, all aimed at steering us towards shared prosperity, proposals for trade agreements that do not undermine labour standards.

This all makes good sense to UNI Global Union members in the growing services sector. We have many migrant workers with insecure contracts, organized by corrupt brokers, penalized by high remittance fees. We have a quality jobs deficit driven by services business models anchored in fantasy-land rates of return. We see toxic anti-union behav-

ious from service giants – from Walmart, T-Mobile, Prosegur, Amazon – that gives little chance of a living wage or decent conditions.

Last week I was in Peru. A Brazilian-owned cleaning company was offering a 40 cents per day pay rise.

A Chilean retailer, Ripley, is victimizing workers for joining a union and we have lodged a complaint against them and Prosegur with the OECD.

Brazilian, Chilean and Spanish authorities, please take note.

Sport is a key part of the services economy. From football to the Olympics in Tokyo in 2020, sport is big business. We would like the Olympic Movement to be in line with the aspirations of the Olympic Charter, with on-the-ground labour standards for workers and athletes at major sports events. There is a major role for the ILO to play here and we would like to take this up with you.

We welcome, in this quest for global equity, the item of decent work in global supply chains on the agenda of the 105th Session of the Conference (2016). This gives us hope for safe workplaces, better-quality jobs and fair pay.

We aim to build on the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety to halt the race to the bottom. Forged from the Rana Plaza ruins, the Accord now includes 180 private sector businesses – binding, transparent, consequent – only business cheats need fear.

The Accord is an example to learn from, as are our global framework agreements and the bolstering and new investments being made in the sectoral activities of the ILO. Unlike Qatar, where the World Cup bid should be rerun, and particularly unlike the misdirected policy overreach by the Troika.

As for the IMF, Madame Christine Lagarde, you have a duty to uphold labour standards and not put unions out of business. You have smashed both in creating unprecedented unemployment levels, eliminating labour institutions and creating a young troika diaspora in those lands of structural adjustment.

Seventy years ago, brave people stormed the beaches of Normandy to end fascist madness. Today, descendants face extremists masquerading as democratic forces at the EU Parliament, the Troika policies killing, crushing a social Europe. We look to the ILO to take a stand to halt the Troika breach of labour standards.

In closing, this year the UNI Global Union World Congress convenes in December in South Africa. Our theme: “Including You” for inclusive growth, and not a global economy rigged for the 1 per cent.

We are spurred on by the 20th anniversary of the victory over apartheid, a rising African economy, UNI’s “Breaking Through” organizing strategy, gaining members everywhere, and the continued struggle for social justice from Colombia to Korea to North Africa.

We are inspired by a local South African expression *Ubuntu*, meaning “I am who I am because of who we are”. Let us bring an *Ubuntu* spirit of humanity not just to Walmart and the Troika, but to the ILO Future of Work centenary project as well.

Original Spanish: Mr BOBIC (Employer, Chile)

On behalf of the Chilean Federation of Industry and Trade (CPC), I would like to begin by greeting all the individuals who have participated at this session of the Conference, and who comprise the ILO,

represented by the President of this session of the Conference, Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja, and by the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Ryder.

This year, we would like to highlight the work that has been done by the ILO, which has resulted in a Report by the Director-General that is much shorter than usual, but as complete as ever, with references to statistics, examples of successful programme implementation and advice given to different countries by the ILO, such as the help the ILO has given Chile in the field of OSH.

Since March of this year, my country’s Government has been run by President Michelle Bachelet, who, in her plan for her time in office, proposed the need to introduce major reforms. We hope these will add to the success that Chile has experienced over the last 25 years and respond to the major challenges our nation faces.

The majority obtained by the government coalition gives this new administration the opportunity to drive forward its reforms, but, at the same time, imposes the challenge of advancing without diminishing the value and legitimacy of social dialogue. Social dialogue is the essence of the ILO and its constituents, the workers, employers and governments, and it certainly has its maximum expression in the annual sessions of the International Labour Conference.

The Chilean employers represented in the CPC have effectively taken part in the first stages of the social dialogue process promoted by the Government for the discussion and analysis of labour issues, through, inter alia, committees on women and work, and the eradication of child labour.

We would like to recognize the special efforts made by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Ms Javiera Blanco, to encourage the authorities in Congress to listen to, and ratify, the points of view expressed by Chilean workers and employers represented in the Workers’ United Centre of Chile (CUT) and the CPC with regard to the legislation that will regulate the practice of restructuring businesses into multiple corporate entities to avoid labour and other costs (known as “multi-RUT”).

Also, we consider that the creation of an advisory committee for the pension system would be a dialogue-based, responsible way to approach this subject, which is an extremely important one for the social partners.

Social dialogue is only possible when there is respect, tolerance for different points of view and the sincere desire to reach a consensus. It is not an easy exercise, but with persistence and patience it is always possible to achieve positive results, particularly when we bear in mind that specific situations are more important than relationships, which are always based on the strengthening of our mutual ties.

We hope, therefore, that the Government will continue to promote social dialogue in discussions and analysis on its proposals for reform. And as the most representative business union at national level, we reaffirm our full readiness to participate in dialogue.

We will also continue to actively engage in dialogue with the workers to push forward the mutually agreed agenda that we signed in 2012 with the CUT, and to seek new areas of common ground that will serve to develop mutual trust.

Lastly, we would like to call attention to the work done with the ILO, and in particular with ACT/EMP, on the creation of a country report on

sustainable enterprises for Chile. Our country is facing a deceleration of growth, which we hope will not generate serious employment problems. For this reason we attach special importance to social dialogue on the various labour reforms and on the abovementioned country report, because this report provides a clear roadmap based on the 17 pillars

identified in the International Labour Conference *Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises* (2007) that were agreed on a tripartite basis, and that are essential to the sustainability of businesses in Chile.

(The Conference adjourned at 5.40 p.m.)

Twelfth sitting

Wednesday, 11 June 2014, 10 a.m.

President: Mr Funes de Rioja

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

Original Vietnamese: Ms PHAM (Minister for Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General on Report I(B) *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. Viet Nam strongly supports the ILO's agenda for fair migration.

The promotion of decent work opportunities for migrant workers is one of Viet Nam's priority goals, involving concerted efforts to develop our legal framework and strengthen its enforcement. The Law on Vietnamese Workers Migrating Overseas for Contract Employment, of 2007, and the Law on the Prevention and Control of Trafficking in Persons, of 2012, have been promulgated and incorporate the relevant international standards. The Government supports the initiative by the Vietnam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS), with technical support from the ILO, to develop and implement a code of conduct for recruitment companies.

The Government of Viet Nam has also actively participated in the Regional Consultative Process on Management of Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process), the Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (Abu Dhabi Dialogue) and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process), as well as in the activities of ASEAN concerning cooperation on labour migration. Moreover, we continue to negotiate and conclude bilateral agreements to promote formal channels of migration, providing pre-departure training to empower migrant workers. In Viet Nam, support policies for workers seeking overseas contract employment make up an integral part of the National Target Programme on Employment and of the Socio-Economic Development Programme.

Viet Nam welcomes the efforts of the ILO to develop a world of work free from forced labour. The development of Global Reports on forced labour and the adoption of an international standard during this session constitute important measures. In Viet Nam, forced labour is strictly prohibited under the Constitution and a number of legal instruments, such as the Labour Code, the Criminal Code, the

Law on the Prevention and Control of Trafficking in Persons, the Law on the Enforcement of Criminal Convictions. In particular, the revised Labour Code, adopted in 2012, incorporates a clear definition of the act of extracting forced labour. In 2013, the Government adopted a master plan on enhancing the capacity of labour inspectors concerning persons with disabilities and social affairs by 2020, with a view to strengthening the labour and social affairs inspection system at the central and local levels, both in terms of quality and quantity, and ensuring that labour laws are respected and enforced throughout the country.

The Government of Viet Nam greatly appreciates the achievements of the ILO over the past two years. Under the leadership of the Director-General, the ILO continues to play its vital part in securing international labour standards and advancing labour, employment and social protection on the international agenda.

With the technical support of the ILO, Viet Nam has continued to develop and implement its labour legislation framework in compliance with international standards. Viet Nam has ratified the MLC, 2006, and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), as well as adopting the revised Labour Code of 2012 and the Law on Employment of 2013, revising the Law on Social Insurance and the Law on Vocational Training, and drafting the Law on Occupational Safety and Health and the Law on the Minimum Wage.

Viet Nam supports the ILO's efforts to protect the legitimate rights of workers.

Original Portuguese: Ms SALVATTI (Minister, Chief of the Human Rights Secretariat, Brazil)

A few days ago, when the Committee on Forced Labour started on its task of supplementing Convention No. 29, we had the opportunity to inform you that the Brazilian Senate, after 15 years of negotiations, had approved draft amendments to the Constitution, which would provide for the expropriation without compensation of land and urban properties where the occurrence of forced labour had been found. The amendments have already been promulgated and will be definitively integrated into the constitutional framework of Brazil. This is a historic milestone which we hope may serve as an inspiration for other countries.

Over the past two decades, the Brazilian Government has made the fight against forced labour one of its flagship policies. We have made considerable

progress but we are well aware that as long as there is even one person living in slavery-like conditions, we cannot rest on our laurels. So we have come to Geneva convinced that it is important that the efforts of Brazil and other countries in our region are replicated through a determined effort on the part of the entire international community.

In the modern world, forced labour takes on various different forms and the updating of Convention No. 29, the main international instrument for combating forced labour, has to take this reality into account. New kinds of forced labour call for new kinds of action against this form of violence against human dignity. The instruments that we have before us take account of these new challenges.

The proposed Protocol and the proposed Recommendation that we are approving are balanced modern instruments which will make it possible not only to punish the perpetrators of forced labour, but also to adopt specific actions to protect victims, to compensate them for the damage suffered and also to ensure the effective and sustained prevention of any re-emergence of degrading work. These instruments show that the fight against forced labour is a task for everyone: governments, employers and workers alike. Accordingly, we need to be aware that however much we may have achieved here, much remains to be done.

Brazil reaffirms its commitment to this struggle and calls on other States and social partners to do the same. Therefore, we vote in favour of the Protocol and the Recommendation, which complement and update Convention No. 29, with the conviction that these instruments constitute a minimum basis for action and protection against forced labour.

On this occasion, I would like to thank the secretariat of the ILO for the preparation of the documents which have served as a basis for the negotiation of these instruments. My gratitude goes to the governments and the social partners for the constructive spirit that they showed throughout the process. I would also like to thank all the members of the tripartite Brazilian delegation who gave decisive assistance to the work on the negotiation of the text that we have just adopted.

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to the other members of GRULAC for their unity with regard to principles and objectives in the whole process. I am convinced that our region will always be able to rise to the challenges that we face.

Finally, I would like to express the hope that the success of this session of the Conference will extend to the football World Cup, which is starting tomorrow in Brazil, where we will all be waiting with open arms for another opportunity to promote brotherhood and integration between peoples.

Original Spanish: Mr FUNTANET MANGE (Employer, Mexico)

On my own behalf and on behalf of Mexican employers, I would like to congratulate Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja on his election to lead the work of this session of the Conference, which will contribute to our main objective of building a future with decent work.

The Report of the Director-General addresses the issue of migration and, above all, stresses the fact that migration needs to be dealt with fairly to ensure that the current global migratory trends lead to progress in our countries.

For Mexico, the issue of migration is of paramount importance, given that our country is deeply

involved in the phenomenon and that the work of our migrants provides a significant source of income for the Mexican economy.

It is easy to see that these inflows do not only boost consumption in Mexico but also promote the growth of SMEs, which, as in the rest of world, constitute the backbone of the economy. Mexico also receives a large number of migrants, many of whom are on their way to the United States.

The Director-General has indicated that he seeks to hold discussions with a more global content and application. This is an important and welcome development which broadens and changes the way in which these issues were discussed in the past.

Migration is a matter of general interest. It is also of crucial interest in political, economic, social and labour terms, since it provides, among other things, an important cultural exchange and a significant source of income. We therefore welcome the objective in these discussions of seeking appropriate conclusions, with a view to providing decent work for migrants and ensuring that they are recognized throughout the world.

For Mexican employers, migrant workers are not just a source of labour but also a means of development and progress. It is also true that in many countries lacking sufficient manpower in certain sectors, the work of migrants is extremely important in areas as diverse as farming, construction, services, public health, education and high technology. Mexican workers, for example, provide the backbone of the agricultural sector in the United States and in Canada. Likewise, the construction sector in both the Middle East and in Europe is entirely reliant on migrant workers; there is a permanent flow of migrants from the interior of the African continent; and the vast influx of migrants to Europe is a well-known phenomenon. Given that many economies throughout the world depend on the work provided by migrants, we must accept their significance and act with the greatest attention and responsibility in this regard.

I would also like to turn to the subject of the transition from the informal to the formal economy, which has been dealt with here and will no doubt be considered in many other forums given that the growth of the informal economy restricts the capacity of government to collect revenues.

Although it can act as an economic and social safety valve, the informal economy destroys legal businesses, reduces the options open to governments, and eventually does away with the capacity for innovation and research of enterprises.

It should be stressed that the growth of the informal economy has to be controlled and prevented given that, in many countries, it is fuelled by illegal activities. In this way, many of the products produced by legally established companies are stolen and enter the informal market without generating any profits for the producer and creating unfair competition. This is of great concern in Mexico where the informal economy constitutes approximately 60 per cent of the national economy, a situation which, over the years, has damaged the social fabric in Mexico.

Fortunately, thanks to the shared vision of the Government of the Republic of Mexico and the employers in my country, we have achieved significant progress in recent years by implementing a strategy which, on the one hand, directly addresses illegality and, on the other hand, promotes the formal econo-

my through incentives for those who make the transition from informality to formality.

On behalf of the member industries and enterprises of the Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce of Mexico, of which I have the honour of being the President, and on behalf of my country's employers, I reiterate our commitment to add our efforts to those of the ILO to build a future with decent work.

Mr DIMITROV (*Worker, Bulgaria*)

On behalf of Bulgarian workers, I would like to declare our full support for the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the supplementing Recommendation that we have just adopted. Members should take preventive action to promote coordinated efforts to facilitate regular and safe migration and to prevent trafficking in persons, including coordinating efforts to regulate, licence and monitor labour recruitment agencies, and to eliminate the practice of imposing fees on workers. Members should provide guidance and support for employers to take effective measures to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address the risk of forced or compulsory labour in the operations, products or services to which they may be directly linked.

There is an urgent need to adopt a Recommendation on facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy next year. I want to stress the importance of three issues in the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

First, respecting rights and extending protection to all workers in the informal economy should be a key element of the transition, including fundamental principles and rights at work (the right to organize and to bargain collectively, and freedom of association) and other relevant standards, including social security, a minimum living wage, OSH, hours of work, childcare and maternity protection.

Second, we need job-centric macroeconomic policies that enable the creation of formal jobs in formal enterprises. Addressing informality and the transition to formality in national development plans is important. Linking industrial policies, sectoral policies and the development of solidarity-based enterprises, are all part of the structural transformation of our economies.

Third, as the Director-General, Mr Ryder, stressed: "we need to turn our attention as well to the management of increasingly complex global supply chains. The Rana Plaza tragedy a year ago in Bangladesh tells us a lot about how those supply chains can operate to produce enormous profits at one end, but lethal working conditions at the other. These need to become chains of decent work, and the ILO needs to be engaging with the companies involved and their workers to make that happen." As a Worker spokesperson, I will continue to defend these three areas of critical importance for us.

This year, the International Labour Conference is dealing with three very important and interlinked issues: migration, the informal economy and forced labour. The main reason for those phenomena is the lack of decent jobs in the formal economies of the sending countries. To achieve fair migration, a rights-based transition from the informal to the formal economy and the elimination of forced labour, we need coherent and integrated policy frameworks and practical actions, both at the international and national levels to promote decent work for all.

I would like to assure you that, as a newly elected member of the ILO Governing Body, I will support all activities to initiate a programme for fair migration, finding the components included in the Director-General's Report highly relevant. The debate on the strategic objective of employment, within the framework of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, is of particular importance to us. Economic development, based on wage growth, makes use of the impacts of the domestic demand and consumption factor. Competitiveness cannot be achieved through wage restrictions and low labour costs, but through more effective technologies, improved work organization, and high-quality jobs, while observing the fundamental principles of decent work and social justice. We attach particular importance to a change of approach towards economic and social policies, which are now based only on fiscal consolidation and deregulation.

The forces and factors which will continue to change the global picture of the world of work should be placed at the service of social justice. That is why we welcome Mr Ryder's comments on the implementation of the future of work initiative for a forward-looking examination and assessment of the importance of work in our lives and societies as a core feature of the celebrations for the ILO's 100th anniversary in 2019.

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

The 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference provides the basis for deliberations on migration, an issue which is relevant to member States and forms a key component in today's labour market policies. In this regard, the Republic of Seychelles fully supports the strategic approach of the ILO to creating fair migration.

Accordingly, I wish to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Ryder, for his Report, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*, which has comprehensively analysed the issue of labour migration in the world of work today. I also wish to extend my profound gratitude to Mr Ryder for his continued support to Seychelles, which has created the enabling environment to further advance the unemployment strategies of my Ministry, notably through the ongoing Seychelles DWCP.

As indicated in the Report of the Director-General, labour migration across the world is growing and, indeed, its trends present diverse policy challenges to member States. I am therefore pleased to note the strategic role of the ILO in accelerating global consensus on the way forward for labour migration. I am particularly interested in the subject, as earlier this year I launched the new Employment Policy for Seychelles – a project which has been achieved with the technical assistance of the ILO under the Seychelles DWCP. This new policy addresses various cross-cutting issues in the employment sector, including migration, which forms an integral part of the policy. In this respect, my Ministry has recently revised the recruitment procedure for migrant workers in Seychelles, which aims to guarantee an enabling environment for greater employment opportunities for Seychellois, increase the ease of doing business and take care of the well-being of migrant workers.

This new system was a bold decision and one that was needed to ensure that labour supply met the growing demand of industry. Extensive analysis of

key economic sectors of the country was essential to ensure that the new recruitment procedure for foreign workers was sustainable.

Seychelles, as a small island State, has limited human resources and an ageing population and thus requires the presence of migrant workers to fill the skills gap. Our national statistics indicate that migrant workers represent around 25 per cent of the country's labour force. This indicator points to certain policy challenges that should be continuously considered as we recognize the benefits of migrant workers in society; hence equitable protection should be extended to them.

Further to this, I am delighted to say that labour legislation in Seychelles is applicable to both locals and migrant workers. This practice guarantees the same fundamental rights and principles at work for all workers in Seychelles. All workers, including migrant workers, should be offered equal opportunities for decent work.

My Ministry remains committed to finding the right balance between local and foreign employment. Last year, we launched a localization plan, which encourages employers to ensure the transfer of skills and knowledge of migrant workers to local workers. Many organizations have responded positively to this initiative and locals are becoming better prepared to take on positions currently occupied by foreign workers.

Our national labour force survey has also highlighted another emerging policy challenge, informal employment, which, given its size and nature, needs to be addressed effectively. I therefore sincerely hope that the programmes to be implemented by the ILO in this area will contribute to a renewal of its commitment to extend decent work to workers in the informal economy.

I am also pleased to note that one of the ways forward in the Director-General's Report is the provision of capacity-building services to tripartite constituents, which could in particular strengthen labour inspection, an important monitoring aspect for fair migration. The crucial role of employers in promoting the welfare of migrant workers in the workplace also needs to be promoted.

To conclude, as we all join the UN in commemorating the International Year for Small Island Developing States this year, we acknowledge the challenges faced by small island nations and also ensure that the voices of small States resonate in contributing to sustainable development. Let us, therefore, adopt strategies that engage all tripartite constituents to ensure decent work for all workers.

Mr HENCZEL (*Government, Poland*)

First of all, please allow me to congratulate this assembly on today's adoption of the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the Recommendation on supplementary measures for the effective suppression of forced labour, as well as the amendments of 2014 to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

Each session of the International Labour Conference is of importance from the perspective of workers, employers and ministers of labour. The Conference is also meaningful in terms of the enhancement of social dialogue at all levels. I firmly believe that this Conference is an event of great significance. When observing the outcomes of international crises, the focus should mainly be on employment; an issue that will be discussed in detail during this ses-

sion, both at the Committee level and before the plenary. The Government of the Republic of Poland supports the concept of sustainable labour market development, as presented by the ILO. Poland is deeply aware of the need for a comprehensive approach to employment, especially in terms of identifying the shortcomings of current policies. My country supports and implements actions designed to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups, in particular, young people, women and workers over the age of 50. In this context, the Government of the Republic of Poland recognizes the need to include social aid structures in the employment activation process. Unemployment among young people definitely remains an unprecedented social issue. Unemployment in this age category poses the threat of the "lost generation syndrome", leading to the waste of human and social capital resulting from significant state expenditure.

Thus, Poland, similarly to other member States, has drawn up a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, in line with a recommendation of the European Commission. This document, along with the provisions of the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions, provides for the application of new instruments that reduce the period within which young unemployed persons must receive an offer of employment from the employment office to four months from the date of registration with said office.

The amended Act provides for the application of innovative instruments, such as internships and training courses, as well as a loan programme focusing on the development of entrepreneurship among young people.

Social dialogue is key in finding solutions for the labour market. Thus, the social partners now play a greater role in managing the financial support provided by the Labour Fund, as well as in labour market policy programming and monitoring. In addition, the labour market councils have acquired decision-making competencies in National Training Fund operations, giving the social partners a greater say in how funds are allocated for the training of groups of employees, companies and regions in need of such assistance.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to the Director-General, Mr Ryder, for his Report entitled *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. This document has created an opportunity for tripartite discussion on the key issue of labour migration. We can all agree that the global crisis resulting, among other things, in pressure to reduce labour costs, may contribute to a deterioration in conditions for certain categories of employees, and in particular for migrants. Therefore, in ensuring fair mobility conditions for Polish citizens in practice, target countries are adhering to the provisions of the European Commission communication entitled "The global approach to migration and mobility". It should also be emphasized that both Polish labour law and the provisions of the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions are anti-discriminatory in nature.

Three ILO Conventions are of primary significance in terms of guaranteeing the basic rights of migrant workers. Actions designed to increase employment and develop social dialogue, particularly in the context of supporting public policy and promoting CSR, help to guide governments and social partners.

All these joint efforts will allow us to find effective solutions to strategic issues, such as unemployment and demographic and environmental challenges, and the threats to democracy and sustainable development. ILO initiatives provide a model for those seeking global solutions concerning the enhancement of regional and national initiatives.

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

In my maiden speech to the Conference, delivered from this same spot last year, I highlighted a number of current challenges to decent work and called upon the ILO to clearly show its added value in addressing them. This year's Report of the Director-General on fair migration highlights a number of decent work challenges in today's world that affect millions of workers worldwide. It underscores the crucial role that the ILO can play in bringing about fair migration and decent work for all.

The Report recognizes the positive contribution of migrants to the development of their countries of origin as well as the countries where they work. Migration does indeed have a tremendous potential to lift people out of poverty, develop entire societies and sustain their economic and social development.

However, we cannot be naïve. There are also tremendous problems relating to labour migration. The unprecedented complexity in global migration flows leaves migrants, more than ever, vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Employers and middlemen frequently underpay migrant workers and put them in exploitative situations. In numerous cases, migrant workers do not enjoy even the most basic social and economic rights. This is totally unacceptable.

Migrant workers need to be treated in exactly the same way as regular workers.

I believe in the concept of decent work and I believe that this concept should apply to all workers, all over the world. I also believe that "decent work" should be regarded as an action; we need to do something to turn it into a reality. I therefore fully support the role that the ILO is playing with regard to this issue.

When it comes to global labour migration, the ILO is uniquely placed to set the rules of the game through its standard-setting and supervisory role.

I am convinced that the ILO can also contribute in a more practical way to promoting decent work for migrant workers. Through its technical cooperation programmes, the ILO can, and should, help governments put the necessary safeguards in place, so that labour standards and laws are respected and abuses prevented. It can help businesses develop fair recruitment processes and it can strengthen the role of trade unions in supporting the rights of migrant workers. To be able to do that, the ILO needs to work closely together with all tripartite constituents, recruitment agencies and multinational enterprises.

Moreover, as Chair of the GMG this year, the ILO is in a position to advocate strongly for social and economic development, which is an absolute necessity to limit the push factors that often lead to exploitative labour migration. As Chair, the ILO should also cooperate closely with other relevant organizations, such as the IOM.

The problems that migrant workers face are not confined to developing countries. Within the EU, the mobility of EU workers also generates unin-

tended side effects. It is, unfortunately, not uncommon for vulnerable mobile EU workers to be exploited by unscrupulous employers. This is, again, unacceptable.

An active approach is needed to tackle malpractice and prevent exploitation from taking place. That is why I have actively addressed this issue in the Netherlands and have strongly advocated the inclusion of this issue on the agenda of the EU. I will continue to do so over the next few months and it should be one of the top priorities of the new European Commission. We have to fight for what is morally right.

This session of the Conference has just adopted a strong Protocol on forced labour and has held a very useful first discussion on formalizing the informal economy. It has also discussed the needs of constituents with regard to employment. Focus on these issues is, and will remain, crucial if we want to manage labour migration and mobility well.

I very much encourage the ILO to maintain momentum on the important issue of labour migration. Its work should be guided by the interests of workers worldwide. Both regular workers and migrant workers will benefit from our joint efforts to promote decent work for migrant workers. In the end, it is to the lives of these people that the ILO must make a difference and demonstrate its added value.

Mr SINHA (*Government, India*)

I would like to begin by complementing the ILO on its efforts to bring about social justice and ensure that internationally recognized labour rights are respected, and on its advocacy of decent work for all women and men in the world of work.

We believe that the ILO has the sole mandate on labour issues, and that it must zealously guard its leadership role in this field, having, as it does, the advantage of a very well entrenched and laudable tripartite structure, coupled with transparency and coherence. Any move by other organizations to enter the field of labour standards must be repelled unequivocally.

I compliment the Director-General on his balanced and comprehensive Report on labour migration *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. In the present era of globalization, when synergies are envisaged at the national and global levels in every sphere of life, migration assumes great significance. We welcome the ILO's initiative to integrate the issue of labour migration into the post-2015 development agenda. Providing decent work for all is one of the focuses of the sustainable development goals. We strongly recommend that labour mobility be recognized as a factor in sustainable growth in the post-2015 development agenda. The ILO must use its position, as a supreme forum for deliberation on labour issues, to facilitate the portability of skills and labour mobility across countries.

Changing demographics across the globe are re-writing human resource management equations. The Director-General's Report rightly highlights the economic connotations of migration. For migrant workers, decent work means non-discrimination in terms of wages, working conditions and recruitment practices, as well as social protection for all. We support the ILO's determination to promote decent, productive and equitable employment opportunities across the globe, and to promote policies that enhance the portability of social security benefits.

This era demands that governance of labour migration issues be undertaken in a manner that results in a win-win situation for countries of origin and destination.

We are particularly happy to note that the Office has included “Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy” on the agenda of this session of the Conference as a standard-setting item. A huge percentage of India’s workers are in the informal sector. Any conclusions reached on this issue will facilitate the formulation of a national policy to address the feasibility and modalities for transition in India.

India is fully committed to achieving inclusive growth that will lead to sustainable development. We have a large, potentially employable and productive youth population, who should find decent employment. The Government of India is proactively engaged in skills development. India’s national skills development initiative is a massive attempt to empower people through improved skills and knowledge, thereby equipping them to compete in the global market.

We are committed to the idea of social protection for our workforce. Our Government flagship health-care programme covers workers in the unorganized sector and has been successfully rolled out across the country. Social protection floors are vital and need to be country-specific, designed according to national needs and priorities.

We look forward to benefiting from the ILO’s technical guidance and advice on labour matters. Most of the global labour force, especially young people, come from developing countries. The ILO must realign its priorities in response to this new scenario. India has always highlighted the imbalance in the regional allocation of ILO resources, whether technical or financial. We have always voiced our support for changing the ILO’s recruitment policies, particularly the language criteria, so as to give every region a fair chance to be duly represented in the ILO. We appreciate that the Director-General and his team have been working on this issue, and we do hope that multilingualism will be accepted by the ILO.

We also look forward to receiving technical support. We want country offices to be strengthened. We look forward to seeing the new central Research Department’s research agenda on cooperation issues, which are important for the developing world.

To conclude, India has great faith in the leadership of the ILO, the principles it embodies and the actions it takes to promote fundamental rights and decent work. I join all member States present here in pledging our support to develop policies and policy coherence, for a socially sustainable agenda focused on decent work, full employment and inclusive growth.

Mr KARA (*Worker, Israel*)

I would like to express my gratitude with regard to the adoption of the Protocol and Recommendation on forced labour.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the President upon his election at this important Conference, and the Director-General on his Report. We trust that the President, with his professionalism and profound knowledge of these subjects, will lead these discussions in a manner that will be highly profitable to all delegations.

The importance of the fourth and fifth items on the agenda of this year’s session cannot be exaggerated.

New, non-standard forms of employment, increasing international competition, institutional restructuring, the decline of the welfare state, and many other elements resulting from the accelerated pace of globalization have made these two matters more complex to deal with.

The two proposed texts contain very important principles and measures, designed to be implemented in all member States.

In my country, we have advanced and detailed legislation on employment. In particular, two of our basic laws, on human dignity and liberty and on freedom of occupation, have a direct bearing on the matters in question. Other laws, such as the laws on the employment service, migrant workers, employment by manpower contractors, employment of women, wage protection, male and female workers, safety at work and labour inspection, are of key importance from a regulatory perspective.

Nevertheless, the implementation and enforcement of these laws are our Achilles’ heel. The principles are good and the means relevant, but when it comes to implementation, particularly in these times of change in the world of work, matters have become more complicated and much is left to be desired. The General Federation of Labour, the Histadrut, as well as other unions in Israel, support and encourage any initiative that involves the social partners aimed at promoting and, particularly, enforcing instruments on these two important issues.

The world pays ever less attention to social considerations. The labour market is increasingly becoming an employers’ market, and in many cases labour is paying a high price while the return on capital grows.

Consequently, the implementation and enforcement of all the principles and measures of the two proposed instruments should be given overriding attention.

We understand, and agree, that this is mainly the governments’ responsibility. On the other hand, the social partners can greatly contribute towards achieving that goal. Social dialogue must take place, and tripartite efforts must be made. Workers’ unions and employers’ associations can be instrumental in enforcing the necessary measures, and we wholeheartedly endorse any means of encouraging cooperation.

In this regard, I want to emphasize that for many years cooperation has existed in the Israeli economy, especially between the social partners, based on the principle of collaboration. This cooperation has succeeded in rescuing the national economy from deep crisis. At the moment, we are witnessing high levels of cooperation between workers’ and employers’ organizations.

Regarding employment and the labour market, in the light of the ongoing global crisis, I would like to point out that, even though the unemployment rate in Israel is very low, we have to make great efforts to improve the quality of jobs and equality in the labour market. However, the reality and trends among the working poor, especially among young people and women in the labour force, are taking a grim and clear turn.

Over the last year, the Histadrut has made considerable efforts to improve the working conditions of agency workers. We have managed to sign collec-

tive agreements covering cleaners employed in both the private and public sectors.

In my closing remarks, I want to emphasize that the Histadrut supports the peace process and wishes to maintain ongoing relations with Palestinian trade unions. The Histadrut is aware of the strong connection that exists between the Israeli and Palestinian economies and hopes that the upcoming bilateral meetings between our respective leaders will pave the way towards promoting the peace process.

Original Spanish: Mr GONZÁLEZ ARIAS (Employer, Paraguay)

Allow me to express my greetings to the President of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja, who comes from the business sector, and also to the Secretary-General, Mr Ryder, to whom I wish every success.

The Report of the ILO Director-General on the subject of migration comes at a very opportune time and is highly significant given that migration affects more than 200 million people worldwide. Paraguay has been, and continues to be, a sending and receiving country for migration and, for this reason, we attach great importance to the recognition of, and respect for, the rights of migrants in host countries.

Decent work and poverty reduction measures in my country, together with job creation, are goals which are being achieved with the help of the employers' sector. Indeed, impetus has been given to the adoption of new laws concerning MSMEs, initial employment and youth employment. On an initiative from the employers, the Office of the Deputy Minister for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises at the Ministry of Trade and Industry has been created to work with the public and private sectors to coordinate all measures aimed at supporting training, innovation and financing for those enterprises.

The Paraguayan Industrial Union, which is a member of the Federation of Production, Industry and Trade, has been a driving force behind the promulgation, by the national Parliament, of Act No. 5012 concerning the promotion of investment in public infrastructure and the expansion and improvement of state goods and services. This law, known as the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Act, is an important tool for meeting the growing demand for the development of infrastructure by combining the capacities and skills of the public and private sectors via the distribution of risks and responsibilities. Indeed, in recent years, several countries have signed PPP agreements for the development of infrastructure and the provision of essential services, such as health and education. This has promoted job creation and more socially inclusive development.

Likewise, we have supported and participated in the drafting of the law on the creation of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, whose mandate as from now will be to improve conditions of work, facilitate access to employment and ensure that workers are covered by the social security system.

Likewise, a labour office has been set up with a view to helping jobseekers find work. The employers, for their part, have organized permanent job banks, with the participation of private companies and the Ministry of Labour.

More than 70 per cent of all Paraguayans are under 35 years of age, and so the need for job creation is becoming increasingly urgent. Vocational training is the top priority for companies. For that reason, business associations are playing an active role within the Council for SINAFOCAL and the SNPP. The Paraguayan Industrial Union, for its part, has a centre for productivity and quality, which offers courses on various specializations for the industrial and service sectors and also has a university of applied sciences, which opened its doors this year with the cooperation of SRH Holding, based in Heidelberg, Germany.

Paraguay is in a phase of rapid growth, which is likely to continue. Accordingly, many industries are establishing themselves in our country, thereby boosting job creation, which in turn is directly linked to education and vocational training. This is a task which we are undertaking in cooperation with all sectors in the country.

The need to improve working conditions in general, in line with labour standards, has consistently been one of the goals of the employers' sector. A process of social dialogue with tripartite participation has been launched through the setting up of ten round tables, five of which started work recently. We are giving them enthusiastic support and hoping that there will be a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations for all the sectors involved.

We reject all forms of forced labour, child labour and other forms of exploitation. For that reason we are participating actively in various public sector initiatives to combat these scourges.

Finally, we support the reforms driven by the ILO to promote the creation of more and better jobs in order to achieve inclusive growth, and to highlight the issues relating to demographic change, youth employment, equality for women in the labour market, efforts to combat inequality and long-term unemployment, and social dialogue.

(The Conference adjourned at 1 p.m.)

Thirteenth sitting

Wednesday, 11 June 2014, 2.30 p.m.

Presidents: Ms Mugo and Mr Funes de Rioja

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

Original Chinese: Mr JIANG (Worker, China)

Fair migration is now a vital ILO issue in the changing world. I fully agree with the points made by the Director-General in his Report. However, I think the concept of migration should be more inclusive for rural migrant workers; certainly those moving from rural areas to urban areas should also be included.

China is a major country with migrant workers. In addition to those who are working overseas, China has a total of up to 269 million migrant workers who pour into the cities in search of jobs and a better life. The Chinese Communist Party and the Government are striving to realize the dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and to spread the benefits of development more evenly, including among migrant workers, through in-depth reform.

In response to the comprehensive reform, the Chinese trade unions are more actively involved in protecting the rights of migrant workers. Trade unions are centralizing organizational campaigns at source to recruit a maximum number of migrant workers. By the end of 2013, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions had 2.77 million grass-roots trade unions with 290 million members, including 110 million migrant workers. Collective wage bargaining now mainly targets migrant workers.

We have always focused our attention on migrant workers' rights, and unions are also tailoring training courses to migrant workers' needs to increase their competitiveness in the job market. Besides, unions are doing all they can to support migrant workers through tough times. In 2013, over 3.2 million poverty-stricken migrant workers benefited, and 6 million migrant workers were helped to return home for the Spring Festival.

The Chinese dream is connected with the dream of the working class everywhere. We should all work towards building a better future for migrant workers, especially by promoting decent work for them. In some countries and regions, the lack of due respect for labour has triggered an array of severe social problems. All countries and the ILO should be putting people first, cherishing the value of labour and bringing benefits to workers, providing them with adequate protection through legislation, institutional arrangements and policies.

To this end, the Chinese trade unions therefore offer a number of proposals.

First, in order to strengthen cooperation and establish a sound global migration governance system, the ILO should set out an agenda and strategic framework for policy coordination and create a multilateral and international tripartite consultation mechanism. All governments should improve their migration governance policies and fully implement the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Second, in order to uphold fairness and promote an orderly flow of migrant workers, all countries should build an ethical and fair employment service system for migrant workers, improve their information service networks as well as their early warning mechanisms, regulate the job market for migrant workers, establish fair recruitment procedures, encourage the regional and subregional flow of labour, and crack down on human trafficking.

Third, in order to safeguard the basic rights of migrant workers, unions of all countries should recruit and organize these workers in a manner appropriate to their needs, establish collective bargaining in as many enterprises as possible, provide migrant workers with decent jobs, and ensure equal pay and eliminate all forms of unfair treatment.

Fourth, in order to enable migrant workers to enjoy the fruits of development, in the name of humanity and justice, the international community should ensure that the benefits of economic development reach all countries and all workers.

The Chinese trade unions, in pursuit of peace, development, cooperation and workers' rights, are developing actively involved in ILO activities, including its international programmes on the management of migrant workers. This year we will increase funds for the ILO South-South cooperation initiative by launching the second phase of union capacity building to better protect and develop workers in the Asia-Pacific region.

Economic globalization and labour migration are an unstoppable global trend of our times. The Chinese trade unions will continue to stand firmly in solidarity with the working class worldwide to fight for decent work and a fair share of the benefits brought about by development.

Original Spanish: Ms BLANCO (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Chile)

As the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Chile, I welcome the opportunity to participate in

this plenary session and to share with you the strategic objectives of the labour policies of the Government of President Michelle Bachelet.

Our country has made significant progress over the past two decades; however, the pattern of growth in Chile is distinctly unequal.

According to the latest data collected by the OECD, Chile has the worst income distribution of the 34 OECD member countries. According to our analysis, there are two important factors behind this inequality. The first factor is a regressive tax system and the second factor consists of differences in terms of access to quality education that arise from socio-economic status.

Our Government has, therefore, taken steps to promote structural reforms in this regard. Another of the causes of inequality in Chile is the asymmetrical way in which the labour market operates, involving, in particular, the existence of a restrictive framework concerning the exercise of collective labour rights.

Consequently, we are currently promoting an agenda which seeks to reform key elements that have an impact on the three pillars of freedom of association.

The level of unionization in Chile is low, standing at 14.2 per cent. In order to address this issue, first of all, we intend to: resolve the issue of accreditation for trade unions involved in the collective bargaining process; introduce regulations concerning the automatic extension of agreed benefits; strengthen trade-union training programmes; and promote the development of trade unions through the creation of a public trade union development and management fund.

Secondly, we wish to expand the coverage of collective bargaining and increase the number of matters with regard to which this approach to negotiation can be employed. The aim here is to make bargaining a more technical and better informed process, one which will bring about mutually beneficial agreements involving a fair balance between greater equality and increased productivity.

A minimum floor for negotiations will also be set, as a result of which employers will not, except in special cases, be able to make offers involving economic benefits that are lower than those contained in the contract currently in force.

Thirdly, we intend to make progress concerning the recognition and extension of the coverage of the right to strike. Although it is accepted under existing Chilean legislation, the practice of replacing workers during a strike constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association enshrined in Convention No. 87, as ratified by Chile.

There are plans to rectify this situation, not only in the interests of coherence at the legislative level, but also because this issue is one of justice. The effectiveness of strike action as a counterweight in the bargaining process is greatly weakened by the practice of replacing striking workers.

From a general perspective, in terms of collective rights, we believe that Chile will only be in a position to address the inequality affecting primary income distribution once we have strong and representative trade unions and institutional conditions that allow for a more balanced collective bargaining process.

Many of these advances have been made possible by the agreements that were recently reached through dialogue between the social partners, repre-

sented by the Single Central Organization of Chilean Workers (CUT) and the Confederation of Production and Trade (CPC). Tripartite social dialogue is extremely important to the Government of Chile and I would like to thank the ILO for its support in that regard.

We are convinced that bargaining between the stakeholders in the world of work reduces conflict, promotes social peace and, consequently, leads to increased productivity.

I could not conclude this statement without mentioning some of the key elements of our social welfare agenda. When the Chilean pension system was set up, two promises were made: that the system would ensure that the population had effective protection on reaching retirement age; and that there would be a replacement level of about 70 per cent.

These promises were not kept. In 2008, President Bachelet put forward major social welfare reforms, including amendments concerning the social responsibility of the State in terms of pensions and a “solidarity pillar”.

Six years on, serious shortcomings remain and our pension system is facing major challenges. Consequently, we have convened a committee of experts, which will examine the matter in depth and make proposals in this regard.

The issues listed above are just some of the strategic challenges we face in the fields of labour and social welfare. I am pleased to note that we have with us here today representatives of the workers, employers and the Parliament, a clear sign of our country’s commitment in this regard.

We fully intend to honour President Bachelet’s promise, made to the Chilean people last December, concerning efforts to build a fairer, more inclusive country, in which the fruits of development and joint labour will be shared by all.

Original Spanish: Mr ZUFIAUR NARVAIZA (Representative, European Economic and Social Committee)

As President of the External Relations Section of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), may I first of all thank everyone here and the ILO as an institution for the irreplaceable work that they are doing on behalf of social justice in the world.

The EESC is an advisory body of the European institutions and is part of the pre-legislative process. It is composed of representatives of the most representative organizations of employers, trade unions and the tertiary sector from the 28 countries of the EU.

With regard to the sphere of external relations, we have been working with the ILO in various parts of the world in support of social dialogue and decent work as pillars of social cohesion and inclusive development. Starting “at home”, we believe that decent work should be a priority in the EU. The European Parliament has requested that a decent work index be included in the table of indicators for Economic and Monetary Union.

Unemployment has reached unprecedented levels among young people, persons over 55 years of age, women, immigrants and the long-term unemployed. There has been a sharp increase in “mini-jobs” and other insecure contracts not only in the peripheral countries but also in the centrally located countries of the EU.

Collective bargaining and labour regulation have been profoundly affected in many countries of the

EU. There has been a fall in the number of workers covered by collective agreements and in some countries there have been cuts in social protection. Increasingly we are seeing unilateral government decisions that do not involve social dialogue.

At the start of the economic and financial crisis, the former President Lula of Brazil reminded the world that the European social model is part of the heritage of humanity. It has undoubtedly been a point of reference and a source of hope for millions of people who are fighting for their dignity, freedom and security. The EESC defends this model which is being undermined by the crisis and the resulting policies which have been implemented. These policies have created scarcity and insecurity in relation to fundamental aspects of life – work, unemployment, sickness, education, old age – and we know that scarcity and insecurity are a breeding ground for social upheaval and political extremism.

Our committee has always advocated alternative policies to reduce indebtedness through investment, job creation and a new production model that combines fighting against inequality with the protection of ecosystems, based on respect for the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Consequently, we believe that employment, decent work and universal social protection should be the central elements of the world programme of action for post-2015 sustainable development. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are, we believe, essential components of this programme. In the last 12 months, the EESC has issued opinions on forced labour, the clandestine economy and undeclared work, defence of immigrants' rights, the updating of the MDGs, the participation of the private sector in the framework for development, and social protection in the context of development cooperation. By means of the above, the EESC has issued calls for action in various forms.

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the defence of the values that led to the establishment of the ILO Constitution in 1919 and the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 is, we believe, a task that is as urgent as it is still relevant, both inside and outside the borders of the EU.

Mr TUN (*Worker, Myanmar*)

I am the delegate who was nominated by the Myanmar Trade Unions Federation (MTUF) and the Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM). The nomination this year is a landmark of unity among farmers and workers in the history of Myanmar. As the delegate representing them, I would like to describe the difficulties they face in Myanmar currently.

Myanmar is a country which has been undergoing political and economic reform since 2011. Still, there are many sectors that require attention. According to my experiences, some of the major problems faced by workers currently are: low income; workplace safety; discrimination in the workplace, the need for reliable laws to protect workers' rights; and weakness in the practice of social dialogue and tripartism by workers, employers and the Government. Let me outline some of the problems below.

Since last year, we have seen the Government's efforts to resolve the issues relating to the minimum wage. Steps are being made but there is some confusion as these issues have not been addressed properly yet. In some workplaces, workers are discriminated against and not protected by the law.

Even though negotiations and bargaining processes are sought in the course of resolving labour issues, workers are subjected to legal action under legislation that is not applicable to the case. In some cases, they have been charged under political and criminal laws. In the last few days, our brothers and sisters from the MTUF were detained for a while for attempting to protect the rights of workers in Sint Kai in central Myanmar. This is because of the lack of reliable laws and their effective enforcement by the authorities concerned. Workers in Myanmar do hope for a remedy to this.

Another important point that I also want to mention is the difficulty relating to the formal establishment of national federations in Myanmar. Because of the practical problems relating to their existence in legal terms, effective tripartite relations and collective bargaining are not yet possible. Therefore, it is important that a rapid process is established or laws are amended to enable the formal existence of federations.

Lately in Myanmar we have also witnessed that forced labour and child labour are considered development-related issues and efforts are increasingly made to eradicate them. However, successful implementation of this requires inclusive efforts and careful consideration of all related matters in order to cover the victims in multiple sectors.

Let me now turn to the issues faced by farmers in Myanmar. The farmers are facing problems relating to access to technology, effective support from the State, markets and, more importantly, regaining the right of possession of lands and the freedom to cultivate freely. As Myanmar is an agriculture-based economy, fulfilling these requirements is essential. For that reason, we do ask the Government and the international community to work for the development of the agriculture sector as the majority of poor people are in this sector.

In conclusion, with regard to the migration issue, Myanmar is a country that has been facing issues of domestic migrant workers and migrants to other countries for many years. There are reports that those who have migrated abroad are exploited and not treated well by the employers and the authorities concerned. Therefore, we appeal to the Conference to give its attention to this issue during the current session.

Mr SAINCIUC (*Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Republic of Moldova*)

I would like to congratulate the President for assuming this important task. The focus of this session on forced labour, facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, employment and cross-cutting issues on fair migration is more than welcome. I would like to extend our appreciation to the ILO Director-General for his comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the complex nature of the current challenges in these areas. All these topics are highly relevant for the ILO membership, including the Republic of Moldova.

My delegation associates itself with the EU statement presented earlier and fully shares the views contained therein. On a more particular note, however, please allow me to briefly showcase my country's experience and progress in building a more efficient national system in the field of labour and social protection.

In recent years, the Government has undertaken a number of important steps. First of all, I would like

to refer to the reform of the educational system aimed at training people according to the demands of the labour market. In this regard several important documents were adopted, in particular the National Strategy for Vocational Training Development until 2020. Within the aforementioned strategy, a national framework for qualifications and occupational standards is being drafted with a view to ensuring a training process that will develop competencies needed in the labour market and that will create new opportunities for lifelong learning.

Recently, we started to develop business support services by implementing training programmes and providing financial support for new start-ups. The National Programme for Youth Economic Empowerment and the programme for attracting the remittances of migrants in the national economy are good examples of such activities. The Government of the Republic of Moldova also provides facilities, including financial ones, to young people employed in rural areas.

Much attention is being paid to the improvement of labour force professional competencies, with the focus on young people, by increasing their access to information on the labour market and by continuous development of employment services. Another important priority for the Government is the inclusion of migration into national sustainable development policies, an issue that is also very well developed in the Report of the Director-General, *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. To this extent, we adopted a programme on the reintegration of returned migrants which integrates best international practices.

The Republic of Moldova remains committed to promotion of active policies in the labour market by implementing different programmes ensuring sustainable development of labour market actors' competencies and monitoring the quality of implemented systems. Further efforts will be made so as to comply with the provisions of the relevant international Conventions against human trafficking and forced labour. The national framework ensuring the observance of legal norms regarding prohibition of forced labour needs also to be improved. To this end, provisions referring to non-declared labour are being introduced in the labour and criminal legislation.

In conclusion, let me stress that the ILO Conventions and the DWCP remain the guiding documents for the promotion of labour and social policies in our country. With regard to the latter, we will continue to rely on the support and cooperation of our international partners, in particular the ILO. In this context, I wish to express our gratitude to the ILO and its country office for Central and Eastern Europe for the assistance provided to the Republic of Moldova in promoting labour and social protection reform.

(Mr Funes de Rioja takes the Chair.)

Original Spanish: Ms FIGUEROA (Worker, Chile)

I would like to convey to you the greetings of the Single Central Organization of Chilean Workers (CUT). We are also representing our fellow workers of the Autonomous Confederation of Workers (CAT).

Our delegation of Chilean workers at this Conference strongly believes that these are auspicious times for trade unionism, not only in our region –

with Latin America booming – but also in the worldwide trade union movement.

Difficult times have left their mark on trade unionism. In our region, the imposition of market policies has paved the way for steady growth, but that is currently showing clear signs of slowdown, and high rates of inequality. Our country is a prime example, with growth rates no higher than 3.5 per cent in the last few decades, and a Gini coefficient of 0.55. However, we are entering a slow but steady period of erosion of market policies as the only form of moving towards sustained progress.

The economic crisis in part of Europe, as a result of financial speculation and acute wage inequality, is being followed closely in our region, as we too have experienced such social policies of austerity and labour rights violations as a means to resolve economic crises.

As a result of our experiences, the resolution resulting from the International Labour Conference is of great interest to us. We fully support the Director-General's emphasis on addressing specific issues related to this deregulated world of work, where informal work, forced labour, and the most precarious work is also the work done by the most excluded sectors of society, such as migrants, young people and women.

It is therefore important to us to emphasize the role of the ILO and the proposal to strengthen our countries' labour laws in accordance with the Organization's standards and regulations. We also support the need to create this forum as the main think tank for establishing new strategies for equality-based development.

In our country, the ILO's intervention has enabled us to make progress in dialogue between employers and workers, and as a result we have been able to address subjects which had been off-limits in our country for some decades, such as labour rights. This process of meeting and discussing has been one of the fundamental factors enabling Chile to gradually settle the debt of the State to the workers. We have gone back to debating labour issues and to making progress in overcoming inequality.

As a trade union movement, we have succeeded in making decent work, as defined by the ILO as employment with social protection, fair wages and also trade union rights, a national priority. We now have a labour programme in which the new administration has made a commitment to the rights of trade unions, a minimum social protection floor law and the effective implementation of Convention No. 87, as the Minister stated. We want to emphasize this, because nowadays some countries are attempting to diminish these rights, as we have heard in this Conference.

In Chile, we have been moving ahead and are now ending a period of 40 years of insufficient labour policies. Our responsibility is to show that it is possible, through such reforms, to promote a growth strategy that does not depend only on precarious jobs. Our challenge, as the trade union movement, is to show that it is not possible to overcome inequality without labour policies that emphasize equality and respect for collective rights.

As workers, not only are we the driver of countries' development, but we also boost local economies through our purchasing power from our wages. That is why our voice is so important.

The world needs its workers, and on our shoulders rests a great responsibility for ourselves and for fu-

ture generations. Therefore, in Chile, on 6 May, in the presence of President Bachelet, we launched a plan for the development of the Americas because we know that our responsibility rests with the workers, as well as with our countries and with global development.

With a strong trade union movement, future generations can be certain that the workers of the world will not sit back and accept injustice and that with a strong ILO we all have a guarantee that the necessary changes will have forums for debate and contact between all partners in the world of work. We hope that no one will be left behind in this challenge.

Mr WIJAYAWEERA (*Government, Sri Lanka*)

It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the Group of 15 (G15) at such a paramount meeting for the world of work. 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.

This session of the International Labour Conference finds the international community still grappling with the global economic and financial crisis, which means that its consequences will continue to hit workers' rights globally. For this reason, topics such as employment, forced labour and formalization of the economy must doubtlessly help guide the ILO's debate in order for its constituents to agree on the most effective policy measures to be implemented to reverse this situation.

The G15 remains convinced that the eradication of forced labour is essential for the full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity. In this vein, the G15 is committed to cooperating with the ILO and other agencies to combat this unlawful practice, which accounts for nearly 21 million souls who continue to be silent victims of this scourge.

The group believes that reliable information on the extent of this illegal practice must be available to all constituents in order to accurately assess the problem and, therefore, adapt existing legislation, create new regulations – when necessary – and support enforcement measures. ILO reports have concluded that laws regulating forced labour are often not specific enough. Concrete and tangible efforts must be made to increase prevention, victim protection and the prosecution and conviction of forced labour. Cases involving slavery and human trafficking deserve particular attention.

With regard to the issue of transitioning from the informal economy to the formal economy, the G15 shares the view that combined action should focus on the design of multidisciplinary, intersectoral policies on legislation, social protection and worker benefits, an enabling environment to foster entrepreneurship and social dialogue.

Work in capacity building, education and skills development is also key and must play a complementary role. The sharing of best practices to help formalize the informal economy must play a decisive role in complementing normative action.

Finally, the G15 would like to highlight the measures taken by the Director-General with regard to the very complex context surrounding the ILO supervisory system, particularly after the events that took place in the Committee on the Application of Standards during the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. For this reason, the

G15 is convinced that dialogue between all parties must remain at the centre of all efforts and therefore reiterates its position in connection with the importance of an inclusive tripartite and constituent-led process for overcoming the challenges ahead, including the review of working methods.

Mr ROLEK (*Employer, Hungary*)

First of all, please allow me to thank and congratulate Mr Ryder, Director-General of the ILO, for putting fair migration on the agenda of this year's session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to speak about migration, because this topic has become a highly important global issue, affecting many countries, including Hungary. The majority of countries are affected by global migration, either as countries of origin, transit or destination. This situation requires effective and affordable policy action by all constituents, to ensure productive and rewarding decent jobs for all groups, while safeguarding the economies and enterprises of the countries of origin.

EU law gives European citizens the fundamental right to move freely within the EU for work purposes and protects the social rights of workers and of their family members. In this dynamic area, where change is driven by labour market policy, family structure and the process of European integration, the legislation on free movement contributes both to the achievement of the single market and the fostering of social, economic and cultural inclusion of EU migrant workers within the host Member States.

Over the past 40 years, the principle of free movement of persons has developed constantly and grown steadily stronger. Originally intended for the active population, this fundamental freedom has gradually been extended to include other categories of the population and now constitutes one of the most important individual rights that the EU guarantees to its citizens.

The crisis has affected regions and countries in a variety of different ways. In my home region, the income differences prevailing in different countries provide the strongest incentives for mobility. This is true for all sectors but this trend has recently had a significant effect on the Hungarian health-care, information technology and construction sectors, where highly qualified and, for the most part, young workers have taken advantage of the perceived opportunities and the chance to experience a different culture and lifestyle.

Moreover, the evidence suggests that, to a large extent, income differentials also coincide closely with demographic trends. In the long term, many higher income societies may have ageing populations which face, or will face, considerable labour shortages. This phenomenon will need to be compensated for through migration if growth, living standards and social protection systems are to be sustained.

Overall, migration should be a win–win situation, good for the labour market, the individual, society as a whole and the growth of the economy. Current free labour movement largely contributes to sustaining major differences in terms of wealth and the potential for growth. A fair financial compensation system must be established, in order to ensure that the large-scale brain drain does not prevent less-developed countries from catching up in terms of their economies. Such a system would at least partly compensate for the significant investment and cost

involved in education, helping the affected countries to mitigate the loss of workers and to retain, or even regain, their workforce.

In conclusion, the Hungarian employers are convinced that the ILO has a definite role to play and an active commitment to its tripartite constituency and to the values and goals of a decent world of work. However, at the same time, the Organization must help weaker countries to position themselves for faster economic growth and more balanced opportunities. I believe that the ILO Multidisciplinary Team for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest should, and can, also play a crucial role concerning this mandate.

Ms GKOUVA (*Government, Greece*)

I am speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia. We affirm our commitment to a more consistent, comprehensive and better co-ordinated approach to migration and development. The identification of measures promoting the role of migrants as agents of innovation and development is of great significance in this respect. Working together should produce tangible, effective, inclusive and forward-looking results to improve the lives of migrants and benefit all countries and societies.

The Report of the Director-General is timely and on an important subject. The ILO plays a key role in labour migration and in ensuring equal treatment for migrants at work. We therefore want to express our satisfaction with the active role of the Director-General in the GMG of the UN.

We would like to make the following observations regarding his Report.

Migration and mobility have contributed to the attainment of many of the MDGs. There can be no doubt, for example, that human capital transfers constitute an important asset for countries of origin. Remittances and the mobilization of diasporas for their country of origin, notably through investments, are new sources of private financing for development.

We believe that migration is clearly linked with development and should be taken into account in the post-2015 framework as an enabler of inclusive and sustainable growth.

Allow me also to share our positive experience of the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM). Since 2005, it has provided a comprehensive framework for external action on migration.

EU legislation on labour migration from third countries stresses equal treatment of migrants in employment and equal working conditions, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, in line with ILO standards. Giving migrant workers the same labour conditions as national workers prevents social dumping and mitigates negative attitudes.

On this basis, we are already engaged in dialogue with a broad range of countries and regions. Several EU Member States have concluded and implemented bilateral agreements and partnerships with several States represented here. Therefore, we urge all countries to engage in international dialogue, to identify shared priorities and to strengthen bilateral and regional migration management.

However, States and international organizations cannot do this alone. We need to involve in an effective manner the private sector, social partners, academia, civil society, and migrants and human rights organizations. They are needed in global, regional, national and local planning, since they often act as implementing partners for migration and development policies.

All States should respect the dignity and human rights of migrants, regardless of their status. We should also ensure the implementation of the relevant international human rights instruments. This is not only important for the migrants themselves, but also for the societies they come from and the societies in which they live and work. Protection should be given to vulnerable migrants such as unaccompanied minors, children and victims of trafficking – a modern form of slavery, which should be prevented and combated. In this regard, we welcome the adoption during this session of the Conference of the ILO Protocol and Recommendation on forced labour.

Turning now to the ILO, it should foster and actively promote coordination, coherence and complementarity between all relevant UN agencies, other regional organizations, as well as the IOM, the leading agency in this field. The Office should continue and strengthen cooperation with the GFMD for a more coherent global policy.

A coherent Office-wide approach is paramount to promoting complementarity and avoiding duplication of efforts. We support the action of the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, which is mandated to disseminate learning products and tools for the benefit of the ILO constituents. More systematic and comparable work is needed to build up a sufficient knowledge base on how migration can drive or hinder development. The sectors most affected by demographics and labour issues should be a priority.

Finally, we reiterate our request that due consideration be given to labour migration in the next Strategic Policy Framework.

Ms WILLIAMS (*Government, Barbados*)

Barbados congratulates the President of the Conference on his election to this 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, which is examining some important issues. I also wish to congratulate those tripartite constituents elected to the Governing Body for the 2014–17 period. The deliberations in the Governing Body over the next few years will have some important implications for this Organization and how we, as a membership, conduct business.

I also wish to commend the excellent tripartite interaction undertaken by delegations in the various committees over the past two weeks, which has led to better understanding and has enhanced the quality of the outcome documents and reports, as we seek to ensure decent work, social protection and social justice for a fair globalization. The issues discussed, including employment policies for sustainable recovery and development, forced labour and transitioning from the informal to the formal economy, are particularly important to many small developing States in the light of the current global economic environment. As Members of the UN deliberate on the post-2015 development agenda, respect for decent work should be reflected in that agenda.

Barbados fully supports the development of a Protocol and Recommendation on forced labour and the expected instrument on transitioning from the informal economy to the formal economy in the session of the Conference in 2015.

Barbados attaches great significance to the work of the ILO and recognizes the Organization as the centre of technical excellence for issues surrounding the world of work. Barbados has benefited from global initiatives undertaken in Geneva, as well as the targeted activities at the regional and subregional levels which have helped to translate ILO Recommendations, Conventions and best practices into concrete actions at the national and subregional levels that take into account our current reality and approaches. This targeted approach, which recognizes that “one-size-does-not-fit-all”, has served us well and enabled significant progress in Barbados and, if I may say so, the wider Caribbean region.

For example, Barbados and the region have benefited tremendously from the support of the ILO Office for the Caribbean in the development and implementation of our decent work programmes, which now form the blueprint for all our policies and programmes in relation to industrial relations, OSH, employment, enterprise development, the management of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, gender issues, social dialogue, social security and labour legislation.

Other areas of assistance have been in the form of training. The most recent training activity in Barbados took place in 2013. On this occasion, the ILO standards specialist from the ILO Office for Caribbean visited Barbados and conducted a week-long workshop which focused on ILO standards and the process of reporting on ILO instruments, including Conventions and Recommendations. This training session was very valuable and assisted Barbados tremendously in meeting its reporting obligations last year, as well as providing us with a tool to monitor the reporting on the various Conventions by the respective competent authorities.

Barbados was also selected to be involved in a joint participatory gender audit, which was conducted by the ILO and the OAS in 2012. The purpose of the audit was to assess how gender issues were currently integrated into the management, administrative processes and programmes of the ministry, and to formulate strategies to ensure comprehensive gender integration. One significant outcome of that exercise has been a greater focus on the disaggregation of labour market information by gender.

Barbados fully supports the Organization’s thrust towards improved functioning and greater efficiency. In this regard, Barbados emphasizes the importance of the ILO Office for the Caribbean in complementing the work undertaken at headquarters in Geneva. We look forward to our continued full collaboration with that Office.

Mr COTTON (*Representative, International Transport Workers’ Federation*)

I am honoured to be here with you today and to represent the 4.7 million transport workers of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF).

We want to highlight the pressing need for international labour standards, for workers within and beyond transport, but in particular, in the supply chain. Thank you very much for the very strong support concerning today’s vote on the amendments

of 2014 to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. This development constitutes a major success, for social dialogue and for the ILO.

However, today, I would like to talk about two things: informal and precarious workers, and the supply chain. Transport workers are increasingly facing precarious and informal work. Precarious and informal workers, mostly women and young people, make up almost 50 per cent of the transport industry’s workforce and many are migrant workers. Unions need to understand the challenges involved in organizing informal and precarious workers, which is why, last year, the ITF launched a project to improve the capacity of unions to organize and represent such workers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. But unions need to face the difficulties that these workers handle on a day-to-day basis: the risk of losing their jobs; the lack of understanding of the benefits that unions can provide; and the fact that they work in different workplaces and that they have incredibly long hours, with very little or no free time to engage in union activities.

Yet, inside the ITF, we have had a number of successes. Our affiliates in Uganda have been able to sign Memoranda of Understanding with five informal transport organizations, to help those workers negotiate better conditions. Taxi workers in New York, who are classed as independent operators, are organizing successful strike action to improve their conditions. When asked by informal workers what they get from joining a union, we continue to assert that workers’ rights and livelihoods are best advanced through collective action. However, in addition to collective bargaining, unions must be able to determine informal workers’ key demands and the only way to do that is to listen.

In order to fulfil our role in organizing and protecting informal workers, it is also important that we gather the support of our organized workers, our members in the formal economy. This is not always easy, but it must be done. Above all, we must insist that the rights of informal workers should be reflected in the constitutions of unions and that all workers should be covered by the relevant ILO Conventions. In trying to achieve the path to decent work for all transport workers, the ITF continues to support the ILO’s system of international labour standards and its supervisory mechanisms. Indeed, the ITF consistently uses the ILO special procedures to ensure that worker and trade union rights are properly adhered to by member States. It is for this reason that the ITF will unwaveringly defend the mandate of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the long-established right to strike, yes the right to strike contained in Convention No. 87.

The ILO must remain a tripartite forum where labour matters can be discussed in a mature and respectful context. Without this forum, not only will workers lose this important recourse to justice but social dialogue, as a means of ensuring sound industrial relations, will also suffer.

Moving on to the supply chain, in addition to what has been mentioned so far, we must also consider the many changes in today’s industry, namely, global supply chains. However, the ITF also has the ability to link up with other sectors. We are working with our colleagues in the other global unions, in particular the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUFA), the IndustriALL

Global Union and the UNI Global Union, together with the ITUC. Together, our affiliated unions in the transport, production and retail sectors can leverage their collective power and put pressure on global retailers for supply chain standards.

With today's overwhelming fear of losing a job, this is a crucial time for trade unions to show their ability to protect their members from having to accept poor, unsafe and inadequate working conditions. Moreover, through training, be it on health and safety, or the organization or recruitment of new members, trade unions can assist in closing those gaps that have hindered the development of a

strong, intelligent workforce. The neoliberal agenda has, time and again, shown its inability to correct the economy's imperfections and its policies do not have a human side to them, but, together, we are able to tackle its impact, as well as the misconceptions attached to the labour movement. We must organize and represent all workers, including informal and precarious workers. Ultimately, the tripartite principles this institution was founded upon, together with cooperation, communication and debate between social partners, are vital if we are to improve the quality of workers' lives.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

Fourteenth sitting

Thursday, 12 June 2014, 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr Funes de Rioja

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

*Original Spanish: Mr CARRASCO VICUÑA
(Minister of Labour Relations, Ecuador)*

Please accept the greetings of the socialist and humanist Government of Ecuador, which favours human beings over capital, in our collective contribution to well-being, where men and women live in harmony with nature.

The Constitution of 2008, which is the most democratic Constitution that we have ever had, drafted and approved by the Constituent Assembly and ratified by a broad popular majority, clearly establishes the workers' rights of our citizens, which include the following guiding principles: the promotion of sustainable human development through decent work and jobs; the effective guardianship of labour rights to ensure decent wages, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; and social and economic equity clearly directed towards the fair distribution of wealth and income. The neoliberal model is thus being replaced by a social and solidary economy.

The principles that I have mentioned are not just empty words but have already been implemented through specific policies and actions. The results achieved in seven years of government have enabled us to overhaul outdated systems and have led to what we, in Ecuador, call the "Citizens' Revolution". These changes have been recognized both within the country and abroad, so much so that people are talking about an "Ecuadorian miracle". But it is not a miracle. In the world of economics and public policy, when things are done properly, the results are good, and that is what is happening in my country. We are living through an era of change but also through a change in era. Ideas lead to consequences and facts change reality. The Ecuadorian reality, for the good of all, is changing.

In terms of labour issues, we have reached a number of milestones, including the elimination of labour outsourcing; the establishment of a decent wage, whereby companies cannot declare their profits if they do not pay their workers a proper wage; and a tax reform establishing major benefits and incentives for hiring new workers, with particular incentives in the case of disabled workers. We have also established effective protection for paid domestic employees, known internationally as domestic workers, providing them with stability, social secu-

rity and a decent wage, among other rights and benefits. We have launched targeted projects for vulnerable groups such as children, disabled persons, adolescents, the elderly and immigrants returning to the country. We have strengthened the social and solidary economy by promoting the incorporation of human resources and the generation of added value as an alternative to cognitive capitalism, to develop the social economy of knowledge, moving from manufacture to "mindfactory". Another achievement has been the regulation and recognition of new forms of work, keeping abreast of the times and in line with the Conventions that have been signed with the ILO.

In the last three years, with the assistance of the ILO, we have prepared a new draft Labour Code, which was handed to the workers on 1 May. Since then, we have been holding intense and broad discussions to achieve the broadest possible consensus. On the basis of the draft Code, we are incorporating and developing new and innovative worker-oriented proposals, which will be put to all the social sectors – workers, employers and craft workers. Some of the new elements of the draft to be discussed are sectoral trade unions; the regulation of economically dependent independent work and semi-independent work; the presumption of a relationship of dependence, giving priority to essence over form, providing for the adoption of the reversal of the burden of proof for the purposes of compensation; the establishment of the National Labour Council; limits on wage gaps; greater protection for female workers and working mothers; and greater protection for trade union rights and for all vulnerable groups.

You will note that Ecuador is entering a new era in terms of labour and employment, and we have taken some major steps in that regard. From now on we will do things much better in order to set lasting precedents for future generations.

I would like to conclude with an invitation to the Members and delegates of the ILO to visit that small corner at the centre of the world that is Ecuador, and to bear witness to what we are doing there. Our efforts are bent on the arduous task of guaranteeing the rights of our workers, on whom the present and the future of our nation depend.

*Mr USAMATE (Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations
and Employment, Fiji)*

The Fijian Government welcomes the Director-General's thought-provoking and timely Report on fair migration. Migration is one of the most com-

plex employment challenges of our time, involving over 232 million vulnerable migrants – 3 per cent of our global population. It demands collective actions beyond our comfort zones if we are to actually deliver social justice in this arena. We have collectively failed to combat discrimination against migrant workers, contrary to the Declaration of Philadelphia. I sincerely hope that our discussions will pave the way to ensuring fair migration to both sending and receiving countries and correct this human rights deficit.

In this regard, the Fijian Government fully supports the instruments adopted to address key challenges in employment and labour migration by the three technical committees of the Conference on employment, forced labour and transitioning from the informal economy. It also supports the amendments of 2014 to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

The Fijian Government is fully committed to its obligations to the ILO, in particular the commitment to protect and promote the rights of all Fijian workers and employers, including our migrant workers. This is evident from the significant economic, constitutional and labour reforms which the Government has undertaken over the last five years.

Our new Constitution was promulgated on 6 September 2013. It has one of the strongest bills of rights in the world. It reflects the basic rights of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which protect ordinary workers. Our new Constitution guarantees universally accepted principles and values of equality and justice to all Fijians. These include: common and equal citizenry; removal of all forms of discrimination; a secular State; eradication of systemic corruption; protection and promotion of human rights; an independent judiciary; and a voting system based on one person, one vote, one value, which totally removes ethnic voting.

Our Constitution also contains an extensive chapter on fundamental human rights, which guarantees the protection and promotion of rights and freedoms of all Fijians, including workers and their families. All this applies equally to migrant workers. These include: provisions guaranteeing freedom from slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking; freedom from cruel and degrading treatment; the right to executive and administrative justice; freedom of expression, publication and media; freedom of assembly; freedom of association; the right to fair employment practices; the right to humane and proper working conditions; the right of all workers to economic participation; as well as the right of all Fijian workers and migrant workers to a just minimum wage.

For the first time, all Fijians have guaranteed socio-economic rights in the Constitution. These in-

clude: the right to adequate food and water; the right to housing and sanitation; the right to health; and the right to social security schemes. Also, the rights of disabled persons and the rights of children are protected, including the right to free primary, secondary and further education. Also, for the first time, discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and marital status, among many other grounds, is prohibited.

Our Constitution expressly states that free and fair general elections must be held before 30 September 2014. The Fijian Government is committed to ensuring that we have the right electoral processes and oversight mechanisms in place to address the corrupt practices and flaws of past elections. It will ensure that we have truly fair and free general elections on 17 September 2014.

The Fijian Government, in working to maintain its obligations as a member State of the ILO, has introduced significant reforms to preserve and create jobs, to sustain industries essential to the economy and to improve the living standards of all Fijians. For the first time in decades, the Government has reduced income and corporate taxes payable by over 99 per cent of all Fijians. For the first time, all Government wage earners last year received a 10 per cent increase in their wages. All civil servants in the lower salary bracket received sizeable increases in their salaries and senior citizens and retired workers over the age of 70 who did not have access to pensions are being provided with state-funded pensions. The Government has activated a tripartite social dialogue process under the Employment Relations Advisory Board, which has conducted a total of 38 one-day tripartite meetings since July 2012 and concluded the review of our employment relations at the end of last year. This revised law also covers migrant workers.

In consultation with our tripartite partners, we are now reviewing the Workers' Compensation Scheme, with a view to implementing a fair and modern no-fault scheme to cover all workers, including migrant workers, for injuries and deaths arising at work. This complements the significant pension reform undertaken by the Fijian National Provident Fund. Since March this year, we have implemented our first national minimum wage to protect marginalized workers in the formal and informal economies. This will complement the minimum wage that already applies in ten sectors.

In the spirit of regional cooperation, the Fijian Ministry of Labour has also worked with the Papua New Guinea Department of Labour through a South-South partnership and successfully completed Papua New Guinea's first reformed Occupational Safety and Health Bill 2014 last month. Similar partnerships will be renewed with the Kiribati Ministry of Labour.

(The Conference adjourned at 10.30 a.m.)

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