

## Ninth sitting

Wednesday, 12 June 2002, 5.15 p.m.

*President: Mr. Elmiger*

### GLOBAL REPORT UNDER THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE ILO DECLARATION ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK: DISCUSSION (*cont.*)

*Original French:* The PRESIDENT – We shall now resume the general discussion on the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, *A future with child labour*.

Mr. VERMEEND (*Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands*) – Some 180 million children are caught in the worst forms of child labour. There still is a very long way to go.

How can we come closer to a world without child labour? The Government of the Netherlands believes that an action plan, as proposed in the Report, is required. Reinforcing IPEC sounds like a solid approach for getting children out of work and into schools and also providing the parents with employment and income-generating alternatives to child labour.

The overwhelming ratification rate of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) has reconfirmed the commitment for action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. At the same time, the more than doubling of the ratifications of Convention No. 138 reflects the growing consensus on the effective abolition of all forms of child labour. This growing consensus should be the basis for action by all relevant partners for joining hands and building alliances in order to put words into action.

We, the Netherlands, have taken up this task by organizing an international conference in February this year focusing on hazardous child labour. The conference was held together with the meeting of the International Association of Labour Inspection, and some 300 participants from 42 countries attended, representing governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, international organizations, NGOs and labour inspectorates. I will now inform you of the main conclusions of the conference.

During discussions, the need to acknowledge the different risks for boys and girls concerning hazardous child labour came up several times. It is therefore of great importance that women and girls are actively involved in fighting hazardous child labour. Also, the composition of the labour inspectorate should reflect the diversity in gender.

The Conference agreed that labour inspection is an important source of information in the struggle against child labour, and suggested that partnerships

among national labour inspectorates should be established in order to exchange experience and best practices. Furthermore, regulations should ensure access to all workplaces.

The Conference also urged effective measures to stop the recruitment of new child labourers and to pay special attention to the informal sector. You can find the conclusions of the conference in the room.

Let me finish by congratulating IPEC on its ten years of existence. In these ten years it has become the leading programme in this field. Because my country believes in the IPEC approach of getting children into school, the Netherlands will donate an additional 2.5 million euros for education-related projects.

We wish the programme much success, wisdom and support for the many challenges that lie ahead. A lot has been achieved but we also have to face the fact that there is still a long way to go. The Netherlands has been committed to supporting the ILO in its struggle against child labour, and we intend to stay committed in the future.

*Original French:* The PRESIDENT – I would like to pay tribute to the exemplary commitment of your country to the struggle against child labour and to thank you for your constructive participation in our general discussion.

Mr. JESTIN (*Government delegate, Ireland*) – The Irish delegation welcomes the new Global Report for its clear statistical analysis and its presentation of the forms contemporary child labour takes, its causes and its consequences. The Report also highlights the areas where there are gaps in our knowledge, particularly on the worst forms of child labour. This area, given the number of children involved and the deficit in data availability and reliability, demands our particular attention.

The Global Report indicates that while the total number of child workers in the world is less than estimated in 1995, there are now thought to be significantly more of them in the worst forms of child labour.

According to the Report, of 246 million children engaged in child labour, 179 million are in the worst forms of child labour. This figure constitutes 73 per cent of all child labourers, or one in every eight of the world's children aged from 5 to 17. Some 8.4 million children are caught in the unconditional worst forms of child labour including slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities. Of this figure, the bulk of children are in forced or bonded labour (5.7 million or two-thirds), 1.8 million are in prostitution and por-

nography, 0.3 million have been forcibly recruited into armed conflict and a further 0.6 million are engaged in illicit activities such as drug smuggling.

As regards the future actions to be taken by the ILO to address these problems, the Irish delegation has a number of practical suggestions to make, namely that the Organization should firstly construct research tools which breakdown data not only by gender and by age but by ethnic and social group, socio-economic status and family status, for example child-headed household, eldest child etc. Secondly, we feel the ILO should mainstream the response to the worst forms of child labour across all ILO programmes, in particular IPEC and the special action programme on forced labour. Thirdly, the ILO should, as regards forced and bonded labour, ensure that ILO-supported programmes to abolish forced and bonded child labour address this type of child labour as part of a wider family poverty issue. The ILO should also undertake independent surveys to establish the extent, causes and impact of child, forced and bonded labour, improve legislation where necessary to criminalize the use of forced or bonded labour, adopt effective measures to implement existing legislation and penalize exploiters of child forced and bonded labour, train all relevant government officials and agents in the relevant legislation and best approach to realize the rehabilitation of children in forced or bonded labour, and adopt prevention measures which address the immediate and underlying causes of forced and bonded labour.

Finally, as regards prostitution and pornography, we feel the ILO should develop a specific programme of technical cooperation, based on the Yokohama Declaration from the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in December last year, to address child prostitution and pornography at regional and local levels.

The Irish delegation would wish to echo a point that was made during the discussion today that, together with poverty alleviation, education is, in our view, a frontline weapon in the battle to eliminate child labour. Access to basic education is a fundamental human right that has been denied to millions of children, condemning them to a downward spiral of poverty and despair. Not only is poverty a cause of child labour, child labour also causes poverty. Education is the best way to break this vicious cycle and is the linchpin of any sustainable programme to eliminate child labour, ensuring that all children can avail of their fundamental right to attend school, educating their families and communities, and raising awareness of the rights of children within the broader spectrum of human rights, both within the countries where child labour is prevalent and throughout the world. In this way, young people take a more active role in society and take control of their destinies and those of their peers and are not only seen by the rest of society as a passive group requiring protection.

In this context, the Irish delegation fully supports the SCREAM initiative announced last evening at the ILO ceremony launching the first World Day against Child Labour. The acronym SCREAM stands for Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media.

The SCREAM initiative recognizes that young people can be a powerful force for social mobilization. Through innovative and creative teaching methods, it sets out to equip them with the means and the

tools to make their own impact on the world in which they live and to take their message out to the wider community. Its educational resource package introduces young people to the complexities surrounding the issue of child labour and helps them to develop appropriate responses and to channel their creative energies in a positive and constructive way.

The Irish delegation hopes this initiative makes a valuable contribution to the active involvement of youth and children against child labour.

In conclusion, the Irish delegation believes that the goal of eradicating child labour must be integrated across ILO programmes and national policy agendas, and encourages all States in a position to do so to honour Article 8 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which states that Members shall take appropriate steps to assist one another in giving effect to the provisions of the Convention through enhanced international cooperation and/or assistance, including support for social and economic development.

Ireland is currently examining how Ireland aid, the Government Development Cooperation Division, can mainstream this commitment into its programme undertakings. In this way we would hope to make an effective contribution to international efforts to address this issue.

*Original Spanish:* Mr. CHAHIN LUPO (*Minister of Labour and Microenterprise, Bolivia*) – Bolivia welcomes the progress which has been made and is reflected in the Global Report on child labour. We have listened carefully to the statements made by the different countries, we share the visions of those who are tackling social realities and we agree with all initiatives which have as their sole goal the development of plans and projects aimed at the rapid reduction of social inequalities. We encourage people to have faith and hope in the fight to establish basic rights for the protection of our children. Let us make their dignity a global issue.

Bolivia treats it as a priority to give protection to one of the most vulnerable sectors of society. Out of population of some 8 million inhabitants, 800,000 children and adolescents are working below the minimum admissible age in the informal sector, in family enterprises and in precarious situations. They are involved in a vicious circle where they have to opt out of school, they are cut off from their families, their health deteriorates and they are involved in delinquency. We are committed to the development of the State and its democratic institutions, and in this context legal and judicial reforms have included a new code for children and adolescents, with programmes designed to support and assist this section of the population. We are involving civil society and seeking to create alternatives for the integration of these young people into our society which is multilingual diverse and culturally rich in its cultures. Our social philosophy is geared to improving education, health and the right to housing and recreation, and generally seeks to recognize the social rights of individuals.

The political constitution of Bolivia, the general law on labour and associated decrees provide the necessary guarantees for the protection of young people. In this context, the Ministry of Labour and Microenterprise, together with other state bodies in a strategic alliance with civil society and international

cooperation, promotes intensive programmes aimed at eliminating child labour.

We are involved in tackling long-standing, accumulated poverty which is difficult for State-sponsored action to eradicate. A revealing figure is that 26 per cent of young people are engaged in work, children in the rural areas consider agricultural work as a normal part of their lives, and a high proportion of children and adolescents are subjected to the worst forms of labour, including agriculture, forestry, the rubber industry, and mining.

This dreadful situation must be rectified. We are committed to eliminating child labour by 2010 using the prefectures and municipal authorities to disseminate programmes for the eradication of poverty. These involve access to health services and education, providing an opportunity to live a life of dignity, and we need the commitment of your institutions and call for international economic cooperation to ensure that projects are sustainable in the long term. To eradicate this unacceptable evil in human society we need the commitment of the whole political community.

We have to have a more human view of things. We have to avoid spending money on weapons for useless wars and instead money has to be spent on education and the care of children. They deserve to be treated as the children they are, with free and pure spirits who have the right to smile, to dream and to play, and perhaps in this way we might avoid an increase in the delinquency, marginalization and poverty which represent a real threat to our global village.

As long as children are sleeping on the streets, and growing up hungry, governments and States cannot have a clear conscience. We have a real responsibility to act with love and to hear the silent cries of the children who are telling us "enough is enough". This is how we must protect them, the only resource that matters.

Mr. HASEGAWA (*Government delegate, Japan*) – Speaking as a Japanese Government representative, I would like to make three comments.

Since the adoption in 1998 of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the most important instrument which sets the direction that ILO activities should follow, the present report is the third under the Declaration's Follow-up. The Report has a lot of worldwide information on the situation of child labour and measures to tackle this problem.

The Report will also be a useful guideline for the ILO and its constituents as they carry out their technical cooperation. Therefore, we highly appreciate the Report, together with the present ILO activities for the elimination of child labour.

The Report says that many child labourers laws are found in the informal economy. During this session of the Conference, under the item "Decent work and the informal economy", the characteristics of this economy and the expansion of social protection are being discussed. We also praise this timely selection of the agenda item with a view to the elimination of child labour.

Ever since the unanimous adoption of [Convention No. 182](#) at the 87th Session of the Conference in 1999, this Convention has been ratified with unprecedented speed by many member countries. This shows a high awareness of the issues shared by people all around the world and the success of the ILO's ratification campaign.

We too ratified [Convention No. 138](#) the year before last and [Convention No. 182](#) last year. Hence, we believe that the objective of the ILO is appropriate. The ILO achieves support from many member countries, and favourable results.

According to the Report, there are as many as 179 million children engaged in the worst forms of child labour, such as slavery and prostitution, which jeopardize the child's physical and mental well-being.

In order to promote the efforts of the international community to abolish child prostitution and child pornography, last December we held the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Yokohama, Japan. In Yokohama we shared the awareness of the issue and reaffirmed the need to reinforce the commitment with more than 130 countries, governments, NGOs and representatives of international organizations who participated in the Congress.

Furthermore, we have held seminars on child labour in the Asia-Pacific region since 1998. This year, we are seeking to co-host a seminar with the Government of the Republic of Korea.

While it is stated in the Report that the Asia-Pacific region has the largest number of working children, we are determined to contribute to the solution of this problem. We strongly support and hope to develop the ILO activities in this field.

Let me finish my speech with an emphasis on the Office's continued efforts for intensive and effective implementation of child labour programmes for a future without child labour.

Mr. TAMBUSAI (*Government adviser and Substitute delegate, Indonesia*) – Ever since the creation of our country, the Indonesian people have opposed the use of child labour. This is reflected in the Indonesian Constitution. By extension, this principle supports the idea that poor children should be given the widest opportunity to enjoy the rights to education and to children's benefits.

In order to effectively regulate child labour, the new Indonesian Government established the National Steering Committee on the prevention of child labour, following an agreement reached between the Indonesian Government and the ILO in 1992. This marked the beginning of the involvement of ILO/IPEC in Indonesia. In affirmation of its commitment to abolish child labour, Indonesia ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 ([No. 138](#)) which states that the minimum working age for children is 15, in accordance with a nine-year compulsory basic education scheme.

Indonesia has also ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 ([No. 182](#)). This has been followed up by the establishment of the National Action Committee on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. This committee comprises government and non-governmental institutions, and has been mandated to establish an action plan on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and to monitor its implementation.

Aside from this, economic and geographic reasons as well as socio-cultural considerations have also led the Government to oppose child labour.

There is a dualism in society regarding the existence of child labour which makes its eradication a difficult challenge. On the one hand, we are aware of the very good reasons why children should not be allowed

to work. Indeed, they should be given the opportunity to exercise their right to education and thus maximize their chance in future life, in order to acquire basic skills and to break out of the first barriers of poverty. On the other hand, due to economic circumstances and poverty, children often have no choice but to become employed in some kind of work to complement their family's meagre earnings. Thus, for many children, work either combined with school or as its replacement is the only real option. This is particularly true in Indonesia, where the country's worst economic crisis caused millions of workers, mostly in the construction sector and in labour-intensive industries, to lose their jobs, thus driving tens of thousands of children to give up school at a young age.

The crisis jacked up prices, and the rupiah fell dramatically.

Four years later, although the Indonesian Government and the social partners have made numerous efforts to cope with school drop-outs, malnutrition and child abuse, there is still a lack of cohesion and a lack of any integrated and comprehensive policies to combat the worst forms of child labour.

In this regard, the modification of legislation on child issues is certainly needed. A first step in the right direction is the Bill currently under review by the House of Representatives, which guarantees children's rights and their court protection against all action depriving them of their rights in childhood.

To conclude, the problem associated with the worst forms of child labour are of a magnitude which calls for concerted worldwide action.

Technical cooperation is indispensable, bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally. All countries must unite in fighting this scourge, particularly to combat trafficking in persons, drugs, prostitution and pornography. Otherwise the consequences are first and foremost economic. Developing countries are already burdened by poverty. Globalization must give them the same opportunities to compete in the free market, in order to encourage investment and job creation. In this regard, we are convinced that the ILO has a crucial role to play as a coordinator, and that its vocation is to advance the cause of social progress and justice for all, particularly for children who are at the forefront of the bodies engaged in this effort. Together we should spare no effort to address the complex problems facing children, for by ignoring them we are destroying their lives.

Mr. SWEENEY (*Workers' adviser, United States*) – I wish to comment on the ILO Global Report, *A future without child labour*, and I do so on behalf of the AFL-CIO and more than 13 million men and women who are members of unions affiliated to our Federation.

Because this is my first opportunity to be with all of you since the awful events of 11 September, I want to frame and preface my remarks by thanking all of you for your expressions of solidarity and offers of support. Within hours of the attacks in New York and Washington, thousands of faxes and telephone calls came pouring in from our brothers and sisters around the world. Those expressions and offers helped us to overcome unbelievable grief and on behalf of America's working families I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

On 3 September, just a few days before the attacks, I delivered a Labor Day speech at the Washington

National Cathedral in which I noted that our nation was at peace, but that the just and inclusive nation we had worked so hard to build was in need of repair. "The time to fix the roof is when the sun is shining," I noted, and I suggested we get busy while there was some daylight left. Let me recall what I went on to say on that day. "And when we think of the roof over our heads today, we must think of a home that is now global, because never have the peoples of the world been more connected –and my Labor Day list of repairs included this badly broken 'winner-take-all economy.'

"We believe the ultimate test of globalization is whether it increases freedom, promotes democracy and helps lift the poor from poverty, whether it empowers the many and not just the few, whether its blessings are widely shared, whether it works for working families in America and in all countries."

I then noted that speaking from the same pulpit, before he was murdered, the civil rights hero, Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, dramatically articulated the challenges we face when he said "No individual can live alone, no nation can live alone, and anyone who feels that he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution". Certainly the truth of that statement is even more true today and it provides a useful context for my comments on child labour.

Men and women of goodwill may differ on the precise solutions to the challenges that this global economy has thrust upon our shrinking planet. But there should be no argument over whether we must work assiduously together to eliminate the horrendous poverty which envelops so much of our world, and scourges like child labour that bloom in fields, fertilized by poverty, ignorance, starvation and disease.

As long as millions of children are at work in fields and factories instead of in school, as long as millions of children are living in slavery, and are involved in trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution and pornography, our world will never know peace. So as we lay plans for building a future without child labour, let us do so with a profound sense of urgency and commitment.

This Report equips us with the knowledge we need in order to understand the problem and what must be done. But the only way we can reach our goal of abolishing child labour completely is to make it our foremost priority and then insist that our countries do likewise.

Our challenge is a great one, but the moral imperative is even greater. I said last September, and I repeat now, that another world is possible, it may take years of unceasing efforts, but we have changed the world before against impossible odds. It is possible to eliminate child labour and we must move forward confidently, since Dr. King taught us that the moral arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice.

*Original Arabic: Mr. AOUN (Government adviser and Substitute technical, Lebanon)* – I wish to greet you on behalf of the national committee against child labour in Lebanon, which groups together the three parties represented here. We salute the part being played by the Organization in this area vital for a humankind free of child labour in the future. The participation of all countries and all peoples of the world means that we must work together to shape a future on the basis of social principles which will contribute to well-being and social peace, thereby strengthening the lasting international peace aspired to by the Constitution of the ILO. The Declaration of the Organi-

zation on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work embodies the two Conventions relating to minimum age and the worst forms of child labour. This Declaration constitutes an “executive” programme for the International Bill of Human Rights, as regards social issues. It has also become a path to social justice and progress. The Global Report issued as a follow-up to the ILO Declaration under discussion at this special session, is a stage which necessitates a review of the global situation as regards combating child labour, and studying the causes which impede the achievement of our goal.

Participation of the richer North with the poorer South has not in fact led to social justice among nations. Quite the contrary the disparity between the rich industrial North and the developing South has created distinctions between nations, exacerbated by globalization. It was therefore necessary that the international organizations of the international community, particularly the ILO, endeavour to establish norms and develop activities that would contribute to diminishing this disparity.

If poverty is the principal cause of the spread of child labour in developing societies, I believe that we can say that wealth enjoyed by societies in the industrialized countries, is responsible for the effects of poverty foremost among which is child labour.

In the light of this international equation, it could be said that holders of capital and investors should be involved in combating the effects of poverty and, especially child labour. The national responsibilities of the social partners place them all in the same boat in the face of prevailing globalization.

It is paradoxical that child labour is predominant in societies where there is high unemployment among the young and adults. It is even more paradoxical that we should address the results while ignoring the causes. The major cause, aside from poverty, is that many peoples have lost their sovereignty over their national resources, and the submission of many peoples to military occupation or economic blockade.

While we look forward to a future where there is no child labour, we should pause to contemplate the image of convoys of Palestinian children being taken to Israeli concentration camps and torture. We must also open our eyes to the sight of the thousands of Iraqi children dying every year because of the blockade and the lack of medicines and food. We should also conclude that ethics at the international level are an essential support in the march towards the elimination of child labour.

In Lebanon, we have taken great steps to combat child labour, in cooperation with IPEC, such as the creation of a national committee which comprises various ministries as well as the workers’ federation, the industrialists’ association and NGOs. Its task is to formulate and implement the national strategy for the achievement of this objective.

We ratified [Convention No. 182](#) two years ago and [Convention No. 138](#) a few weeks ago. The Ministry of Labour has drafted a labour law which reflects all the international labour norms relating to children, particularly as regards the minimum age, raised to 15 years, which prohibits child labour harmful to health and morals, and which aggravates the penalties imposed on persons violating provisions on the employment of children.

Our experience in Lebanon, although recent has begun to bear fruit and now represents a model

in conformity with proposals made by the Director-General in his Report as regards the responsibilities of the social partners and the ILO for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Finally we wish to say that child labour is an obstacle to a better future, life and work. The conditions for achieving a future free of child labour are the very same as those for human dignity in a life of freedom and independence aspiring to progress and well-being.

*(Original Spanish):* Ms. LAU VALDÉS (*Government delegate, Cuba*) – The Government delegation of Cuba very much appreciates the efforts which are being made by the ILO with a view to eradicating child labour. It considers this task to be an inevitable part of the work of the Organization and of governments’ economic, political and social programmes. The Report states that there are 211 million children in the world who are working to the detriment of their education, their health and the development of their personalities. The magnitude of this figure indicates that efforts made so far, are insufficient.

In Cuba there is no child labour, let alone in its worst forms, which we condemn. In our country, the right of all children to well-being and all-round development has been a priority. For more than 40 years now the elimination of child labour has represented one of the major achievements of the Cuban Revolution. All children in the 5-11 age-group go to school and 100 per cent of them enjoy the guarantee of being able to continue their studies. The national education system covers the entire country.

In Cuba expenditure on education is defrayed from appropriations from the state budget and more than 60 per cent of that budget is devoted to education, health, social security and housing.

Medical services in the preventative, curative and educational fields and in stomatology are guaranteed in all educational centres, in addition to general services covering the entire population.

Parents also have and exercise various rights and enjoy the requisite protection for themselves and their children. Children who do not have parental protection are especially protected by the State.

Social service programmes as a whole, including employment programmes, mean that in fact we have no abandoned children working on our streets or children working in order to contribute to the informal economy or family purse. These achievements show the political will of the Government of Cuba and these facts are, unfortunately, incorrectly described in paragraph 129, part I of the Report, in spite of the fact that our country sent in the relevant information. We trust that, in the future, the objective reality and particular features of our country will be faithfully depicted.

The eradication of child labour calls for huge, joint efforts by a number of parties, but primarily it requires political will on the part of governments. From the point of view of the country as a whole, these actions have to ensure that there is employment for everyone who is fit to work and that there is real and effective social protection for all and that this is seen as a responsibility of the State, as well as free education, healthcare and respect for human dignity from childhood onwards. The way we treat our children is the yardstick with which history will measure the way we have fulfilled our responsibility to the future of humanity.

(Original German): Mr. KOBERSKI (Government delegate, Germany) – The very title of the Report before us leads me to reflect on a future without child labour. Is this Utopia or is it something we really can achieve?

In my eyes, this Report contains a number of very important positive points. There is a clear distinction made between legal child labour and three other kinds of child labour which should be eliminated: children who have not reached the minimum age, who are involved in the worst forms of child labour, and who are performing hazardous labour. Secondly, in the Report there are new insights as regards the number of children involved in child labour. I am not reassured, however, when the Report refers to child labourers between the ages of 5 and 1 and says there has been a drop from 250 million to 211 million.

In the Report, the argument is often repeated that the statistical figures are not absolutely right, but we have these 211 million children who are working and they have to be seen in the appropriate category. Finally, the Report also gives certain figures as regards working children between the ages of 5 and 17. What is even more important are the figures relating to the distribution of children in the various economic sectors. There is a clear indication that agriculture is where the largest number of children are involved, and this is an area where we have to recognize the dangers and hazards. This applies to working with chemicals without the necessary protective measures, or when machinery is used that is obsolete and dangerous. Only 30 per cent of child labourers work other in areas, but they are nevertheless very important.

We also think it is very important to know what the Report has to say regarding the causes of child labour. We recognize the link between child labour and poverty, but I do not think we can say that poverty equals child labour and that no poverty would mean the eradication of child labour. The Turkish Minister of Labour spoke this morning about the variety of reasons for and causes of child labour; among the causes mentioned were questions of demand, family circles and family requirements, and social circumstances. I support what was said by my Swedish colleague, who spoke about the need for schooling, and access to schooling, which would strongly contribute to eradicating child labour. The recognition that there is no model as regards child labour, and that there can be no solution, no general solution, to combat it and eliminate it is not something new; but, for the first time, I think, there have been very many facts which have clearly indicated the realities.

I believe that this Report represents a sort of handbook, a manual, so that each country can look at it in order to find the appropriate model in order to try to combat child labour on its soil. At the same time, those countries that wish to help, can use this Report to help find appropriate measures to combat this phenomenon.

I believe it is also very important to think in terms of the need for cooperation among the various players. The battle against child labour should not be, and cannot be, a monopoly – a monopoly of the State, of the employers, of the workers, or of civil society. Not even the international community has a monopoly here. All these players have a responsibility in the battle against child labour; none of these players should be excluded. In Part 3 of the Report, there is an action plan for the effective abolition of child

labour. One proposal speaks of reinforcing the work of IPEC, another of taking up the issue more actively in the ILO with more joint activities between IPEC and other ILO units, a third of forging closer partnership with associations representing workers, employers, and other groups and institutions having the same goals of eliminating child labour.

I give my full support to this, and hope that it will lead to a broad consensus among the Members of the ILO. Let us take this excellent Report, and breathe new impetus, new life, into the battle against child labour. In this connection, we might think in terms of the appropriate Convention.

In reading this Report, I am reassured that this is not a utopia, but it is something which can become reality. A future without child labour *can* become a reality if everyone plays his or her role. Children are our future, they represent a potential, and we should not endanger this potential of our children. We should protect children, they should be allowed to play, they should have the right to education, schooling, and access to vocational training. If this is achieved, then we are on the right path.

(Original Chinese): Mr. LIU (Government adviser, China) – We would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Director-General in submitting his report entitled *A future without child labour*, in which he gave a comprehensive description of the phenomena of child labour worldwide.

Children are the hope of mankind and the future of the world. Child labour is a challenge to the civilization and dignity of mankind. The sustainable development of society will be impossible without the abolition of child labour. To care for children means to care for human civilization, and to protect children means to protect their future. At present child labour involves a huge number of children, and causes serious damage to them. The ILO has been making unremitting efforts to eliminate child labour.

Fifty countries have participated in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour since its launching in 1991. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted in 1998, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) have clear provisions on the elimination of child labour. In order to further protect the rights and interests of children, the ILO prepared a Global Report entitled *A future without child labour* in 2002; this indicates that the elimination of child labour has become a global task in the new millennium. The fight against child labour is getting more and more responses and support from member States. The Chinese Government appreciates the objectives and activities of the ILO relating to the fight against child labour, and supports the efforts of countries and regions to take specific measures to tackle this problem.

China always attaches great importance to the protection of the rights and interests of children, and has formulated a series of laws and policies. It is clearly provided in the Constitution that children shall be protected by the State, by labour law, the law on the protection of minors. Provisions on the prohibition of child labour strictly forbid government agencies, social organizations, enterprises, public institutions, individual businesses, rural households and urban residents from employing children under 16 years old in paid work or private work that will bring them income.

The Government of China has ratified Convention No. 138 and is accelerating the process to ratify Convention No. 182 as a priority. At the same time, the provisions of criminal law cover the exploitation of child labour, and also provide for the penalization of individuals and entities that use child labour. Judicial authorities will impose criminal penalties if the case is particularly serious.

As the country has a huge population and a vast geographic area, and because of the constraints of economic and social development levels, there are still difficulties and problems facing children's development in China.

Therefore, based on the analysis of the situation, of the 350 million Chinese children, China has formulated and promulgated the outline for children's development in China 2001-10, which will lead to a further positive development of activities for children in China.

The Chinese delegation believes that economic development and education is the foundation for the eradication of child labour, and international co-operation may also help in this regard. The ILO should continue to focus on the protection of children and the prohibition of child labour, with more human and financial resources given to this area. The developed countries need to take responsibility and assume the obligation of supporting the developing countries. They must fulfil their commitments concerning finance, debts and trade, so as to build a sound external environment for the developing countries and mitigate the gap between the North and the South so that developing countries will have more resources for the protection, education and the development of children. The Chinese Government will continue to devote efforts to the development of activities for children, and to contribute to the promotion of international activities for children, together with the ILO and all other countries in the world.

Mr. DREVER (*Government delegate, Australia*) – The Australian Government wishes to thank the Director-General for providing a comprehensive and informative Report on the nature and incidence of child labour throughout the world. It is particularly fitting that discussion of the Report is taking place on the day designated as the World Day against Child Labour; a day on which we are invited to reflect on the enormity of the child labour problem, and consider how best to give hope to many millions of children throughout the world.

The Australian Government strongly opposes the exploitation of children through work, and is absolutely committed to the abolition of the worst forms of child labour. Australia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has signed the optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Australia's law and practice implement these treaties, as well as the principles and objectives of the two core child labour Conventions. The fact that Australia has not ratified the ILO Conventions does not imply a lack of commitment to these standards or that a child labour problem exists in Australia. It merely reflects the fact that Australia has some technical compliance issues with these particular instruments.

Australian authorities promote the protection of children through a range of legislation providing for

compulsory education to at least age 15, minimum ages for employment in selected occupations, child welfare and occupational health and safety. These legislative provisions are supported by a range of government agencies, public and private organizations, an Australian culture characterized by protective attitudes towards children, and news media which is strongly predisposed to reporting instances of the exploitation of children. This combination of laws and cultural factors protects children against admission to harmful employment and promotes their fullest physical and mental development.

In the light of these factors, the governments of Australia's constituent states and territories have not been prepared to legislate for a general minimum age for employment as required under Article 2 of Convention No. 138. This is because current law and practice are sufficient to protect children from harmful or exploitative forms of child labour and there is no obvious need for additional legislation. This means Australia cannot meet all the prescriptive requirements of Convention No. 138 for the purposes of ratification. However, I would like to reiterate that Australia unequivocally meets the objectives and principles of this core Convention.

The Australian Government strongly supports the principles of Convention No. 182 and is confident that domestic law and practice effectively promote the abolition of the worst forms of child labour. The Australian Government is currently unable to ratify the Convention due to domestic policy that no international treaty be ratified unless domestic law and practice, including that of the states and territories, is in full compliance with its provisions. Unfortunately, a study of the interaction of federal and state law and practice has revealed a possible technical compliance issue that needs to be resolved. That said, there is no evidence of any domestic problem falling within the scope of this Convention.

The Australian Government is committed to supporting international efforts to eliminate exploitative child labour. Through its aid programme the Government has supported region-wide efforts to create and increase public awareness of the exploitation of children. These efforts support NGOs active in preventing sexual abuse of children and support regional workshops and seminars as part of the Stockholm Agenda for Action. Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with the Governments of the Republic of the Philippines and Fiji to cooperatively combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Australia's aid programme focuses on sustainable development, strengthening educational systems and building human rights institutions. Specifically, the aid programme targets intervention and rehabilitation programmes for those children in most need. Examples include programmes to support and help keep extremely poor children in school, support for national and local initiatives to address the problems of street and working children, support for delivery of basic services to street children, and support for the return and reintegration of women and child victims of trafficking, as well as strengthening governments' institutional capacity to address this problem.

The Global Report begins with a statement that "the effective abolition of child labour is one of the most urgent challenges of our time". The Australian Government believes that this Report will provide a

useful basis for developing practical responses to this challenge. We have reached the stage where the nature and extent of the child labour problem have been identified, universal acceptance of the principle of abolishing exploitative child labour has been achieved, and the benefits of firm, positive action to eliminate this problem are widely agreed. It is now incumbent upon the ILO and its Members to ensure that significant real progress is made. The Report pays due regard to the fact that there are no ready-made solutions to the child labour problem and the policies and programmes must be flexible in order to respond to different national conditions. The Australian Government agrees with the view expressed in the Report that the most useful focus for action over the next four years would be to strengthen the ILO's support for national stakeholders in their efforts to abolish exploitative child labour.

The proposed three pillars of an action plan, reinforcing the work of IPEC, mainstreaming the abolition of child labour across ILO programmes and forging closer partnerships, provide a sound strategic basis for approaching this task. For this approach to be fully effective, it would be important to ensure that IPEC is up to the task and has proper mechanisms in place to ensure accountability to members. The Australian Government considers that the IPEC programme must be strongly outcomes-focused if it is to ensure the effectiveness of country programmes. Inevitably, the managers of the programme, governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other participating parties at country level will have some successes and some failures as they try to learn by experience which approaches will be the most effective. This is a necessary but worthwhile learning experience which, when coupled with effective evaluation processes, will help to ensure that in 2006 the ILO will be able to report real and substantial progress in eliminating the child labour problem.

Three years ago at this Conference delegates gave their unanimous support to the adoption of Convention No. 182. This support has been reflected through the very high number of ratifications achieved in such a short time. In actual fact, as [Convention No. 182](#) is a core Convention, all Members are committed to supporting its principles. I advise the Conference that Australia will ratify Convention No. 182 as soon as possible. The Director-General has shown real commitment and leadership and the Office is to be commended for the work it is doing. Together we can all contribute to making a real change for the better. The onus is on us all to get on with the job.

Mr. MACIEL SANTOS (*Government adviser, Brazil*) – Ten years have passed since IPEC was created and since its very beginning Brazil has provided rich soil for it to flourish in. However, the Global Report lacks important information on the Brazilian case which is why I would like to try and fill in the gap now, in order to provide information for those countries that might be willing to adapt the Brazilian model to their realities.

In 1992, Brazil had 5.4 million children aged between 5 and 15 who had worked for at least one hour during the reference week of the National Household Survey. In 1999, the same survey revealed that this number had decreased by about 30 per cent, to a total of 3.8 million, or 2.9 if we consider only those who worked for at least 15 hours a week. What did we do

to achieve this result? In 1994 the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour was created, through which governmental, workers', employers' and non-governmental organizations, as well as international agencies could integrate their actions to increase the combined effect. Labour inspection bodies were urged to pay close attention to combating child labour. Inspectors in each state were designated to monitor child labour. Special studies and research were produced and brochures and books published on the subject. Later on, several workshops and seminars were held on a comprehensive range of topics covering many aspects of child labour which helped to raise awareness of the problem throughout the country in conjunction with national and regional campaigns against child labour.

Three years before the adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 ([No. 182](#)), Brazil had already launched a national programme to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Initially the national programme reached 145,000 children but by the end of 1999, the year of the most recent National Household Survey available, there were 800,000 children receiving grants from the federal Government to stop working, go to school and participate in a set of activities designed to prevent them from going back to work in their spare time.

Moreover, many States and municipalities have their own programmes, which increases the number of children receiving grants. Brazil was perhaps the first country to define hazardous forms of child labour damaging to the safety, health and morals of children in a tripartite manner, as demanded by [Convention No. 182](#). The final list, published in January 2001, was extremely comprehensive, consisting of 82 hazardous forms of child labour prohibited to all children under 18. In March 2000, the Brazilian Labour Inspectorate launched a new strategy against child labour. Since the vast majority of working children were employed in the informal sector of the economy, which is not adequately covered by traditional inspections, the Labour Inspectorate issued instructions that labour inspectors should act in each and every case of child labour identified, even if they could not prosecute because the employer was not identifiable. In such cases they were to inform those authorities who had the competence to intervene, for example prosecutors who could bring the case to court, lawyers for the defence of children's rights, and so on. Supervision of the national programme was also entrusted to the Labour Inspectorate, and the coordination and planning of the action carried out at each stage was conducted by special groups to combat child labour set up under each regional office. Last but not least, the Brazilian federal Government struck a major blow against child labour last year when a preventive programme was set up to benefit children attending school, irrespective of whether they worked or not. This huge programme currently provides monthly grants for 8.5 million children. Based on all this, we are highly confident that the 2001 National Household Survey, whose data should be released by September this year, will show an even greater reduction in the instance of child labour in Brazil, as already indicated in the preliminary data for the 2000 national census.

*Interpretation from Arabic:* Mr. DERBY (*Government delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) – In the



name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! The Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2002 is the source of our debate today on Convention No. 182, which is concerned with the worst forms of child labour.

The Report is detailed and includes statistics from the whole world. The statistics for 2002 show an increase in the number of children employed in any kind of activity between five and 14: this figure is about 211 million, of which 186 million are engaged in child labour to be abolished (including in its worst forms). Of the 141 million children aged 15-17 engaged in economic activity, 59 million children are engaged in child labour. These are alarming figures. It means that we have to make concerted efforts and allocate resources, we have to work together to eliminate the worst cases of child labour, and this can be done only by supporting the ILO and IPEC. We agree with the three categories of child labour for abolition, encompassing various forms of work that are physically, morally and psychologically harmful.

If children benefit from health and education programmes, they will form a generation which can carry responsibility and can contribute to the economic and social development of their countries. But if the experience of childhood has been denied, as in the cases cited in the Report, we will have a generation which will be a burden on society.

Our country has ratified all the Conventions concerned, and the special importance we attach to children is reflected in our national legislation. Paragraph 20 of the Green Book deals with the rights of children in society. We place emphasis on education, considering that this should primarily be within the family, and we stress the special link between child and mother, especially at the time of breastfeeding.

Existing legislation includes provisions to ensure the care of the child from birth to age 16, and the labour legislation has stipulated that no child may be employed in our country before he or she is 16. Vocational training and education in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is free of charge and the nine years of compulsory schooling, from age six to 14, are also free.

In finishing I would like to say that we also want a future in which no more Palestinians are killed by Israeli bombardments and the actions of the Israeli army. This is crucial for the future of our children and for the honouring of Convention provisions that concern them. Nor must they be allowed to die of hunger. Therefore we must be able to punish those who violate children's rights and the relevant provisions, including those contained in the appendix to the Director-General's Report concerning the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. I also think it is important to set up a fund for financing social services in the occupied territories.

*Original French: Ms. AGUESSY (Government delegate, Benin)* – The Government of Benin would like to congratulate the International Labour Office on the Global Report, *A future without child labour* and the useful information it contains on child labour throughout the world.

I would like to reaffirm that my country is absolutely committed to combating child labour. Aware of the fact that child labour stops economic and social development in a country, Benin was one of the

first countries to adhere to the IPEC Programme in 1997. During the first year of this programme's implementation in Benin, several studies were carried out to assess the scale and complexity of the phenomenon. With regard to this, I would like to express my gratitude to IPEC and the ILO for their financial support.

Most of the studies carried out on the question have revealed that the phenomenon of child labour exists in Benin and is found in agriculture, fisheries, and in all the activities of the informal economy, and is related to illiteracy and poverty. Many areas where the trafficking of children takes place have been identified throughout the country, and awareness campaigns have been stepped up in these regions. These publicity campaigns need to be strengthened by community development programmes. For this reason, civil society which is broadly associated with all of the work carried out as part of the IPEC Programme, has started many concrete campaigns in the last few months that are subject to the approval of the IPEC Programme in Benin. All of this action is aimed at reacting to the causes identified during the studies that have been carried out.

I would like to mention some of the action that demonstrates the political will to combat child labour in Benin.

Firstly, the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Also primary education is free of charge for girls; an inter-ministerial committee has been created for harmonizing national legislation in this area; and the national budget has a credit line of FCFA 450 million, which is US\$650,000 for the purpose of eliminating child labour. It should also be highlighted that the action taken on the national level fits perfectly into the sub-regional strategy for combating child labour and the trafficking of children.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our cooperation with neighbouring countries, particularly Côte d'Ivoire which last month helped twenty-five Benin children to return to their country and escape exploitation. Thanks to the mechanisms set up by the Government and civil society, these children were able to go back to their families.

I hope that the ILO will encourage the efforts made by countries to increase effective and concrete action. I also hope that if all States join the effort to combat child labour as a priority, we will be able to work together to build a future without child labour.

Mr. STEYNE (*Workers' adviser, United Kingdom*) – First let me say that the new figures in the Report illustrate just how important Convention No. 182 has been for us all as a complementary instrument to Convention No. 138 in identifying the extent and nature of child labour, including in its worst forms.

I would like to start by thanking the Director-General for the Report and for this afternoon's interactive debate. It was a useful start, and I am sure that it will provoke further discussions here at the Conference, as he wished, and perhaps lead to more active and productive discussions at home.

We in the United Kingdom have work to do still to implement both Conventions: immediate action must be a priority, for example, on the work of under 18-year olds in our sex industry. Trafficked children must be treated as victims and not as criminals.

I made the point in the interactive discussion that the TUC believes, as Bill Brett said on Monday in the plenary, that there are only two ways to protect working people sustainably – through good law, properly enforced by effective labour inspectorates and judiciaries, and through social dialogue between effective social partners. For us, that means organization in free workers' organizations and the right to effective collective bargaining. I would like to return to those two points. First, labour inspection services have a key role to play in monitoring the incidence of child labour. Indeed, under the law, it may be the key responsibility in child labour legislation.

I would therefore have liked to have seen even more space in the Report devoted to the contribution labour inspection services can make and the innovative methods already in use. There are many. There might have been greater space for more north-south and south-south exchange.

Now, it is a truism that labour inspection services are underfunded in almost all countries, and lack capacity in many. Redressing both those challenges must be a priority for governments and for the ILO. The fact that labour inspection services deal with other labour standards apart from those on child labour should not be a reason for resigning from that task. On the contrary, if we recognize the indivisibility and mutually reinforcing nature of the eight fundamental human rights Conventions, an indivisibility stressed in the Declaration, there should be no reason to hesitate. If labour inspection services, in combating child labour, contribute to promoting decent work and vice versa, then that is absolutely complementary. I would urge Governments and the social partners, as they consider their national plans of action on child labour, to examine closely the recommendations of the first High-level Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Child Labour, held here in Geneva in September 1999, and those of the Regional High-Level Tripartite Meeting of Experts from the African Region on the same subject, held in Harare in September 2001.

The representative of UNICEF seems to be labouring under the misapprehension that trade unions do not care about workers in the informal economy, including child workers, have no contacts with workers in the informal economy and know little about the informal economy. We know full well that child labour is most prevalent in the informal economy. That is also a truism because one characteristic of the informal economy is that it is rarely subject to labour inspection.

The need for governments to ensure that labour inspection legislation is amended where necessary to ensure universal coverage was a key recommendation of both meetings.

So long as sectors of the economy remain excluded from the possibility of inspection, for example in some countries domestic service, or agriculture, or export processing zones, we will do less than we can to uncover hidden work. This is particularly true in the case of domestic service, in which the girl-child in particular is at special risk.

But labour inspection services cannot inspect all workplaces regularly, not even in most of the industrialized countries. We only wish they could. When we call for companies to develop credible supply-chain monitoring systems in voluntary social initiatives such as the ethical trading initiative, we are not calling for the privatization of labour inspection services. That

would be an unthinkable approach for the trade union movement. But we are recognizing the power and responsibility of multinational enterprises for their supply chains. No, we see voluntary social initiative monitoring systems also as part of a complementary network of support for labour inspection services, just as collective bargaining agreements are. The simple fact of a union presence in the workplace and in the country, the presence of community-based organizations in communities, the work of the education services and so on can all contribute to supporting the work of labour inspection services in developing proactive strategies to combat child labour and to enforcing the law when needed.

On the one hand, as my friend and colleague, Mr. Mdladlana, the Minister of Labour of South Africa has often said, these various actors can help promote a culture of compliance with the law among employers. He was referring specifically to the Ethical Trading Initiative.

What complementary relationships can such voluntary social initiative monitoring systems develop that support the public labour inspection services, and what can voluntary social initiatives do? That is a question we are seeking to answer in a variety of pilot projects, including a new project on child labour carried out with local partners in the garment industry in Tamil Nadu, and another in the South African wine industry which we have just concluded, with the establishment of a new multi-stakeholder body in the winelands. The latter will provide workplace monitoring initially to British retailers.

Just as poverty is one cause of child labour, child labour also causes poverty, so the battle against child labour cannot be won without universal, free, accessible basic education. And universal education cannot be achieved without the elimination of child labour.

We are committed to poverty elimination, social uplifting, social dialogue, sustainable development, just terms of trade and a fundamental change to the Bretton Woods policies and public expenditure. We know that with political will, even poor countries, and poor regions of poor countries can make progress in eliminating child labour.

I remind you of the words of Julius Nyerere, "A fair share of the little of what we have". Let me reiterate, to conclude, that we are for a fair share for all, of the big cake that is the global economy. That is why I referred to just terms of trade, but the message remains inequality, discrimination, oppression, lack of political will and the willingness of employers to exploit children. These, too, must be addressed at the national level.

I close there. Our belief remains that fundamental rights at work are indivisible and mutually reinforcing, and that education, social dialogue, decent work and equity, nationally, and internationally, are the keys to the effective elimination of child labour.

*Original Arabic:* Ms. ABD EL HADY (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Egypt*) – Let me thank the Director-General for his excellent Report on child labour. I would also like to thank him for having chosen Egypt to make the declaration on behalf of the Arab world.

Child labour has human and social dimensions that are of great importance because children should enjoy the right to education. There are many negative effects that child labour tends to have on societies, both economic and social, but also in trade relations.

Egypt is among the first countries in the world that stood up to oppose child labour, and its representatives have attended a large number of international gatherings on the issue. But more action is needed at both the international and regional levels.

We all want a world for our children that is free of suffering. That is why we need international solidarity in order to protect children, particularly the children of occupied Palestine, who are threatened like everyone else in the region.

Poverty, of course, is the major reason for child labour. Also, the tragedies befalling our region have forced many children out onto the streets to work in order to make up for the loss of revenue resulting from parents lost in Israeli onslaughts.

We have certain organizations, particularly the council headed by the First Lady, which supervise the monitoring of child labour. And I am very happy to note that Egypt, last September, ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). It also ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) which means that Egypt has ratified all international instruments on the child.

Egyptian authorities are trying to check child labour. But child labour is mainly a result of poverty. I would like to point to a certain number of achievements, including awareness campaigns and cooperation with the IPEC as well as with a similar American programme.

I would like to note the tremendous efforts that are being made by the ILO through the IPEC, and particularly the support that the Egyptian worker movement receives from the IPEC.

All this, of course, has included the environmental protection groups. Training courses have also been organized for small farmers, and young farmers as well, in addition to awareness workshops.

Finally, I would like to say that we are doing our utmost to eliminate child labour. But like all developing countries we need help for families so that they can establish small and medium-sized enterprises to face up to the economic pressures, particularly in the face of deteriorating economic conditions.

*Original Arabic: Mr. AL KUHLANI (Workers' delegate, Yemen)* – In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! On behalf of the Yemeni General Federation of Trade Unions, I would like to extend our thanks to the Director-General for his excellent preparation of this document.

Child labour in Yemen is a problem that requires an immediate solution and which has made the Yemeni General Federation of Trade Unions pool all its resources in order to meet this challenge.

Ever since 1999, the Yemeni General Federation of Trade Unions has been undertaking studies and research on child labour, as well as organizing workshops and training courses in cooperation with IPEC and with the Bakhour project, which has also received support from more than country and more than one organization. It has also set out to meet the challenge of poverty and the main reason for poverty.

Forty-seven per cent of the population of Yemen happens to be under 14. The annual increase in the labour force amounts to about 40 per cent and the very fact that children are working is affecting attendance rates in schools. Attendance rates have, in fact, fallen to a mere 60 per cent, particularly owing to work in the informal sector.

At present, the minimum age for work and for recruitment to the armed forces is 18. Yemeni labour law provides for a minimum wage, but there is a real gap between legislation and practice.

We have been coordinating with the social partners and thanks to support from the ILO and certain NGOs we have been able to undertake a number of studies and projects. What we have been able to achieve, however, has been minimal in view of the magnitude of the problem.

The efforts to protect children have led the ministry to publish a manual on the subject in order to promote awareness. We are also seeking assistance from financial institutions throughout the world. We have amended our legislation in such a way as to align it to international standards. We have organized special teaching sessions for children who have had to leave school. We have placed a special focus on education for female students. All the efforts that are being made in this field are being supported as far as possible by the Government.

However, we are looking to international organizations for further help and resources, while mobilizing all our own. What we have to remember is that Palestinian children are being subjected at present to the worst forms of oppression. Many of them have lost their parents and so they have to work to survive. The international community cannot stand on the sidelines: it has to help the Palestinian children.

We would also like to mention here the conditions of children in Iraq. We hope that they too will get the support they deserve, from the international community.

*Original Chinese: Ms. XIA (Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, China)* – For this Conference, the Director-General has prepared a report entitled *A future without child labour*. It demonstrates the determination of the ILO to take up the elimination of child labour as a global cause of the new millennium and it puts forward the proposal that the elimination of child labour should be mainstreamed in Poverty Reduction Strategies.

The Chinese trade unions have expressed their appreciation of this goal and these efforts. As a populist-developing country, China has always attached great importance to the prohibition and abolition of child labour. Actually, China was among the first countries to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Chinese trade unions have been playing an active role in the prohibition and elimination of child labour. The Constitution and other laws such as the Labour Act and the Act on the protection of minors clearly state that the use of child labour is prohibited.

In the workplace, the Chinese trade unions have helped the public authorities to conduct inspections of child labour. During such inspections, Chinese trade unions always fight resolutely against child labour. At present, Chinese trade unions are urging the Government to ratify the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), as soon as possible.

In order to facilitate the effective implementation of global strategies on the abolition of child labour, I would like to put forward the following proposals. Firstly, we hold that poverty is the root cause of child labour. Therefore it is of vital importance to include the subject of child labour in poverty reduction

measures, if child labour is to be abolished. The international community and governments should integrate the elimination of child labour into their poverty reduction strategies. Secondly, against the new backdrop of globalization, the large-scale reduction of poverty poses a severe challenge to the developing countries. The international community, including the ILO and the developed countries, should pay more attention to, and provide more support for, the underdeveloped countries. The ILO should strengthen cooperation with the developing world and especially with their trade unions. Thirdly, child labour is a social issue. We should be aware that social partners and tripartite collaboration have a major role to play in this regard.

Trade unions have always been active in all moves to abolish child labour. The ILO should give full attention to the unique role of these actors.

Mr. MAMMADOV (*Employers' delegate, Azerbaijan*) – On behalf of myself and Azerbaijan's Employers' delegation I would like to congratulate the President on his election and express my gratitude to the organizers of the 90th Session who have made it possible for us to participate in what I hope will be a very successful Conference.

Azerbaijan's employers have read with a keen interest the Director-General's Report on the effective elimination of child labour *A future without child labour*. This Report has provided a realistic picture of the implementation of one of the four categories of fundamental principle and rights.

Azerbaijan has implemented a number of consistent and effective measures to abolish child labour in the country. The Republic of Azerbaijan has ratified 14 international Recommendations and Conventions, 11 of which are ILO Recommendations and Conventions relating to the application and elimination of child labour. Azerbaijan's Cabinet of the Ministers has approved the list of industries, professions and clandestine forms of employment in which child labour is prohibited. More than 300 indicated jobs in hazardous industries in 35 sectors of the economy are included on the list which are prohibited to those under the age of 18.

The Labour Code of the Azerbaijan Republic, which came into force on 1 July 1999, prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15. Together with the Government and trade unions, employers have also accepted important responsibilities to minimize child labour.

Today, as a result of the economic reforms implemented on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 71 per cent of GDP is generated by the private sector. The number of people employed in the private sector amounts to 70.3 per cent of the total workforce. Azerbaijan's National Employers' Confederation, the national organization of employers in Azerbaijan, is ready to participate in the organization and implementation of all activities in respect of ILO fundamental principles and measures undertaken by the Government of Azerbaijan to eliminate child labour.

The 2001-02 cooperation programme between the ILO and the Republic of Azerbaijan anticipates the implementation of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, aiming to promote conditions which would enable the participating bodies to progressively regulate, restrict and prohibit

child labour with the view to ensuring full compliance with international labour standards on the minimum age for employment and work.

I would like now to focus on two issues extensively described in the Report of the Director-General.

Firstly, the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on child labour. As mentioned in the Report, there is need to analyse the effect of the pandemic on child labour. In order to avoid such negative factors, we need to increase our efforts and implement preventive measures, particularly in the former Soviet republics. The seminar on HIV/AIDS being organized by the ILO in September in Baku represents a first step in this direction.

The second issue concerns military conflicts and child labour. As indicated in the Report of the Director-General, military conflicts not only cause sacrifices but also increase the numbers of orphans and homeless children and lead to child labour. At present, 20 per cent of the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic is occupied by Armenia, 1 million people, including hundreds of thousands of children, have become internally displaced persons or refugees. As a result of the occupation, more than 300,000 jobs have been lost.

Our activities are currently taking a new direction and we are experiencing certain difficulties in informing communities of certain activities and disseminating them in the regions. Although there is sufficient theoretical basis for the realization of our goals we consider that the theory should be accompanied by practical steps in order to be effective.

I would like to submit to the ILO some suggestions from the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation which I represent.

Firstly, regular seminars could be organized for employers on the elimination of child labour. The Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation is implementing a number of measures in employers' training, but we need ILO support to extend these to the regions.

Secondly, poverty can be reduced by providing the means for self-employment of women, solving gender problems, developing female entrepreneurship, and organizing seminars to strengthen social partnership which will promote the improvement of social dialogue among the participating bodies and the coordination of their activities.

My final suggestion or request is for support of a pilot project entitled "Elimination of child labour" soon to be launched in our Republic.

To conclude, I want to return to the idea of a future without child labour and call on employers in all countries to abolish child labour. Let us not forget that we are also parents and that we too have children.

Ms. MUKADI (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Indonesia*) – It is my honour on behalf of the Indonesian Workers' delegation to congratulate the President on his election to chair this 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Indonesian Workers' delegation to the International Labour Conference would like also to convey its warm greetings and best wishes to all delegations.

Today, the discussion of the Global Report, *A future without child labour*, provides an opportunity to examine past activities, to get a better understanding and to learn a lesson so that we can move forward for better children's protection in the future.

It is our hope that concrete action can emerge from the discussion, and show how the elimination of child labour is becoming a global cause for the new millennium. Lasting peace can only be achieved if there is social justice for all.

For Indonesia, child labour is a major problem in which at least 2.3 million children aged between 10 and 14 years and 3.8 million children between 5 and 8 years have to work in order to support their families. Indonesia has ratified ILO [Convention No. 138](#) and incorporate it into Law No. 20 of 1999, in which it bans, among other things, the employment of children under 15 years.

However, we have found that many Indonesian children who are under 15 years old are still being employed. Some of them in fact are engaging in either hazardous work of the worst forms of child labour, namely in plantations for boys, as domestic workers for girls, in the fishing industry, in construction, as street vendors, in child prostitution and in drug trafficking.

We have also found that another form of child labour also appears in the informal economy, particularly in home-based industries such as the production of fireworks, matches, clothing, weaving, brick-making, stone-carving and furniture.

The efforts to eliminate child labour in the country have been undermined due to the economic hardship and political instability that Indonesia is facing today.

Child labour in Indonesia is closely linked to poverty, poor health and a lack of educational opportunity. Although the Indonesian economy was severely hit during the Asian financial crisis, the aggregate impact on child labour has been limited. One possible reason is that child labourers have moved to work in home-based industries. Home-based industry involving subcontracting appears to be increasing nowadays in Indonesia. This shows that production cycles have shifted from factories, to homes, for merchandise such as leather goods, rotten and hybrid seeds. Some enterprises are doing this because they want to reduce their labour costs by exploiting women and children, particularly girls.

In some cases all the children are working between 20 and 30 hours a week, which causes back problems and muscle pain because of poor working conditions.

Based on the above mentioned explanations, several measures should be taken and adopted in the action plans for the effective abolition of child labour, as follows. The Government must focus on law enforcement and labour inspection to solve this matter. The number of labour inspectors in Indonesia is still not sufficient – 1,000 inspectors for the whole country. There is a need to strengthen law enforcement and intensify inspections so that it can reduce or hopefully eliminate, child labour, especially work in poor conditions which deteriorate children's physical and mental development.

We need to have Government political will and to create good governance to abolish child labour. Government, trade unions, and employers should work together with other stakeholders, namely teachers and educators, to mobilize efforts to combat child labour. One of these efforts is now focusing on designing a teaching kit, which we call in Indonesia Paket Kejar. It is a programme that combines basic education with practical life and work skills. This programme is very useful for former child labourers,

as it enables them to re-enter the labour market for better jobs in the future.

Children in the workforce should have time to study by reducing their work time. Manuals should be developed for employers and their organizations by collaborative efforts between the InFocus programme on skill, knowledge and employability, to initiate, to expand action and to promote productive employment for youth.

Disseminating laws on labour, particularly child labour, is very important in order to raise awareness and legal literacy among children, families and communities about their rights.

Collective bargaining is a means for trade unions and employers to come together in social dialogue for combating child labour.

The ILO should implement measures as well as enhance its programmes for technical cooperation. IPEC could render its assistance and support in campaigning against child labour in Indonesia through advocacy and social mobilization at all levels, by involving local partners. It provides services that enable community-based groups in developing social protection.

Child labour undermines national development by keeping children out of school, preventing their education and depriving them of skills that they need to enable them to contribute to economic growth and to the prosperity of the country when they are adults.

*Original Russian: Mr. MEHBALIYEV (Workers' delegate, Azerbaijan) –* The effective abolition of child labour is one of the most urgent tasks of our time. Child labour undoubtedly harms every child and prevents children from enjoying their childhood. It hinders their development and causes physical and psychological damage for life. It also damages families, communities and society as a whole. In Azerbaijan a great deal of attention is being paid to this question. In 1998, a law on the rights of the child was adopted in Azerbaijan. In 2000 Azerbaijan undertook a study on the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit for Children. A national report was submitted to UNICEF on the results of ten years work. In May 2002 Azerbaijan adopted laws which made it possible to accede to the optional protocols to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, respectively relating to trafficking in children, child pornography and prostitution, and children in armed conflicts.

Over and above the law on the rights of the child, we can also mention the Labour Code which entered into force on 1 July 1999, and which includes many provisions regulating labour relations appropriately for children from the ages of 15 to 18.

The Code stipulates that a labour contract can be concluded only with a physical person aged over 15. Contracts with persons from 15 to 18 can be concluded only with the written consent of the parents, adopted parents or guardians, as laid down by law. People under 16 are entitled to paid holidays of 42 days, and from 16 to 18, the entitlement is 35 days.

Section 10 of the Labour Code devotes a chapter to workers under 18. It defines the main provisions relating to recruitment, working conditions, medical services, remuneration and dismissal. The Republic of Azerbaijan is among the 116 states that have ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 ([No. 138](#)). Today Azerbaijan has every possibility of ratifying

the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). At the same time, the situation of child labour is cause for concern. It is mainly the result of the poverty of families with children, owing to the armed conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and the difficulties of transition to a market economy. The military conflict and the subsequent occupation of 20 per cent of the national territory has caused death, injury and destruction. Schools and kindergartens, have been destroyed, as have clubs, libraries and sporting facilities. There have been considerable human and financial losses in both the formal and the informal sector, and expenditure has had to be shifted to military expenditure. More than 300,000 children under 15 have been displaced and have suffered the consequences of the conflict. The transition to a market economy also has had a negative impact on children.

Despite this, we are taking effective measures against poverty in the Republic. We believe I consider that child labour has got to be one of the priority areas for technical cooperation by ACTRAV and the ILO as a whole. We must elaborate national and international strategies for combating child labour, in particular using education and vocational training.

Mr. ZARCONI (*representative, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*) – Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Bank during this extremely important discussion on the Global Report, a future without child labour. Thank you also to the people who are still in this room listening to the speakers.

Alleviating child labour, especially in its most harmful forms, is crucial to efforts to reduce poverty and is therefore of particular concern to the World Bank. We are very glad that this issue is being discussed before the International Labour Conference. We also want to congratulate IPEC for preparing such a comprehensive and informative document to serve as the basis for the deliberations, and the ILO Director-General, Mr. Somavia, for his commitment and dedication.

In order to develop policies and programmes aimed at targeting child labour, the first step must be to understand the nature and scope of the problem. Through attempting to develop more precise and detailed estimates of child labour, this Report provides us with such information. Another important contribution of this Report is that for the first time evidence has been provided about the extent of hazardous and other of the worst forms of child labour.

While it is heartening to know that the number of economically active children has declined from 250 million to 111 million since the mid-nineties, the data provided in the Report on the number of children engaged in hazardous work and the worst forms of child labour are extremely worrisome.

It is clear that significant challenges need to be overcome in order to have a measurable and sustainable impact on reducing child labour. It is also clear that no institution acting alone, no matter how well funded, has the capacity to solve this daunting array of complex inter-related problems. Our work towards the eradication of harmful child labour must be a collaborative effort between the international agencies, civil society and the national and local communities, based upon inclusion and participation. As with all agendas for development, the efforts to reduce harm-

ful child labour must combine a long-term perspective with a sharp focus on achieving measurable results on the ground, by creating effective and comprehensive partnerships for change. In this context, the World Bank and the ILO and UNICEF, as our colleague also mentioned, established the project for developing new strategies for understanding children's work and its impact, with the support of the Governments of Finland, Sweden and Norway. The UCW Project through a variety of data collection research and assessment activities, is broadly directed at increasing global and local level understanding of child labour, its causes and effects, how it can be measured and how it can be addressed.

Under the framework of the UCW Project, the agencies have been able to more effectively link ongoing activities and promote the sharing of information which lead to the development of a common analytical base. Hand in hand with this activity, the partnership is addressing the crucial need for capacity building with other countries.

Our partnership with the ILO has made great steps towards utilizing the comparative advantages of each agency in the fight against child labour. However, as the Report aptly captures, there remains much to be done to provide effective solutions for these vulnerable children. No country will grow economically and reduce poverty while its people cannot read or write and its children struggle with malnourishment and sickness. This is not just a moral issue, it is a major impediment to poverty reduction and economic development.

Since its funding first began in 1963, the World Bank has provided US\$30 billion in loans and credits and it currently finances 153 projects in 79 countries. Working closely with our partners, the Bank helps developing countries in their efforts to achieve the goal of education for all in order to establish universal primary education for all children by 2015 and reduce the education gap between boys and girls by 2005. In order to reach these goals, we effectively promote the elimination of user fees in schools.

A final point relates to the discussion on the PRSP. On 8 July 2002, Mr. John Page, the Director of the Poverty Reduction Group at the World Bank, will be in Geneva to discuss these issues with ILO staff and will start a debate with the civil society in Geneva.

We look forward to expanding our partnership with the ILO in order to work to identify key strategies to combat child labour and to promote the protection of children, who are the key to our future.

Ms. LINDENFORS (*representative, the International Save the Children Alliance*) – I am speaking on behalf of the NGO subgroup on child labour. We congratulate the ILO on their thorough analysis of children's work in the world today and share many of the conclusions drawn in the Report. We feel that our complementary approaches to children's work offer many opportunities for enhanced collaboration in the future.

We have a few comments on the contents of the Report. We share the view that harmful child work is a persistent problem, with alarming numbers of working children engaged in harmful forms of work. We also share the view that significant progress has been made in response to children's work. In particular, we welcome the shift away from simplistic abolitionist responses to approaches that recognize the

complex realities of work in children's lives and focus on the best interests of the child.

Much remains to be done when it comes to moving from theoretical discussions to positive changes for working children. We agree with the ILO that we must distinguish between different forms of work and recognize that some kinds of work are more harmful than others. Responses therefore need to be tailor-made and must also include strategies to prevent children from entering the worst forms of work. In addition to the economic contribution highlighted in the Report, the important contributions made by children, primarily girls, through their unpaid housework, childcare activities and as a part of family subsistence strategies should be recognized.

We congratulate the ILO on their emphasis on child and community participation in the Report and the recognition that community ownership is crucial to the success of intervention. In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we believe that children have the right to be fully and meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect them. We strongly recommend that, in the future, greater emphasis is placed on the role of children, communities and families. We agree that the causes of children's work are multifaceted and that we must address the root causes if we are to solve the problems of harmful child work. We also support the view that the lack of access to education is an important root cause of children's work. Therefore attention must be paid to the quality and relevance of education, as well as to the number of children actually attending school.

We would particularly like to develop greater engagement between the ILO and NGOs at every level, from the international to the community level. We have the following recommendations for cooperation that would enable more effective action against harmful forms of child work.

When it comes to reinforcing the work of IPEC we can engage in advocacy by assisting IPEC's clearing house function by establishing mechanisms for routinely sharing samples of documented good practices with the ILO and IPEC. We can participate in the proposed Convention No. 182+5 event. In research and policy work we can, for example, engage in collaborating and enhancing research capacity, including the use of participatory tools and the development of gender-sensitive methods for exploring less visible forms of work, as well as training staff in sharing research findings. We can also engage in collaborating and finding appropriate ways to end the exploitation of working children in the informal economy. In technical cooperation we can share lessons learned in addressing harmful forms of child work and could help to formulate national development policies to combat poverty, such as the poverty reduction strategy papers. We can also assist the ILO in their desire to mainstream the effective abolition of child work and the Decent Work Agenda by, for example, sharing knowledge of how child work relates to the other fundamental principles and rights at work. When it comes to forging a closer partnership, the engagement of NGOs in the above activities will in itself help the ILO to forge a closer partnership with civil society and to some extent with children in communities.

We hope that these recommendations give an indication of what a closer working relationship might look like and we hope for continued and enhanced cooperation between NGOs and the ILO.

Ms. GIUSTI (*representative, Defence for Children International*) – I speak on behalf of Defence for Children International. We welcome and praise the detailed analysis and the new global estimates on child labour provided in the Global Report. We would like to encourage the continuous improvement of data collection criteria and techniques so the disaggregated data can also lead to isolating the youngest and hidden groups of child labourers.

We congratulate the efforts committed to the elimination of child labour and agree that not all forms of economic activities fall under the category of child labour. However, we think that in defining child labour the Global Report is lacking a human rights perspective. It is neglecting that child labour is not only a labour problem but is above all a problem of the violation of human rights. Although the Report briefly mentions Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, we believe that this Convention should be adopted as the permanent framework for defining child labour and developing strategies for its elimination, since it is through such a framework that we can guarantee the full exercise of the rights of those below 18 years of age. Thus we recommend that child labour be identified as an activity which threatens the full exercise of the rights of the child and in particular the right to education and the right to complete development, defined in the Convention as physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. In so doing, we agree that international instruments and national legislation which rely on a minimum age for employment should be adopted as important tools and criteria when addressing the question "What is child labour?"

The approach to child labour should be a complementary one, which integrates ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 and other ILO instruments with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We stress the need to understand child labour as a multifaceted phenomenon produced by several interacting factors, of which poverty is the main one. Through such an approach the best strategy may be developed. We particularly encourage mainstreaming child labour within poverty reduction strategies or enhancing the level and quality of education services, but we urge that it be recalled that multifaceted strategies are more often a better solution to the elimination of child labour. We acknowledge the consideration given to cooperation at every level in the fight against child labour and congratulate the importance granted to civil society in achieving the target.

Although the role of NGOs in advocacy and in the promotion of the rights of the child is recognized, we would like to emphasize the importance of collaboration with NGOs and the success stories highlighted in this Report. This suggests that the tripartite structure which features the ILO policies and actions should be made more flexible. At different levels NGOs can provide important input to help understand and address child labour as a human rights issue by developing strategies at the advocacy, social mobilization and intervention levels. Many NGOs have a long history of involving communities and, most importantly, children. Child participation is an important right, as well as an asset, and although it is mentioned in the Report as an aspect to be developed, we believe it should be emphasized as a priority in the strategies at different levels. We thus recommend the following: a human rights perspective should be a guiding framework in

tackling the problem of child labour in order to address the best interests of the child. We encourage commitment to involving civil society, including NGOs, in cooperating with IPEC and the vertices of the tripartite structure for the development of interventions at different levels, in particular advocacy, mobilization and awareness creation. We recommend making the commitment to child participation an effective element in actions against child labour.

Finally, we would like to announce that our movement as a whole, and through its national sections, is willing to cooperate with all actors and to coordinate actions to implement all of the above.

Mr. S. KAILASH (*representative, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*) – I would like once again, to congratulate the ILO for advancing the fight against child labour, publishing the Global Report and proclaiming today as the first World Day against Child Labour.

I want to emphasize the sense of urgency of this matter. The very first Article of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 No. 182 called for member States, to “take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency.” Things are moving, definitely, as I said this afternoon, but in most countries the efforts have not met this standard.

Every minute, children are being bought and sold like animals, they are trafficked for domestic labour, prostitution and abuse, they are confined to workplaces, locked into factories and mines as bonded labourers. Children are taken from one to another country to be camel jockeys, they are tied to the backs of camels and screamed at “to make the camels run faster”. We cannot delay for days, months or years: it is urgent that we act now.

Only last evening, during the cultural celebrations of the ILO, Raju, a 12-year-old Indian boy, issued a challenge to the whole world – what are you doing to secure childhood, freedom and education, for 250 million children like me? He asked this question urgently because his own brother is still enslaved somewhere. Raju himself worked as a bonded labourer, along with his family, at a brick kiln; he used to take out the hot-baked bricks and complained of skin burns, headaches, and other problems. While working he had a dream that one day he would live in a brick house; his family has always lived in the shanties. Now he is free, living in a rehabilitation centre and is studying in third grade. When he grows up he wants to become a doctor. While travelling to Geneva he not only flew in a plane for the first time, it was the first time he had even seen a plane. He was very thrilled with the speed of the plane. Yesterday he asked me why we could not eliminate child labour at the speed of a plane. That was his question: why were we so slow?

Most of the children who were suffering the in worst forms of child labour when [Convention No. 182](#) was adopted two years ago have not enjoyed any relief and rehabilitation since then. The world community has not even managed to stop the fresh recruitment of child labourers. That does not mean that things are not changing; we see very promising results in a number of countries, despite poverty and other problems. There are inspiring models and examples, but these models and examples should not remain just

that; they should become part of the national agendas, mainstream agendas and the people’s movement.

We are passing through a very important time, when several initiatives have the potential to change the future of the world. These include the strong and proactive implementation of [Convention No. 182](#) and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 ([No. 138](#)) under the ILO’s leadership, the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All under UNESCO’s leadership, enhanced funding through the Education for all action plan under the World Bank’s leadership, and the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative under UNICEF’s leadership. It seems that most of these actions have moved ahead in parallel, so it is a high time that we combine these efforts.

We definitely require a serious amount of political will at the national and international levels, greater collective action and coordination between department and ministries, and concrete interagency joint action to combat the worst forms of child labour as a top priority, and the steady elimination of child labour, ensuring free, compulsory and quality education.

To address these issues, I would like to propose the formation of an international task force on child labour. This high-level body, led by the ILO, should be composed of heads of the relevant United Nations agencies, selected heads of state from developing countries with encouraging track records in the elimination of child labour, selected heads of state from industrialized countries who have shown leadership in mobilizing political will and resources for children, and the heads of employers’, workers’ and civil society organizations. Such an international task force can help in converging the fragmented efforts and mobilizing the highest amount of political will and resources for the cause of the most vulnerable and exploited children.

We are ultimately accountable to the future of the whole of humankind. The generations to come should not remember us as the promise-breakers. Let us pull together all our wisdom and compassion, all our knowledge, behind one single goal – to make this world free of child labour.

Ms. CECCHETTI (*representative, World Organization Against Torture*) – The World Organization against Torture welcomes the Director-General’s Report *A future without child labour* and salutes the ILO’s efforts to produce such a comprehensive picture of the nature and causes of child labour today. According to the Report, the total estimated number of economically active children aged between 5 and 14 in developing countries has decreased since 1995. OMCT would like to recall that according to Articles 6 and 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “State Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child” by ensuring without any discrimination the protection of every child from economic exploitation. OMCT strongly believes that there is no acceptable form of work, no justification of any kind, for a child working while still below the minimum age of employment, as established by ILO [Convention No. 138](#). Extreme poverty, low family income, lack of schooling opportunities, poor quality education, lack of future job opportunities, cultural or traditional attitudes or practices can never justify child labour. Furthermore, what



is utterly disturbing is that according to the Report the estimated number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour is believed to amount to 180 million, and to constitute 73 per cent of all child labourers. This situation urgently calls for an enhanced effort from the ILO, its constituents and partners, to strengthen their human rights approach and to put an immediate end to this violation of children's rights. In this context, a human rights approach, given the causes and the nature of child labour, requires that particular attention be paid to the enhancement of economic, social and cultural rights and to the fulfilment of States' obligations in this respect. Indeed, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, along with the ones that OMCT considers to be unacceptable forms, remains illusory without rights, such as the right to education, the right to health and the right to adequate housing being secured. Similarly, without the protection of groups and individuals engaged in the defence of all human rights, this goal cannot be effectively achieved. Too often trade union members and representatives face harassment and threats or even extra-judicial execution for having denounced breaches of basic labour and human rights. In this era of globalization and the whole range of impacts that this process has had on the enjoyment of human rights and labour rights, it is urgent that the ILO, notably through its World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, ensures the inclusiveness of this process along with basic rights.

At the International Conference on Children, Torture and Other Forms of Violence that OMCT organized in November 2001, with the support of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it was concluded that under certain circumstances bonded labour and slavery might amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and even to torture. Consequently, the responsibility of the State for such violations becomes evident. In most situations, the suffering endured by children meets the definition given in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and has both limited and long-term consequences for the physical, psychological, social and intellectual development of the child.

Slavery and bonded labour cause pain and suffering to child victims. The deprivation of labour generally linked to physical constraints, such as being treated as an object or a simple commodity of exchange, and the lack of future prospects, are forms of violence inherent to every kind of forced labour. However, the intensity of such pain and suffering also depends on various factors, such as the type of work given to the children, the conditions in which they must perform it, and the risks or abuse to which they are exposed in their activities.

Children, and especially the youngest ones, are particularly vulnerable both to exploitation as forced and slave labour, and to physical, chemical and other hazards to which they might be subjected in the workplace. Children endure physical suffering *inter alia* through work that is beyond their physical capacity, dangerous tools or machinery, exposure to toxic chemicals, motorized equipment, excessive noise levels, damaging vibration, harsh climatic conditions, and by carrying heavy loads or sitting for long periods in unnatural positions. Children subjected to slavery and bonded labour are also generally prevented from attending school. Even when attendance at school is

permitted, the excessive time dedicated to work and the psychological trauma related to the condition of exploitation directly affect their capacity to learn. The demands of their work often leave them with neither time nor energy to attend school regularly or to keep up with their studies.

The OMCT considers that States' responsibility includes an obligation of due diligence to prevent, stop, investigate and punish slavery and bonded labour, irrespective of whether the perpetrators are acting in an official capacity or as private individuals. Furthermore, in some cases state agents are complicit in slavery or bonded labour practices perpetrated by private actors. This happens, for example, when police officers bring runaway children back to their employers or when police or labour inspectors accept bribes for not investigating a case.

The OMCT welcomed the plan of action for the abolition of child labour and the commitment of the ILO to further announce its partnership with key partners. The OMCT will strongly call on the ILO to formally commit itself along with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF and the WHO, to contribute to the United Nations study on violence against children that the United Nations General Assembly recommended at its Special Session in 2001. The study constitutes a unique opportunity to make all violence against children visible, this being an essential step in the development of strategies to effectively reduce and end it.

The OMCT recommends and urges that the study be carried out in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and that it cover, among other things, violence against children in the street and in work situations. It is certain that the ILO could make a great contribution to the study by bringing to it its knowledge, research capacity and expertise. Its active involvement and support will be key to the study's success.

Mr. POTTER (*Employers' delegate, United States*) – One last stab at interactivity here. Several hours ago Mr. Brett endorsed, on behalf of the Workers' group, the Employers' statement on this Global Report and we would like to return the compliment. In particular, we think the recommendations that the Workers have made relating to the Workers' group and ACTRAV and IPEC are equally applicable to the Employers' group and ACT/EMP.

We would note that there has been more concreteness in this Global Report debate, the first part particularly, than we have had in previous years although I think we have a long way to go. This concreteness is due to the fact that the ILO technical assistance activity in this area is far more advanced than the other areas of the Declaration. With respect to the interactive discussion, it was in fact interactive and I think it was really a good first start at this kind of thing. We would have liked to have had more discussion from actors who are in the trenches on this issue, from government, workers and employers. We certainly tried to do our part in that regard.

You have previously been the chairman of a committee that would meet late into the night and I just would ask you to think about the visual image of the room that we are in now, given the relative importance of the Declaration to this Organization and we would suggest that we need to think, in terms of this

global follow-up procedure, of some way of bringing closure to it in a way that is meaningful, that will cause people to be here at the end.

Overall, we can conclude that this Global Report has helped provide a building block for a future without child labour and, as we said, we still have a long way to go, particularly in terms of coming up with means to stimulate those governments which have not availed themselves of ILO technical assistance, including participation in the Global Report follow-up.

Mr. STEYNE (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, United Kingdom*) – I would echo all of Mr. Potter's conclusions but it is not surprising because the global campaign against child labour has created a social alliance the like of which we have rarely seen and which I am sure will be enduring. I would like to reiterate unequivocally, in the light of some of the comments made this afternoon, the workers' attachment to [Conventions Nos. 138 and 182](#) as the normative framework for the effective elimination of child labour. IPEC is the leading instrument in the struggle against child labour with a tripartite approach and social dialogue as keys to that support.

We will work with anyone who will support both Conventions and the ILO's mandate to achieve the effective elimination of child labour. We especially welcome support from the Employers' group for greater involvement and coordination with both ACTRAV and ACT/EMP and we also believe that there can be greater interdepartmental cooperation, for example in the field of monitoring. We also repeat our request for the ILO to develop benchmarks of competence for social auditors, including those with the specific mandate of monitoring child labour. We repeat the need for inter-agency cooperation to ensure that other multilateral agencies support and do not undermine the ILO's mandate on child labour. Public expenditure on education should be supported

rather than undermined because universal education is a key to the effective abolition of child labour and we would point out that core labour standards are indivisible and mutually reinforcing and that the application of relevant legislation, social dialogue and decent work are also fundamental keys to the effective elimination of child labour.

Finally, with regard to Mr. Potter's comments on the modalities of the debate, there was clearly insufficient time for the formal statements by delegates. It is now nearly 8 p.m. and perhaps a longer interactive discussion would have included more viewpoints in a less formal and more productive way. However, I do agree with Mr. Potter about the lack of practitioners and although I understand why we have chosen the plenary, the general assembly room, for such an important debate, I also wonder if an interactive discussion should not take place in a room in which we could see one another. Having said that, the chairs in room XVII are a great deal less comfortable than they are here.

I would like to thank the Mr. Chairperson for his concluding remarks on today's remarkable event, but I do agree with Mr. Potter, when I look around the room I wonder about the importance that our colleagues attach to such a significant event.

*Original French:* The PRESIDENT — We might not be many of us left in the room; as I said earlier in jest, there are probably more interpreters and Office officials than participants here. But the fact remains that when undertaking to do something, it is worth doing well. We must go to the end — and I believe we have worked in this spirit.

I thank you for the way you have participated in this discussion which paves the way to the decisions the Governing Body will take in November.

*(The Conference adjourned at 8 p.m.)*

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