



# Provisional Record

Eighty-ninth Session, Geneva, 2001

## Fourteenth sitting

Saturday, 16 June 2001, 10 a.m.

Presidents: Ms. A. Sto. Tomas, Mr. Parrot

The PRESIDENT — Before we resume the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General, I would like to give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference for some announcements.

### RATIFICATION OF CONVENTIONS BY BENIN, ANGOLA AND SWEDEN

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — I have pleasure in announcing to the Conference the following ratifications. On 11 June 2001, the Director-General of the International Labour Office registered the ratification by Benin of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), and the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150).

On 13 June 2001, the Director-General registered the ratification by Angola of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

On the same day the Director-General registered the ratification by Sweden of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

With these ratifications Angola and Sweden stand among those member States that have ratified the eight fundamental Conventions.

### EMPLOYERS' ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — A communication was received from the Employers' Electoral College, dated 15 June 2001, which reads as follows:

The Employers' Electoral College met on Friday, 15 June 2001 at 9 a.m. on the occasion of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. In accordance with articles 50, 51 and 54 of the Standing Orders, Mr. Daniel Funes de Rioja was elected Chairman of the Electoral College. Mr. Jean-François Retournard attended as representative of the President of the Conference.

In accordance with article 54, paragraph 5, the Electoral College unanimously elected Mr. Ancheta Tan (Philippines) as Deputy Member to replace Mr. Steve Marshall (New Zealand).

### REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION (*cont.*)

The PRESIDENT — We shall now resume the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

*Original Farsi:* Mr. SALIMIAN (*Workers' delegate, Islamic Republic of Iran*) — First of all, I extend my congratulations to the President on her election. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General on his concise and valuable Report.

The Director-General should be complimented for his progressive approach, particularly for introducing and implementing strategic objectives and strategic budgeting, and creating eight InFocus programmes. These have increased efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of the ILO's mandate.

Decent work is more than a goal: it is our life. Just as there can be no livelihood without work, there can be no real existence without decent work. The concept of decent work is an integrated approach that includes job creation, core labour standards, social protection and social dialogue as key elements. There is an urgent need to act decisively on measures to close the gap that exposes men and women to indignities in their work. We require positive actions in terms of upholding dignity, relating to security and voice, gender equality and solidarity, fundamental rights at work, social dialogue and social justice.

In an era of globalization, workers' organizations have to set new goals and work in new ways because the economic, social and political environments in which trade unions organize and represent working people is changing dramatically all over the world. Unions must offer new services such as skills development and social protection. The workers' community has raised the concern that globalization may evolve into a new form of colonization of developing countries by the major powers.

Regarding challenges for the social partners, we agree with the Director-General that the ILO has to offer strategic support and services, especially to workers' organizations, in the major challenges they are facing, and make this as an integral part of the decent work approach.

The success of an economy is often measured by the growth rate of output and incomes, whereas social progress is measured by the enjoyment of certain rights, security and social protection. Trade and foreign investment have direct effects on employment and working conditions. The workers' community is concerned that development objectives may be

pursued at the expense of workers' rights. Today, governments and employers are undermining workers' social protection. They deregulate in the name of competitiveness and job creation in order to generate high profits. But these benefits are not redistributed and people are obliged to accept any work that is available.

The labour flexibility that is an element of governments' economic, trade and employment policies does not meet the standards of decent work. It meets the needs of some sectors while destroying every fabric of fundamental labour rights.

We hope that the process of effective standard grouping will make fuller use of the potential of ILO constitutional capacities to promote the application of standards. Modernization of the ILO implies, amongst other things, that this Organization must be capable of really protecting all workers.

Coming to my country report, one of the main themes of May Day this year was the fight against temporary labour contracts. We believe that it is a form of neo-exploitation and slavery in the twenty-first century, which has endangered the job security of the workers of our country. We warn that, if the competent authorities do not take urgent measures, this sleeping volcano will explode and will have devastating effects, which are not in the interest of the country and the system.

When we talk of civil society, we must take into consideration civil liberties and respect them. We demand legalization of the right to strike for Iranian workers.

The International Labour Conference recommended the ratification of two core labour Conventions, namely the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 89), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). We hope that our Government will take the required steps to implement the said Recommendations.

Finally, I would like to thank the ILO and ACTRAV for holding the Tripartite Seminar on Fundamental Labour Conventions and the Workshop in the Islamic Republic of Iran. We hope that this trend will continue as we have the capacities to benefit from ILO technical assistance and cooperation.

*Original French:* Mr. LOURDELLE (*representative, European Trade Union Confederation*) — It is both a pleasure and an honour for me to speak this morning on behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which I represent here, and which has a membership of more than 60 million European workers from 34 countries, and even more if you consider the relations and work we have developed within our Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with the trade union organizations of the Mediterranean region.

I would like at the outset to refer to the speech of the Director-General two years ago when he spoke at the Ninth ETUC Congress. During his statement, he underscored two important concepts: Democracy, first and foremost, and workers' rights in a globalized economy. These concepts correspond to some of the main preoccupations of the trade union organization which I represent here and perhaps of the whole trade union movement. They are also part of the topic and Report chosen for the 89th Session of the Conference. They also relate to the reflections

within the European Union and to which we would like to contribute.

We, too, think that proper social protection of workers and citizens as a whole is an asset rather than a liability for the economy, helping to provide decent work. We congratulate you on the way in which this discussion has evolved although we know that the battle is far from won. However, promotion of this social protection is one of the major challenges for the trade union movement and for the social partners in general for years to come in these times of economic globalization which may, if we are not careful, lead to socio-economic inequality between countries and between regions. A case in point would be the unequal resources for fighting pandemics such as AIDS.

That is the reason ETUC, along with other organizations, is pushing for a discussion, within the World Trade Organization (WTO), on the introduction of social standards.

At the European level, however, if in the framework of the European Union ETUC is trying to promote what is called the European social model which does not reduce European construction to the creation of a free trade area but seeks to develop social welfare, and this includes our colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe who are still at times facing situations of exclusion and impoverishment and for whom we must find solutions, the ILO can count on ETUC's cooperation.

We are committed therefore, to searching for very specific solutions for all those who have non-standard working conditions, such as part-time work, fixed-term contracts, temporary work, and who are often excluded from social protection.

What, for example, is the situation regarding the right to unemployment benefit of a woman working part time. What will her pension be when she retires, if the amount is pegged to any contributions she may have made?

The ETUC believe that, alongside increasing flexibility of labour, there must also be social security. That is to say, we must seriously consider the conditions for obtaining rights and conditions of social protection. This holds true for interruptions of careers for family reasons or for vocational training.

Indeed, situations mentioned in the Director-General's Report are much more dramatic than what I have touched on, since the men and women referred to have nothing, not even a non-standard contract in any shape or form.

But we are convinced that a search for solutions to meet the needs of these men and women could be the first step in searching for solutions to other situations considered in the Report.

We are convinced that there will only be a viable solution within the framework of solidarity. Solidarity is not to be confused with assistance, it is a solidarity which would be aimed at making everyone citizens of the world. Solidarity and citizenship should lead to the acceptance and enshrinement of new laws and rights at the international level. This is our goal, as it is yours. You can count on our cooperation in the search for possible solutions.

*Original Spanish:* Mr. GORRITI (*Workers' delegate, Peru*) — I would like to convey to the international community of the ILO the respectful good wishes of the Peruvian workers. May I express the wish that the ILO will commit itself with renewed

vigour to its mission of protecting and promoting the rights and employment conditions of the workers of the world.

While we wish to express our most determined support for the key issues mentioned by the Director-General in his Report to this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, we wish to ask the ILO for broader cooperation with our country in order to comply with the international labour Conventions. This is because in Peru, for many years now, and especially over the last decade, workers' rights have not been respected, and the previous Government has disregarded the observations and recommendations made by the ILO.

Despite the progress made by the transitional Government, there are still violations of fundamental trade union rights, collective bargaining, equality of treatment and non-discrimination, etc.

In Peru, it is insufficiently appreciated that the regulatory framework of a pluralist society must entail a commitment, a regulatory pact of political coexistence between the various social sectors. While the right of private ownership and free enterprise is recognized, there must also be recognized guarantees and rights for workers, of both an individual and a collective nature, in order to balance their forces with those of economic power.

Peruvian workers have been living under a Government that for ten years has not respected democracy or the rule of law, and has implemented an open and undisguised anti-trade union policy to destroy the trade unions.

We have made all trade union organizations in our country aware of this through individual reports, which have merited favourable comments from the Committee on Freedom of Association and were approved by the Governing Body in November 1994 and June 1996. On the latter date, the ILO requested the Peruvian Government to amend its legislation, because it contravenes the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). It is precisely these Conventions which are invested with universal respect because they are the fundamental standards of the Organization.

It is our obligation to denounce, in this international forum, the fact that in our country workers in cooperatives cannot join trade unions; the same applies to individuals working for enterprises providing temporary services which, acting as intermediaries, are authorized to supply workers to so-called "user" enterprises up to a level of 50 per cent of total workers; nor can workers in special support services (such as maintenance, cleaning, security, and so on), or workers in contracting and subcontracting organizations join trade unions. All these workers are prevented from joining the enterprise union under the pretext that they are working for a different firm, for another enterprise. Divide and rule — this has been the policy to prevent the application of the right to freedom of association.

One of the main principles and objectives of the ILO, contained in the Declaration of Philadelphia and in the Constitution of the ILO, is that labour is not a commodity. Therefore, there can be no traf-

ficking in human labour, nor profit from it, thereby reducing the earnings of the workers who are doing the work. However, in our country, just as at the beginning of the century in the case of the press gangs, labour has become a commodity through cooperatives and other intermediaries, which prevent workers from exercising their right to join trade unions and their right to collective bargaining, as well as discriminating against them with lower pay and inferior working conditions as compared with other workers.

Workers contracted on the basis of agreements on youth employment training and pre-professional experience are also prevented from joining trade unions as their relationship is not considered to be an employment relationship and consequently no labour standards or international labour Conventions apply to them. Current legislation allows an enterprise to recruit up to 20 per cent of its staff under these conditions.

Free and unregulated fixed-term recruitment, just like the introduction of groundless or arbitrary dismissal and the lack of protection for trade union leaders, also contribute to a legislative framework contrary to our own Political Constitution, to the international standards of the ILO and to other international instruments on fundamental human rights.

All this has meant a drastic reduction in the number of trade unionists, and therefore a reduction in the amount of collective bargaining to below 25 per cent — an unprecedented level — as a result of the various measures to weaken the bargaining power of trade unions. Unless this abusive legal framework is corrected, it will end up eliminating the trade unions in our country.

The draft amendments to the Collective Labour Relations Act, submitted by the transitional Government to the National Labour Council, while they constitute a significant advance, will not ensure full application of the comments made by the ILO Governing Body.

However, we cannot fail to express our gratitude to the transitional Government for its praiseworthy work of laying the foundations for a change in labour and social policy. This has been done by establishing the National Labour Council as a body for social dialogue and negotiation, the promulgation of a new Act respecting inspection, intended to redouble and strengthen inspection activities, the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), among others. In addition, in the general political framework, the Constitutional Tribunal has been re-established, a start has been made on restoring the independence of the Judicial Power and the Attorney-General's Office, political influence has been purged from the armed forces, and honest and democratic elections have been organized.

However, much remains to be done to bring our labour and social legislation into line with international labour Conventions and other international fundamental human rights standards. To help us achieve this, we ask the international community to lend us the necessary support to ensure an end to violations of international labour Conventions in our country and to establish a new democratic model of labour relations which respects labour rights. The current political climate means that such efforts will not be wasted.



*Original French:* Mrs. SAINT PREUX CRAAN (*Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Haiti*) — It is an honour for me to convey the best good wishes of the Government of the Republic of Haiti to the President and congratulate her for this distinction which has entrusted her to guide the work of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

It is appropriate to emphasize that the programme of the Government in the field of labour corroborates the Report of the Director-General of the ILO which, whilst taking into consideration the specific nature of each member State, has highlighted the possibilities of decent work in a globalized economy.

The Government of Haiti, pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of 29 March 1987, which is a fundamental charter enshrining amongst other things, the principle of freedom of association, is firmly committed to improving working conditions.

Our participation in the present session is one of the Government's activities which not only aim to make the question of labour, employment and social protection one of its major concerns, but also aim to demonstrate its will to ensure the promotion and respect of fundamental labour rights.

Inspired by the ILO Conventions and Recommendations ratified by the Republic of Haiti, many of the Labour Code's provisions had to be modified with a view to meeting the profound aspirations of the Haitian people as a whole.

This being so, the State of Haiti is committed to following the guidelines of the ILO, regardless of the economic climate. The Government's political will in this respect is reflected in various projects which, inter alia, include the submission to the competent authorities of international labour Conventions and Recommendations in force with a view to their ratification, introduction into national legislation, and their subsequent application using appropriate measures; the application of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), and progressive implementation of the ILO's related project; the improvement of the situation of all workers in Haiti; vocational training for young people and the promotion of crafts and skills in both urban and rural areas; the access of different categories of workers, including agricultural workers, to health care and social security; the increase in the minimum wage in relation to the cost of living; the submission of the new Labour Code to the competent authorities with a view to its immediate ratification; the reduction in the level of unemployment by creating 500,000 jobs in the public and private sectors, divided amongst various sectors of activity; and the promotion of international labour standards, which will be supported by regular requests for ILO cooperation and assistance programmes.

These activities, to be carried out during the five-year period 2001-06, according to the general policy of the Government, should enable the State to see positive changes, provided that the understanding of our sister nations, present at this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, give us their support for creating this climate of harmony and peace, which can only be achieved if the political crisis experienced in our country is resolved.

Therefore, the Haitian Government, which I have the honour of representing at this forum, is counting on the integrated participation of the various sectors concerned, and commits itself to stepping up its

efforts to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, the follow-up to this session of the Conference so that Haiti may face a future with better work, employment and social protection prospects.

*Original Portuguese:* Mr. PEREIRA MONTOYA (*Employers' delegate, Portugal*) — First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on her election to such an important post, and I certainly wish her every success in her work.

Since the presentation and discussion of the Director-General's Report to the 87th Session of the International Labour Conference in 1999, progress has been made in the area of reforming and modernizing the ILO, bearing in mind its strategic aims, standards and the fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

However, as regards modernization of the legislative instruments of the ILO, we need to stress that progress is still too slow and, despite the complexity of our task, we need to start seeing real practical results emerging. We need to promote realistic alternatives to the traditional standards-related activities of the ILO.

The Report submitted this year by the Director-General takes up the issue of decent work, and looks into how it might be possible to overcome the challenges we face in a rapidly changing world, and how these challenges tie in with the strategic aims of the ILO.

We need to bear in mind that there is no universal interpretation, at least as we stand today, of the concept of decent work. While there is a general consensus as to the concepts of freedom and protecting human dignity, we cannot say as much for the concepts of equity and security, because they mean different things depending on the social, economic and cultural context of countries and, indeed, the respective levels of development of those countries. We also need to stress that the concept of decent work needs to include the idea of job creation, particularly through continuous vocational training, for which it is essential to develop an entrepreneurial spirit.

I think that the main challenge of the ILO should be the implementation of the principles enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which includes the ratification and total respect of the Conventions which underlie those principles.

I think it is worth highlighting the considerable number of ratifications of the eight core Conventions, (Nos. 29, 105, 87, 98, 100, 111, 138 and 182), while efforts still need to continue to increase that number, particularly with regard to the two Conventions relating to child labour, the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), because in these two cases the number of ratifications is still comparatively low.

On the subject of child labour, which is a problem occurring in just about all our States, although in different dimensions, I feel I have to refer to Portugal. A joint study carried by the Portuguese Government and the ILO, to assess the scope of the phenomenon in Portugal concluded that it is not really as serious a problem in Portugal as it is in other regions of the world, and that it has been virtually eradicated completely.

The number of cases of child labour detected by our labour inspectorate in the so-called high-risk companies, that is those sectors where they tend to use child labour, was only 126 throughout the year 2000, which we consider to be a fairly insignificant number.

With regard to decent work, Portuguese employers believe that to provide in conditions of freedom, equity, safety and respect for human dignity is an integral part of economic and social development.

To conclude, I would say that there are two aspects relating to this issue which merit particular attention. The first has to do with social protection. I know that there are ongoing debates in this assembly relating to social security, particularly with regard to the report on social security: issues, challenges and prospect, so it is a topical issue. We need to bear in mind that we are dealing with States' responsibilities and we should avoid focusing the debate purely on the European social model, because although the European social model has interesting aspects, it also covers certain aspects which cannot be deemed to be universally applicable at the present time.

The second aspect requiring a special mention, which is highlighted in the Report of the Director-General, concerns the shortcomings in the area of social dialogue. Employers' and workers' organizations have responsibilities to shoulder there. The ILO, as part of its remit, could contribute to creating conditions for promoting social dialogue and increasing co-operation so that, together, the representative employers' and workers' organizations can discuss common problems and come up with balanced solutions.

The future of labour relations involves true social dialogue. This has got to be vital to strengthen the importance and efficiency of employers' and employees' organizations in society, in so far as these organizations are in a prime position to promote economic growth and social development with the necessary realism.

Mr. KAPUYA (*Minister for Labour, Youth and Sports Development, United Republic of Tanzania*) — Permit me to join with those who have spoken before me in congratulating the President and the Officers of the Conference on their election.

May I also express my delegation's appreciation to the Director-General for his concise and focused Report to this session of the Conference. The Report vividly exposes the challenges facing member States in achieving the objective of decent work. It also proposes strategic options to ensure that despite these challenges, the goal of decent work remains part of our country's development agenda.

The United Republic of Tanzania is aware of the decent work deficit and has begun to address some of its challenges. I enumerate below some of the challenges, beginning with employment, which we believe to be the core objective around which all others revolve.

The United Republic of Tanzania suffers from high unemployment in the formal sector, 60 per cent of urban economic activity takes place in the formal sector and 80 per cent of the population live and work in rural areas. Most labour is unskilled, a problem compounded by a lack of labour market information.

The following are some of the key strategies put in place in order to reduce the deficit:

- (a) a review of the employment policy to provide for an inter-sectoral integrated approach to job creation, including promotion of appropriate macroeconomic policies;
- (b) promotion of the informal sector into a viable regulated segment of the economy which will become a sustainable source of employment creation. This strategy is extended to employment creation in rural areas through a framework provided under the National Employment Promotion and Services Act, 1998;
- (c) skills training at different levels, one of the key areas to be given focus under the country's poverty reduction strategy; and
- (d) the re-establishment of the employment exchange offices, a process which should culminate in ascertaining the gap between the current skills demand and skills supply in the labour market, from which appropriate skill training plans will be made.

I hasten to add that we seek to do the above amidst the realities of human and financial resource constraints. The United Republic of Tanzania believes in the goals of promotion of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. To this end, it has ratified six of the eight core Conventions including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), ratified on 12 June 2001. The remaining two are in the final stages of ratification. We have embarked on major labour law reform, one of the aims of which is to ensure conformity of our laws with obligations under the core Conventions.

Moreover, as my President has already said, the country is committed to the eradication of child labour and has launched the Time-Bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. In addition, we are studying ways to extend occupational health and safety standards to the informal and agricultural sector.

With regard to the social protection deficit, the United Republic of Tanzania acknowledges a glaring gap of social protection. The existing social schemes cover less than 5 per cent of the working population. The coverage is inadequate in terms of numbers and benefits.

Currently, the country is developing a comprehensive social security policy to strengthen existing schemes, extend benefit coverage and formulate strategies to deal with the threat posed by pandemic diseases, especially HIV/AIDS and malaria.

With regard to the social dialogue deficit, the United Republic of Tanzania has tripartite structures where dialogue is carried on in respect of issues of labour and employment. Institutions for collective bargaining are in place and the Government is increasingly engaging both employers' and employees' representatives in discussion on the major policy issues of concern to their constituents.

The major problem being tackled here is that of building the capacity of the three partners so that they can dialogue effectively. We are encouraged by the efforts of the ILO in establishing the ILO/SLAREA project, which will go a long way to alleviate this problem.

I wish to assure the Director-General and other member States of the ILO, that the United Republic of Tanzania, through its tripartite structures, will strive to incorporate the goals of decent work in its

development agenda, to make people are the purpose and not the objects of development.

Mr. MOTANYANE (*Minister of Employment and Labour, Lesotho*) — I wish, first and foremost, to associate myself with the congratulations expressed by the delegations that have spoken before me to the President and the Officers of the Conference at this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The highly commendable Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General have raised issues of critical importance in the world at this point in time. For the purpose of this intervention, I shall confine my comments to a few issues raised therein.

Over the last ten years, many developing countries, particularly those in Africa, have undergone a historic political transformation into multiparty democracies. Naturally, this has meant heightened enjoyment of civil and political rights.

Regrettably, the same cannot be said for the development of our economies and the enjoyment of socio-economic rights. Our economies are still hamstrung by deep-rooted poverty with resultant high levels of unemployment, underemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Thus, the decent work deficit is one of our biggest challenges in developing countries.

The concept of the decent work deficit has most appropriately been captured in the Report of the Director-General as an absence of sufficient employment opportunities, inadequate social protection, the denial of rights at work and shortcomings in social dialogue.

The Report has correctly underscored the need for collective action on the part of governments, employers, workers and other relevant actors in society in order to address obstacles and arrive at balanced approaches. The social partners of Lesotho are committed to moving forward in all these areas and will, accordingly, constantly seek the strategic advisory services of the ILO and our other development partners.

Regarding the issue of rights at the workplace, suffice it to mention that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and its social partners are giving the matter serious attention through social dialogue. Amongst the specific areas of focus is improvement in the area of workers' rights and working conditions in Lesotho's rapidly growing clothing, textile and leather industries. To this end, a project intended fundamentally to assist the social partners to address aspects of workers' rights and social dialogue in this industry is currently being discussed between the ILO, the United States Government and my Government.

The ongoing debate on the subject of social security has amply demonstrated the profoundness of the decent work gap that obtains in this area with respect to developing countries and the enormity of the challenge. We are most grateful to the ILO for giving regular priority to this matter in the Decent Work Agenda.

The Director-General's Report unequivocally asserts the centrality of job creation to the Decent Work Agenda as the surest way out of poverty. We sincerely hope that our multilateral and bilateral cooperation partners will fully embrace this approach in their support to the poverty alleviation strategies of developing countries. We are also hopeful that the instrument to derive from the debate on the promotion of co-

operatives will greatly facilitate the development of employment opportunities through cooperatives.

The Report of the Director-General has also most appropriately underscored the timely issue of the need for an integrated approach by the various organs of the United Nations family as well as the Bretton Woods institutions. The benefits to be derived from a holistic approach and complementarity of the special attributes of these institutions are clearly immense. We commend the Director-General for his vision on this important matter and wish him every success.

In pursuance of the ideals of decent work, the Government of Lesotho has during this current session of the International Labour Conference deposited instruments of ratification of the following ILO Conventions: the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

Finally, the eradication of child labour remains a major challenge of our times. Starting from January 2000, the Government of Lesotho has embarked on a programme of free primary education. We are fully committed to the success of the programme and have made it one of the leading priorities of the Government. The indications are clearly that one of its dividends will be the total elimination of the incidence of young children outside formal learning, who end up as child labourers in the formal and informal sectors of our economy.

*Original Spanish:* Mr. CAMACHO PARDO (*Workers' delegate, Bolivia*) — I should like to express the brotherly and fraternal wishes of all the workers of Bolivia.

I am present at this important international forum on behalf of the workers and the poor of my country, Bolivia — all those who are working in the Central Workers' Organization, a single organization which acts as a focal point not only for those who have worker-employer relationships but also for the nation as a whole.

Since the application and introduction of the neo-liberal model in August 1985, the workers and the people of Bolivia have been experiencing brutal attacks against the most fundamental rights which each human being should enjoy. There is massive unemployment, underemployment, low salaries, negation of social rights of the workers, lack of respect of labour law which should apply in the country and an excessive power on the part of the employers, which creates a dramatic situation which can be expressed and is expressed in discrimination, abject poverty, hunger and despair.

Those who state that the new political economic model based on the free market constitutes a formula which would meet with and solve the economic, social and political problems of the country are lying blatantly and shamelessly.

In Bolivia the first measure which they took was to dismiss thousands of mineworkers and factory workers and then, by way of capitalization, they entrusted the strategic state enterprises and national resources to transnational corporations, converting the country into an empty shell without any heritage whatsoever with the obvious grave consequences.

The State, which used to create jobs and development policies, is now merely an impotent



spectator of the activities which are taking place in the country leading to the pillaging of the wealth of the nation.

The Government which should administer the State in a way to satisfy and improve the conditions of life and work of the people has become an obsequious operator, a mere puppet of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank. And in this way the political leaders of the country are acting merely as managers of the interests of the foreign undertakings, which have appropriated the mines, electricity plants, the railways and the tremendous reserves in hydrocarbons which are considered to be amongst the largest in Latin America. And this is leading to tremendous profit and gain for the transnational corporations, whereas the poor people of Bolivia have to pay international market prices for oil-based products just as if we were importing from the Persian Gulf.

The workers of Bolivia are going through a very difficult situation and the effects of the economic crisis, with which we are struggling in our country, are being shifted, are being shifted onto the weak shoulders of the workers, whose only resource is the hard work they do.

Daily we see that the factories are being turned into sweatshops, where men are working without any protection as regards labour legislation. They have no job security, no industrial safety, no social benefits, they work 14 hours a day and work for breadline salaries. They are subject to inhuman exploitation in the name of competitiveness and productivity — for what and for whom?

In the face of this, the workers of Bolivia are developing an active strategy of resistance and we are calling for respect of labour rights and with absolute determination we call for recognition of trade unions. We recognize that the effort and the sacrifices which we are making are still insufficient. That is why we believe that the time has come for unity of all the workers and peoples of Latin America and the world as a whole. We should create a broad alliance so that we become an impregnable retaining wall against globalization, which is attempting to convert people into objects, the Third World countries into suppliers of raw materials and their inhabitants into mere consumers, negating our capacity to create our own destiny.

Now more than ever it is necessary to take united action on a massive scale. We have something which unites us: the poverty in which thousands of millions of human beings are living. If globalization has constituted a uni-polar world, we, the workers of the world, must create another pole in order to counter the major international corporations who have decided to govern the planet.

Our objectives cannot, in these circumstances, be mere calls for social and economic development. But we have to call for far-reaching policies with a view to initiating a process of qualitative change which will meet the needs of the vast majority of the population of the world.

The Central Workers' Organization issues the call to globalize our struggle for a new international order where the economy is at the service of man, where there is respect for the rights of workers, where countries are able to regain control of their natural resources in the interests of their people, while applying a fair distribution of riches. A situation where it is

universally recognized that there should be a rational and equal trade between countries, where there will be a new international division of labour, where a new international order will be established in which solidarity will be the ethical and moral value which governs international relations amongst our peoples and our countries.

With this tremendous task ahead of us, the Workers shall have to, first and foremost, take on a leading role so that it is not, as someone said, a case of history having come to an end, but that it is just beginning, and that we are going to determine the course it takes.

*Original French: Mr. BOISSON (Employers' delegate, France) — I thank the President and congratulate her on her election. On behalf of the Employers of France, whom I have the honour to represent here, I should like first of all to note the high quality of the Report submitted by the Director-General, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*.*

Quite clearly, it is impossible in five minutes to express fully the sentiments inspired by such a rich and dense text, but whether one starts by endorsing such a development or by expressing reservations about another aspect, it seems to me that we are talking here about a remarkable contribution to the essential and crucial debate on globalization.

My only regret is that the Report was not published earlier. It is often difficult to make our national organizations aware of the ILO's work and aims. They are too caught up in their own domestic concerns. Debate upstream of this Conference, based on this excellent work, would therefore have been very valuable in each of our countries and we hope that this will be possible next year.

On reading the Director-General's Report very closely, one is struck by its balanced approach. Of course, the media has highlighted the negative aspects. It has focused on the decent work deficit by stressing the scale of the problem, and many long statements have been made on that point. But there is much more to it than that. Since the time constraint compels me to be very selective, may I emphasize the positive aspects, and above all the Director-General's conclusion that today we can assess both the fears and the hopes born of globalization, that the measures to be taken to ensure that globalization benefits everyone are now clearer and that they are in line with the ILO's agenda.

Earlier, he stated in his Report, amongst other examples, that progress in information technology opens up prospects for growth in remote regions, with consequent improvements in job opportunities and higher earnings, and that the growth resulting from trade also means a rapid expansion of employment and wages.

While he stresses that free trade alone is not the source of growth and employment, personally I would say that it is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition.

There is another example of the balance of the Report when I read that, "excessive protection may be deadening to initiative and responsibility, but basic security for all...is a fundamental for both social justice and economic dynamism". We must all support that formula.

The opportunity is there for the taking. Let us have the initiative to support and influence globalization. This is the Director-General's message.

In this connection, we must welcome the considerable efforts he has made, and continues to make, to modernize our institution and strengthen the partnership between the ILO and other organizations in the multilateral system. It is quite true to say that the Governing Body Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization is a rare body, perhaps the only one in which discussions can take place from a common standpoint on the way to provide everyone with access to the benefits of globalization. This work must be continued and intensified in the spirit of the Singapore Declaration, and I think that the meeting next week, on 19 June, will be very important in this connection.

Another positive aspect that should be emphasized is the realism and pragmatism of some of the assertions made by the Director-General, especially when he says that, while the main principles, especially those of the Declaration, are universal, it is for every country to give specific effect to them in the light of its own situation, possibilities, developmental capacities and specific cultural features.

This point is essential and might have led to a clearer reaffirmation of the irreplaceable role of technical cooperation, which is one of the ILO's major assets. This is the "made-to-measure" part of our work. There is another area in which the effectiveness and credibility of our Organization will be increasingly at stake, namely the current reform of standards policy. We must welcome the progress made; procedures may be slow, but the constructive tripartite debate has led to progress. I think we must continue the debate and action along these lines.

With regard to tripartism, the Report contains a statement of commitment to tripartism that is far from being mere empty words. I was impressed to note that no fewer than 57 NGOs had signed up to the Committee on Social Security. In view of the problems relating to their representativity, I think it is important for the relevant rules to be clear, strict and known, and understood by everyone.

It is one thing to open the door to civil society, but quite another to risk diluting our action in pointless and interminable debate, or, even worse, clashing with professional agitators and radical negativism.

In conclusion, I would like to state my conviction that this Conference's debate, based on a text which provides a vision and opens up prospects for the future, must be continued in the Governing Body and lead to concrete policies and actions that place our Organization at the heart of the mechanisms for a better distribution of the fruits of globalization.

*(Mr. Parrot takes the Chair.)*

*Original Portuguese:* Mr. FELICIO (*Workers' adviser, Brazil*) — We entirely share Ambassador Juan Somavia's concerns. We do indeed need to eliminate the decent work deficit. We have immense shortcomings in that regard in our region, and in particular in our country, Brazil.

The lack of democratic freedoms and respect for human rights is chronic in our region. Wages are low, unemployment is high. Social security coverage and benefits are both insufficient. Gender and racial discrimination continues, as we have seen from a recent investigation carried out by trade unions. Health and education services are weak and public safety is getting worse. Public services and productive infra-

structures too are worsening, despite the promises of privatization.

The lack of investment has led to an energy crisis and rationing which is penalizing everyone, with spiralling prices, falling production and increasing unemployment.

The problems that we need to overcome were made crystal clear with the financial crisis in Asia, which was followed by a series of crises in Russia, Brazil, Argentina and Turkey. Globalization, with the structural adjustments prescribed by the International Monetary Fund, has aggravated the historical problems faced by developing countries and led to new problems, such as informal work and the digital divide, which indeed are highlighted in the *World Employment Report* this year. We have seen no real progress in the social field in the underdeveloped countries which have adopted the neo-liberal prescriptions. Despite everything, the economic authorities carry on saying that the foundations of our economy are solid and that we are ready for sustainable development. We have to be honest and say that we have an awful lot to do to overcome difficulties. In this regard, the Director-General's Report represents an important solution.

An economy's strength is only meaningful if it meets the needs of the people. The human development indices issued by the United Nations Development Programme show that we are more than justified in demanding radical changes in globalization. To that end, we are mobilizing public demonstrations and events in our country, in the Southern Cone and during the meetings of the World Trade Organization, the G8 and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Demonstrations were held in Singapore, Seattle, Prague and Quebec. In Porto Alegre a positive leap forward was made. Quite apart from demonstrations and events held in parallel with summits promoting the globalization of capital, we held a World Social Forum in order to promote the interests of the majority. We believe that another kind of world is possible, and decent work is part of that world.

The globalization that we want would be both economic and social. It requires respect for the fundamental rights covered by the 1998 Declaration. It will offer more work and access to land and other means of production, guaranteeing income distribution, creating new instruments of social protection and broadening the coverage of existing systems. All this should take place in a climate of democracy and popular participation, using social dialogue as an instrument which will guarantee the relevance, quality, efficiency and sustainability of the policies adopted.

The social dialogue is losing ground to the policies adopted by the IMF and the World Bank. In our country, the Government simply does not negotiate with the public service workers, who have had their wages frozen for the last six years. That has basically cut their income in half. This absurd situation was condemned by the Constitutional Court in Brazil. The Federal Superior Court condemned the executive branch for failing to apply wage adjustment laws for public servants, as established by law. In 1998 the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards recommended that Brazilian legislation should be amended so as to introduce mechanisms for collective bargaining in the public service. Nothing has been



done to date. We want respect for the laws and Conventions, and respect for workers and public service employees; above all respect for people in general who are suffering from the deterioration of the public service. Public service employees' unions have existed since 1988, but they do not effectively negotiate with the Government. This is a basic right which is still flouted by the Brazilian authorities. In the same way, the Government is not properly complying with a legal ruling to pay compensation for land confiscated from a workers' fund (the Work Time Guarantee Fund) because of losses attributable to economic adjustment. Even policies that have been supported, such as the eradication of child labour, have been suspended in practice, in order to deal with the adjustments imposed by the IMF.

Despite numerous requests from the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Governing Body, the legislation has still not been amended to ensure trade union freedom. The Brazilian courts are still threatening unions with exorbitant fines, which in practice prohibits the right to strike. The recommendation of the Committee on Freedom of Association that dealt with the oil workers' strike in 1995 has not been fully applied. Freedom of association has suffered many setbacks recently. The policemen responsible for the massacre of 19 peasant farmers in the State of Para in 1998 are only now appearing in court. We are still waiting for the trial of the murderers of the peasant leader Margarida Alves, 18 years after the crime. We really need a dissemination campaign of the principles and fundamental rights in Brazil.

The Group for the Eradication of Forced Labour, a body created by the executive branch, is facing serious difficulties in its work. The secrecy which is so needed in order for it to carry out its inspections has not been respected, and the penalties imposed are not sufficient to stop violations. The legislation is still not sufficient to do away with slavery-type work in our country. Apart from the many cases encountered in rural areas, three months ago the newspapers reported cases of forced labour in the centre of our biggest city, São Paulo.

In this Organization, tripartism takes place between central governments and national workers' and employers' organizations. Efficient action at the local level will require local tripartism, with local authorities, unions and business associations involved. Since the Habit II Conference in Istanbul, in 1996, local governments have been trying to find their place in the United Nations system. Associations of local authorities are making progress, and the ILO should play an important role in this quest to think globally and act locally.

We want a radical change in globalization, with globalized rights, especially those in the Declaration and those related to the four strategic objectives of decent work. This is a struggle which must be waged on the streets, but also in institutions. Since 1989 we have been working on a social dimension in MERCOSUR, which now has an Economic and Social Advisory Forum in addition to a tripartite commission to put into practice the principles and rights established in the Social and Labour Declaration. The support of the ILO has been important. We have made progress, but there is a new threat looming on the horizon. The creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas could be another step backward if it is

inspired by globalization in its current form. The ILO, the Declaration and decent work must be a part of this discussion.

The Director-General is bringing the fundamental principles of the ILO into forums advocating globalization. As far as we are concerned, we will continue to mobilize and to create democratic forums for participation, such as the World Social Forum, the first meeting of which was the start of a process. The second meeting will be held in Porto Alegre at the start of next year. It will be an excellent opportunity to submit the proposals of the ILO, joining the institutional struggle with popular mobilization in order to do away with the deficit of decent work in the world.

*Original Arabic:* Mr. DERBI (*Government delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! Firstly, I would like to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Conference on their election. They have been appointed in order to conduct the deliberations of this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference and I wish them every success.

The Report of the Director-General, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, has been recognized as extremely important by all countries seeking to implement it as a fundamental and strategic objective. Implementation takes the form of socio-economic plans and employment policies which are the end result of a number of policies from the fields of housing, education, training and technology.

Work is an extremely important matter for any individual because it leads to self-fulfilment and provides the possibility of using knowledge gained. It is a means of providing for one's family, and for society it is the way towards establishing a healthy environment characterized by stability, social peace and equality within a democratic system.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is seeking, in line with the ILO's goals, to provide its citizens with decent work. Since time immemorial it has paid close attention to the human element and has sought to implement development plans comprising agricultural and industrial projects. These have been expensive but have generated employment not only for Libyan workers but also for thousands of foreign workers. In the last 30 years we have successfully overcome enormous difficulties caused by certain countries which still live in the colonial era and wish to dominate other countries.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has spared no efforts in fulfilling its role by applying a philosophy which provides radical solutions for economic and social problems. It has promulgated legislation that guarantees freedom and regulates labour relations. Workers have become partners in the enterprises in which they work. This legislation has also laid the groundwork for the right to dialogue and collective bargaining.

The objective of the development policy was to establish a productive base in order to diversify sources of income and to reduce our dependence on the oil sector which represents a major portion of our gross national product.

We have managed to put into place economic and social development programmes, and we have made considerable investments in infrastructure, industry, agriculture, energy, services and human resource development, by providing education and training entirely free of charge.

The result of these efforts is that the number of employed Libyans has jumped from 804,000 in 1973 to 1,090,000 in 1990. This figure is expected to reach 1,296,000 in the year 2001.

As for the efforts made in the fields of education and training, they have led to a great improvement in the quality and competence of the national labour force. The number of university graduates in our country has risen considerably, going from 4.1 per cent of the total labour force in 1984 to 8.9 per cent in 1995.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya also places great importance on the implementation of the labour standards which govern relations between the parties to production (the social partners). The political authorities have enacted legislation that guarantees freedom of association for workers. For this reason, we have encountered no difficulties in ratifying all the Conventions referred to in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In order to supplement the abovementioned efforts, thanks to the evolution in our economy and once we have achieved horizontal development by providing education and training to all school-age people, the next stage will be to improve the quality of the labour force, on the basis of the following measures. We must expand the effective dialogue between the different partners, shift education and training from the horizontal programmes, which provide for education to be given to every school-age person in accordance with the law, to a new system that would improve the quality and level of education so as to meet the needs of our country, taking into consideration the fact that our world is constantly changing and technology is forever evolving.

We know that the world today is a global village, and we must bear that in mind. We intend to revise our education and training programmes to provide our citizens with the necessary skills so that they can be able to compete on the international level.

Although we are convinced that it is difficult to provide for decent work in the current economic context, with the world divided into two groups — the developed countries and the developing countries, with the latter trying to catch up — I believe that within the ILO we can try to bridge the gap between the developed and developing countries by providing assistance to the latter in the form of programmes, and by giving them advice when necessary.

This Organization thus could play an important role by expanding dialogue based on the collective desire to help the weak. The developed countries bear a special responsibility because they are very often responsible for the underdevelopment in the world.

Decent work will always be an objective for countries, but it will never be easy to achieve this objective, as the conditions are very different from one country to another.

There are still countries under occupation, others are involved in armed conflict, and still others are suffering from economic crises. We have to show solidarity on the international level. That is the only way we can be able to achieve decent work for all the workers in all parts of the world.

*Original Bahasa Indonesia: Mr. RODJA (Workers' delegate, Indonesia) — Let me give this speech in my national language. On behalf of the Indonesian workers and my colleagues, I would like to extend my*

warmest congratulations to the President on her election and the other Officers. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to reiterate our interest in this tripartite organization and our readiness to cooperate fully in attaining economic progress and social justice.

During its 82 years of existence the ILO's main achievement has been the role it has played as a promoter and defender of the fundamental rights of workers.

In his latest well-documented Report entitled *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, the Director-General reaffirms the commitment of the ILO work programme to four strategic objectives designed, in the words of the Report, to "focus the ILO's energies on decent work as a major global demand of our time", and touching on a number of universally recognized core issues.

As a reflection of the ILO's work programme on decent work, the representatives of the Indonesian workers in this forum are committed to addressing the future of social security in the same spirit, and to tackling the challenging problems related to the workers' situation in Indonesia in order to improve their quality of life and that of their families. Amongst others, the Indonesian tripartite partners will be restructuring the JAMSOSTEK social security system in order to promote the services responsible for increasing the benefits of workers and their families.

JAMSOSTEK is currently a government-run workers' insurance organization which is and should remain at the core of the social security system. In our opinion, JAMSOSTEK should be restructured and given a tripartite management. In addition, it should be legally structured as a trust fund, with a tripartite supervisory body composed in equal parts of representatives of the government, employers and workers. Furthermore, this tripartite representation should involve not only the board of governors, as is the case today, but also the executive directors.

The agricultural sector in Indonesia is an area in which the present conditions of work are particularly unsatisfactory. We are therefore hopeful that the deliberations in this Conference devoted to the topic of the promotion of and standard setting for safety and health in agriculture will provide some strong guidelines to help us in our search for solutions to the problems of workers in this field. In fact, the situation of Indonesian workers in this particular area, despite the fact that it absorbs the great majority of the workforce, is critical because of the inadequate protection of workers' safety and health and the impossibly low wages.

As far as unemployment is concerned, we are fully aware of the need to encourage new investments in order to provide new job opportunities. However, at the same time we also need legislation to genuinely secure the protection of workers' rights and the employers interests. In this regard, we are of the view that legislation such as the Ministerial Decrees No. 150-2000 jo 78 and No. 111-2001 violates human rights and the principle of social justice. More importantly, it contravenes the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), which Indonesia has ratified. For these reasons, Indonesian workers have staged a nationwide protest to request a complete review of the labour legislation, and especially these particular

Decrees, with a view to creating harmonious industrial relations in Indonesia. These problems are very much at the centre of the preoccupations of the Indonesian workers, whom I represent. Indeed, the reason for my delayed arrival at this Conference was that I was leading the protest I have just mentioned.

I could go on at length on this topic. However, I should like to conclude this address by expressing the hope that the ILO will continue to uphold the pursuit of social justice all over the world, as stipulated in its Constitution. Indonesian workers, for their part, will commit themselves to fight for the same ideals and actively to support the work of the ILO now and in the future.

Ms. NORMARK (*representative, International Federation of Building and Woodworkers*) — With reference to the Report of the Director-General I would like, on behalf of the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers, to say a few words about the importance of the ILO core Conventions in our day-to-day work.

The ILO provides a global arena for social dialogue and for tripartite discussions on the future of our industries in the building, wood and forestry sectors.

We have been able to use and promote the ILO core Conventions and the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. In concluding global framework agreements with major multinational companies, such as the furniture retailer IKEA, the pencil-maker Faber-Castell and the construction companies SKANSKA and Hochtief.

We have noted with great satisfaction that there is now a serious discussion at global level on corporate social responsibility, and we will continue to contribute to this process.

It is of the utmost importance that the ILO Conventions form the basis for such global agreements, as this provides a far more solid basis for social partnership than unilaterally adopted company codes of conduct. Through these agreements with serious employers, we have managed to improve our social dialogue and find rapid solutions to problems that otherwise would have escalated.

We are promoting social dialogue, discussions and negotiations as our first line of solution to problems arising in different workplaces. We firmly believe that this is the best way to create a genuine and functioning partnership in the labour market. Of course, sometimes no negotiated solutions are possible, and then we have to use other means to put pressure on companies.

In our efforts to improve global social dialogue in our sectors, we were able to cooperate with the ILO and the World Bank when initiating a meeting here at the ILO this year with CICA, our counterpart in the construction industry.

We see that there are many ways in which the ILO could play a more active role in promoting global social dialogue, for example, on sustainable development of our industries. We will have two ILO meetings this year, one in September to discuss the wood and forestry sectors and one in December to discuss the construction industry. It is fundamental that our counterparts from the selected countries participate and that governments see the need to send their representatives who deal directly with the construction, the wood and forestry industries, in order to

have a meaningful discussion of the common interests of the three parties.

We know that it is easy to build houses with cheap and dangerous materials, with cheap and unskilled labour and with cowboy contractors. When these houses collapse the governments are blamed. We want to prevent such disasters through better co-operation and dialogue with companies and employers, and with governments.

We, as trade union partners, want to initiate discussions that bring together all concerned parties in order to define areas where we can work together for sustainable development in our industries, comprising not only economic, but also social and environmental aspects. We think that the decent work concept should be integrated into such a framework, and we sincerely believe that the responsibility of the governments to assist the social partners in such a development should be part of this discussion.

*Original Arabic:* Mr. IBRAHIM (*Workers' delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) — In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate! I would like to congratulate the President on her election at this session of the Conference. I would also like to congratulate the other Officers of the Conference, and wish them success in their work, and in the work of our Conference, so that we can achieve the results that we all want.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Somavia, the Director-General, on his Report, which deals with various important issues, and on his efforts to consolidate the role of the ILO in the realization of its objectives. This year's Report, entitled *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, has arrived at a decisive moment for employment in the world and for economic and social activity in general.

Decent work is an essential demand and a necessity for economic and social development and the attainment of our social policy objectives. The Report urges us to pool our efforts to translate the goal of decent work into a practical programme of activities designed to be implemented in the context of a permanently evolving world economy.

One of the noblest objectives of mankind in this century has been to strive for liberty, equality and justice. These goals can only be achieved by meeting the essential needs of people, and especially their need for decent work. Without decent work, there can only be poverty and misery. Without freedom and justice, there will only be more misery. That is why all workers' associations and trade unions must continue efforts to defend workers' freedom, and that is also why the workers' revolution took place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in September 1978, transforming workers from mere wage earners into partners. New legislation has been adopted, in accordance with international labour standards, which guarantees the freedom of association and social dialogue, as well as equality between the sexes and respect for human dignity and fundamental rights.

Based on these principles we are endeavouring to take part in discussions to formulate laws on decent work for all through economic institutions or partnerships for production and services, which correspond to the cooperatives mentioned in the agenda for this session of the Conference. These partnerships and cooperatives create opportunities for decent work for all those wishing to set up an industrial, commercial or



service-oriented enterprise, and who thereby benefit from the financial and administrative aid necessary to do so.

We agree with the Director-General on many of the points raised in his Report, especially with regard to the effects of globalization on job creation programmes and on workers in general. This is why we would like to propose that the ILO make greater efforts to strengthen the technical assistance and material aid programmes for the African and developing countries who need this support to fight the devastating effects of globalization. We believe social security, also on the agenda for this session of the Conference, is vital to provide the international changes and the extraordinary technological advances of this new millennium with a social dimension. Man is, at one and the same time, the object of, and the catalyst for, this development. We must therefore work towards a lasting social security and social protection in order to provide security, stability and solidarity for society itself.

At the tenth congress of our federation, in February 2001, we adopted resolutions that strengthen social security, health care and social benefits for our citizens. We also confirmed our support for the ratification of all international labour standards and for the principles of social dialogue, freedom of association and all matters pertaining to fundamental rights and principles at work.

The Libyan revolution has always been the defender of the right of nations to freedom. It has lent its support to all just causes of the peoples and opposed attempted domination by Zionist and colonialist imperialist policies. It has successfully resisted many desperate attempts to undermine it, the latest of which is the so-called Lockerbie affair, an attempt by the American and other governments to involve us in matters which have nothing to do with our country.

We have suffered the imposition of economic sanctions and other unjust measures that have a devastating economic and social effect, blocking many of our development projects as well as numerous programmes for cooperation with other countries. We take this opportunity to repeat our thanks and once again express our gratitude to all the African and Arab countries, their peoples and trade unions, and all other friendly countries that have supported us in our hour of need. We thank them for their actions and their initiatives to put an end to these unjust sanctions.

We denounce the occupation of the Golan Heights and the other Arab territories and the massacres committed against an unarmed nation using the support of the American military machine. There will be no peace while the aggression continues, nor will there be any security for as long as the Zionist occupation of Palestine and the other Arab territories continues.

Mr. MATOMBO (*Workers' delegate, Zimbabwe*) — Firstly, I want to congratulate the President upon her election to this very important post. On behalf of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and its newly appointed leadership, I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the International Labour Office for his comprehensive Report on reducing the decent work deficit. The Report is indeed a consolidated summation of varying observations, views, opinions and challenges, whose detailed elaboration would have resulted in as many volumes as there are delegates to this Conference.

My organization notes with great approval that the goal to focus the ILO's energy on decent work as a major global demand of our time remains as one of the driving forces behind ILO programmes and activities. It is very humbling that the Office seeks to unite all the tripartite partners to rally behind this hitherto underplayed agenda. As clearly stated in the Report, it is not only a goal for men and women to obtain productive working conditions of freedom, equality and human dignity, but also to provide an integral policy framework. It is furthermore a goal of finding a method to organize programmes and activities and a platform for external dialogue and partnership. The decent work deficit is not an abstract term at all. The four aspects of this phenomenon, namely the employment gap (referring primarily to unemployment and underemployment), the rights gap (manifesting itself in the widespread denial of rights at work), the social protection gap (evidenced by dangerous working conditions and income insecurity) and the social dialogue gap (inadequate representation and institutions to permit voices to be heard) render the subject a very practical one. We all know, government, employers and workers alike, that this sickly baby is there, although we may not agree on the question of its paternity.

I need not go into the details of the Report, but allow me to make the following pertinent observations with respect to the conduct of social partners, globally and individually. Firstly, the Report has observed that there is a linkage between globalization, business re-engineering, competitiveness, productivity and decent work. It calls for a judicious blend of business profits on the one hand, and observance of the principles of decent work on the other. Secondly, there is the social protection gap. It is disheartening to note that the Report laments the absence or sketchiness of our global information on the social protection gap.

The indications are, however, that, while we may have to wait for information to ascertain the exact magnitude of the gap, workers the world over continue to die because of a lack of social protection. Inaction on our part in this area is akin to pronouncing a death sentence for workers and their families.

Thirdly, there is the social dialogue. While the Report puts emphasis on non-representation and under-representation of some groups of workers in tripartite discussions, notably of workers in the export processing zones and of employers and workers in the informal sector, we must also not underplay the obstacles to tripartite dialogue between the traditional players (formal sector workers, employers and the Government).

Our experience, which is most likely to be shared with our colleagues present, is that as Third World economies collapse due mainly to the economic turnaround policies that look at workers' rights as costs, workers get agitated. Workers show their disapproval mainly through resisting such policies, which are also intertwined with political policies. Governments always turn around and accuse workers of creating obstacles to dialogue.

As it is put in the Report, the decent work deficit may lead to social and political unrest, because work is also at the heart of politics. Above all, work is the lens through which people judge how the economy is faring.

Social dialogue is therefore threatened when other players, employers included, think that the running of the economy does not include inputs from workers.

The Office's willingness to assist individual Members to establish genuine tripartism is most welcome. Of course, this does not mean that the social partners must sit and wait. The success of tripartism depends on the will of the parties themselves.

Finally, we acknowledge the challenges for governments, workers' and employers' organizations as put by the Director-General; specifically, that globalization does not reduce the responsibility of the State, that governments have to promote an enabling environment for organizations of workers and enterprises, that they need to build and support the institutions which defend rights, promote access, combat inequality and exclusion and enhance security.

We, for our part, will endeavour to stand up to the new challenges, and we shall engage business more than before in possible integrated programmes of ensuring that the quest for profit does not override employment, workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue.

*Original French: Mr. NTONE DIBOTI (Workers' delegate, Cameroon)* — I would like to add my voice to those of the distinguished delegates who have preceded me in warmly congratulating the President and the Officers of the Conference on their election at this the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

We wish them every success in this task and we assure them in advance of our unconditional support.

I am extremely pleased to speak today on behalf of the workers of my country. Our presence here shows that there has been an improvement in the relationship between the Cameroon Workers' Trade Union Confederation (CSTC), the largest trade union of Cameroon, on the one hand, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), on the other.

This evolution is a new approach to the former situation of conflict between our trade union and the international organizations mentioned.

Over the past year, our country has had the honour of hosting two independent inquiry teams, one from the ILO, and the other from ICFTU.

Without prejudging the result of these two missions, we feel that, through their reports, objectivity will prevail and the facts will be presented as they really exist in the field.

Together with the majority of workers we are determined, as in the past, to continue our efforts to promote free independent trade unionism in our country.

We would like to thank the ILO, ICFTU and OATUU for their new approach and for their good offices in settling problems within our own trade union organization.

Finally, it is with relief that we announce that tripartite social dialogue has resumed, after more than six years of interruption owing to the difficulties of which we are all aware and which led to the aforementioned two missions.

The renewal of activities on the various structures for social dialogue on the part of the social partners shows that we are working.

The workers have welcomed with relief the convocation of the national consultative labour committee and the committee on safety and health at work.

The various texts submitted for consideration to these committees aim to change certain elements of Law, 92/007 of 14 August 1992 of the Labour Code, in order to harmonize them with the provisions of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

The same holds true for the revision and renegotiation of national collective agreements, which are obsolete because of the socio-economic evolution marked by globalization.

To come back to the agenda of our Conference, our trade union welcomes the enrichment of the ILO's vocabulary through the introduction of the notion of decent work. In our opinion, this is work which not only enables human beings to provide themselves with their basic needs for survival: food, clothing and shelter, but also to find a new status in the workplace through their active involvement in decision-making.

We consider that decent work also includes good health. Our organization therefore supports the ILO in its struggle against HIV/AIDS. In our country we are undertaking an awareness campaign on this pandemic in the labour world. We have elaborated a strategy against the exclusion of the workers with this virus and we are working to ensure that their needs are met.

We support the policy and promotion of cooperatives promoted by the ILO. This initiative is a powerful instrument for development in our countries.

Many of our enterprises are increasingly becoming agriculture-oriented and many workers are exposed to professional risks of various kinds. We would like proper safety and health protection measures to be taken in this field. To this effect, we support the ILO's initiative without reservation.

We cannot conclude without expressing a few wishes, namely that the ILO should take an innovative approach to the problems related to globalization.

The ILO must envisage new policies adapted to the needs of a changing world, bearing in mind the rapid evolution as a result of new technologies.

The activities of the ILO should enable employers and workers to have partnership relations, without which no system of production can ensure the well-being to which we all aspire.

We are convinced that, through the promotion of international standards, the ILO can play fully its role as regulator. However, in order that it might do this, we invite all member states of the ILO to do everything possible to ratify the Conventions and ensure their implementation.

This is the challenge of our International Labour Organization in the twenty-first century.

*(The Conference adjourned at noon.)*

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