



## Eleventh sitting

Thursday, 13 June 2002, 10.45 a.m.

*Presidents: Mr. Hussain, Mr. Rampak*

### RATIFICATION OF TWO INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS BY SWEDEN AND BURUNDI

The PRESIDENT (Mr. HUSSAIN) — Before resuming the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General I give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference for an announcement.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — I am pleased to inform you that on 10 June 2002 the Director-General of the International Labour Office registered the ratification by Sweden of the Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175). The Director-General has also registered the ratification by Burundi of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

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

Ms. TOKARSKA-BIERNACIK (*Government delegate, Poland*) — I wish to congratulate the President on his election and I am sure that under his leadership we will achieve our very ambitious goals.

The Reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body present the Organization's activities in the period 2000-01. Both Reports focus on the implementation of the Organization's strategic objectives. I wish to draw attention to the fact that the social policy objectives of the recently elected Government of Poland are consonant with those of the ILO.

Poland's present social and economic difficulties, characterized by unemployment and a slowdown in economic growth, make it necessary for the Government to intensify its efforts in those areas. As a result, it is probable that the living conditions of our citizens will improve and that Poland will continue to develop in a balanced, socially acceptable, democratic manner.

The strategic objective of Poland's economic policy is to create an institutional, organizational and financial infrastructure, conducive to the growth of employment and to improve social security by laying firm foundations for the functioning of a system where all social partners will engage in dialogue and cooperation.

In order to achieve these objectives under present conditions, the Government, adopted in January this year, a social and economic strategy called "Entrepreneurship, development, work". The strategy's imple-

mentation is geared towards the revitalization of an entrepreneurial spirit among Poles, a factor which is seen as crucial in generating economic growth, especially through the elimination of the problems which have dogged the start-up of small and medium-sized businesses. A key building block of the government strategy consists of the "Entrepreneurship first and foremost" package. Its main features are the adjustment of labour law to existing social and economic conditions and "first job" programmes designed to assist young graduates to find their first post. An updated version of the National Employment and Human Resources Development Strategy for 2000-06, consisting of measures to reduce unemployment and increase employment in the country's rural areas, will also facilitate the implementation of the "Entrepreneurship, development, work" strategy.

With a view to enforcing this strategy, the existing Labour Fund will be reformed so that it becomes more effective and can smoothly absorb support from the European Social Fund. The current financial and legal structure of the Labour Fund discourages local initiative and the existing disbursement system encourages the maintenance of high levels of unemployment. Our definition of active labour market measures should therefore be revised to bring it into line with the appropriate European Union standards.

Implementation of these changes will require amendment of the Labour Code. The amendments will be in full conformity with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and with the core Conventions ratified by Poland. The purpose of the proposed changes is to cut labour costs by making labour law more flexible and by reducing red tape, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. We believe that, in the long run, those changes will encourage more entrepreneurship and lead to the creation of new jobs, thereby reducing unemployment.

If the Government's plans outlined above are to materialize, there must be effective social dialogue at the national, regional and sectoral levels. The institutional framework for such a dialogue was established in the July 2001 Act on the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs.

Furthermore, the Government of Poland also intends to issue a document entitled "The principles of social dialogue", in 2003-05 to found bilateral social dialogue institutions to strengthen the autonomous social dialogue and to assist in the preparation of social partners for the social dialogue at European level.

The Government also intends to strengthen the practice of social dialogue, to create a suitable climate and to ensure professional support for it. The Government of Poland sees the need for regulatory action to

strengthen the organizations of social partners, remove hurdles in the negotiation of collective agreements and improve the system for resolving collective labour disputes.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my Government's deep and sincere appreciation for the support the International Labour Office is offering Poland now in connection with these urgent tasks and in connection with Poland's accession to the European Union. I am sure that the implementation of the new programme of technical cooperation between Poland and the International Labour Office, which was signed on 22 May this year, will greatly contribute to the realization of my Government's social policy objectives.

This year may be called the "Year of the Child" in the United Nations system. In May, a United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children was held in New York. Children are also the focus of the ILO Director-General's Report. I have the pleasure of informing you that the President of the Polish Republic has recently ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Globalization is a theme present in all reports prepared for this year's session of the Conference. Poland has noted with satisfaction the establishment of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization. I wish to once again express Poland's support for the work of that Commission towards the alleviation of the adverse consequences of globalization, especially in countries in transition.

*Original Arabic: Mr. NEFFATI (Minister of Social Affairs, Tunisia, speaking on behalf of the Arab Maghreb Union) —* In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! I would like to present my warm congratulations to Mr. Jean-Jacques Elmiger, Secretary of State with the Swiss Federal Government, on his election to the presidency of the Conference. I would also like to express my appreciation to Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the ILO, for the efforts undertaken to achieve the objectives which this prestigious Organization has set for itself, and which are reflected once again in the quality of the reports submitted to the Conference. These reports have a wealth of information and they reflect the interests of the social partners.

We wish to see the budget surpluses recorded this year to be used, as proposed by the Director-General, to support cooperation programmes for the developing countries, in particular for employment promotion and the elimination of poverty.

We also support the creation of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, and express the hope that it will achieve its objectives.

The report submitted by the Director-General on the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories clearly reflects the dramatic situation of the Palestinian people in all their aspects and the terrible and alarming repercussions of the occupation and of the colonization on the social partners, as well as the crushing losses suffered by human beings, property and basic infrastructure.

While we support the recommendations proposed by the Director-General, notably the creation of an Employment and Social Protection Fund, we believe that the ILO can assume a greater role, all the more so because it represents the world's social conscience. It constantly calls for decent work for all, the consolidation of social peace and respect for workers' funda-

mental rights. We are convinced that the Organization is capable of playing a more effective role to support peace and to stop the deterioration of the situation of the Palestinian people, especially as it already demonstrated its ability to do so when it took a firm stance for the elimination of the racist regime in South Africa.

The Report of the Director-General on child labour is clear and comprehensive. I would like to pay tribute to the role played by the ILO in helping to eliminate child labour throughout the world. There is no doubt that enhancing technical cooperation programmes for countries facing such problems will contribute to eradicating its causes.

Tunisia, under the presidency of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, has quickly become aware of the importance of the universal approach to human rights, particularly through the protection of the rights of the child in various areas. It has taken the initiative of drawing up legislation in this area, and was one of the first countries to promulgate a Children's Protection Code and to ratify the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Tunisia has also worked to implement the rights of the child in practice and to eliminate the causes of child labour. In order to do this it has established numerous implementation and follow-up mechanisms, including a child protection corps. It has made schooling compulsory. The enrolment rate is now close to 100 per cent.

I would also like to mention the large number of development programmes that we have in the country's various regions, that have enabled us to reduce the poverty level to 4.2 per cent and to raise the coverage of social programmes to 84 per cent.

We are sure that the effective elimination of child labour will have to involve the eradication of the roots of the phenomenon and the strengthening of the principle of solidarity at the international and national levels. We believe that the ILO has a paramount role to play in this area.

Tunisia is proud to be a country of dialogue, tolerance and solidarity. Applying these principles in different areas is a concern for our country. Our country therefore recently held a broad dialogue at the political level which resulted in a popular referendum that for the first time in the country's history amended the Constitution. The amendments are aimed at entrenching democratic practices and a multi-party system and at strengthening the participation of civil society in public life and consolidating the principles of solidarity as a basis for the Republic's future.

We have also undertaken a comprehensive social dialogue with a new round of social bargaining in the public and private sectors. This is the fifth time we have done this since 1990. The four previous rounds led to significant social gains. This new round of bargaining was begun despite the challenges faced as a result of globalization, climate problems and the difficult situation in the world stemming from the negative ramifications of 11 September last year.

This bargaining will be another milestone in the improved relationship of trust and confidence between the social partners and in consolidating the contractual policy which our country has chosen for developing industrial relations.

*Original Arabic: Mr. MUHESEN (Minister of Labour, Jordan) —* In the name of God, the Merciful,

the Compassionate! It is my pleasure to congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session of the Conference. It is a coronation of his vast experience and outstanding wisdom in leading deliberations. I wish him every success.

Jordan, under the leadership of its King, Abdallah II, believes that the path taken to promote democracy and human rights fosters the fundamental principles enshrined in the ILO Constitution, the Declaration of Philadelphia, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and other international labour standards. Jordan has always believed in the fundamental role of democratic dialogue involving the social partners representing governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, to strike a balance between various interests and to correct imbalances in a spirit of consultation and mutual trust.

In the past few years, under the leadership of the King, who launched a full-scale modernization campaign, Jordan has entered into a new era to respond to changing needs at all levels and in various fields. It is thus demonstrating its ability to adjust in its economic, social and development restructuring.

The democratic dialogue among the social partners in Jordan has achieved concrete and positive results in various spheres of labour and production. A modern Labour Code has been adopted which is in keeping with international labour standards. Our legislation concerning social security and occupational accident and health insurance systems has been brought up to date.

In the field of technical cooperation with international agencies and organizations, Jordan is currently working with the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), and we have drawn up a national strategy to combat this phenomenon and to train the necessary staff to handle it. It also works in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to improve the life of migrant women workers and to adopt the necessary legislation to regulate and organize work by women and to uphold their rights. It cooperates with the International Labour Organization as part of the tripartite social dialogue project in order to promote such dialogue among the partners in production.

The Jordanian leadership believes that investment in the human factor, in education and training, is an investment in the present and the future. It has thus improved workers' qualifications and provided them with sufficient social and legal protection, as well as the right to organize and to exercise freedom of association.

We fully appreciate the efforts made by the Director-General, in particular in sending a fact-finding mission to assess the situation in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories. We endorse the report's recommendations, which support the resistance of the Palestinian people in the face of unemployment and a lack of employment opportunities, as well as the harmful effects of the economic blockade and collective punishment imposed by Israel on our brothers in Palestine. We believe it is crucial to increase the technical and material assistance and support given to the social partners in these territories.

Mr. TUNHAMMAR (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Sweden*) — First of all, I would like to

congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Conference on their election. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General for his very impressive Report. In the past year globalization has continued to be a hot issue in the debate. Not least, for some people the terrorist attacks of 11 September have called into question the benefits of open borders and an open society. The rise of xenophobic and nationalist politicians in Europe feeds on these fears.

We have a different view. It is of the utmost importance that business and labour take a clear stand in favour of an open society, a global society, open to people from other countries, but also open to trade, investments and ideas from abroad. Openness is at the core of globalization, and also at the heart of business and entrepreneurship.

In recent decades the world has experienced successively more openness. Trade barriers have decreased, hence trade itself has increased. Countries which have opened themselves to the world have seen a rise in economic activity and consequently millions of people who used to endure apparently hopeless poverty now live better and safer lives than ever before.

Openness has increased in the world. But whereas much progress has been made on promoting the freedom of capital and trade, the freedom of people to live and work where they can find employment is still extremely restricted.

Promoting labour migration is one of our great challenges for the future. The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, which I am heading, has in the past year promoted more liberal legislation for foreigners coming to Sweden to work. In the years to come, Sweden and many other Western countries will face a shortage of labour. At the same time the birth rate is soaring in many developing countries. So I am convinced that the world needs more labour migration, not less.

The role of the ILO is to promote the social dimension of globalization and pave the way for further openness. Legislation and practice in all countries must be adjusted to be in line with open markets for trade and capital, as well as for labour.

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise strongly supports the ILO core labour standards. They are important tools for promoting the ethical and social foundations of globalization and it is vital that these be ratified by more ILO member States. The ILO should continue its important work in this regard and I think this could well be further developed in the context of the ILO's Global Employment Agenda.

Finally, the ILO should also strive to further incorporate the global perspective in its own Conventions. ILO Conventions should provide basic protection for all workers regardless of where in the world they are employed.

*Original Russian: Mr. NAGIYEV (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Azerbaijan)* — First of all, allow me to express my deep gratitude to all the organizers of this session of the Conference and to the ILO for giving me the opportunity to address such an authoritative assembly.

The Report of the Director-General, *A future without child labour*, deals with urgent problems. Indeed, our future depends on how we bring up our children and take care of them.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has already ratified a number of the fundamental international labour Conventions aimed at protecting children's rights, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and international conventions dealing with the employment of children.

Since the Republic of Azerbaijan gained its independence, important measures have been implemented to bring national legislation into line with international norms and standards in the field of children's rights. New legislation has been adopted, including a law on the rights of children and a law on the social protection of orphans and children removed from parental custody.

Thus far, Azerbaijan has ratified 54 ILO Conventions, including seven fundamental ILO instruments. Work on ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), is now in progress. Several times, the ILO has emphasized the positive steps taken by Azerbaijan to apply international labour standards in its national legislation.

However, as you know, we are building statehood and implementing our economic and social reforms in exceptional circumstances. As a result of Armenian aggression, 20 per cent of our territory is still under occupation. One out of every eight inhabitants of our country is either a refugee or an internally displaced person, 30 per cent of whom are children. A total of 4,959 people are missing in the conflict area, including 69 children and 320 women. Azeri citizens taken prisoner or hostage have been brutalized, tortured, injured and killed. Children born in tents are still living there ten years later. They recognize that the protection of their rights is one way of promoting a return to their motherland.

Naturally, these problems cannot be solved simply by adopting legislation; their solution depends on the state of the country's economy and an equitable stance on the conflict by the world community.

But Azerbaijan is following through on policies adopted when it gained independence, and is implementing wide-ranging social, economic and administrative reforms. To define relations between government, employers and trade unions, a new employment law has been adopted that is based on international standards.

To help vulnerable people such as refugees and internally displaced persons, disabled people, young people and women, our national employment service is implementing an active employment policy that includes new, flexible, and comprehensive employment programmes, the promotion of self-employment and vocational training courses. Job fairs are held regularly and the employment office is operating normally.

Though privatization is complete in the agricultural sector, a lack of technology is an obstacle to raising output. That is why the support of the ILO in establishing and developing cooperative farms would be very helpful and appropriate.

We have begun to reform our pension and welfare systems, emphasizing individual accounts and targeted social welfare.

Armenian aggression and the insufferable living conditions in tent camps have led to an increase in children's disabilities.

The number of orphans in Azerbaijan has also increased, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to SOS Kinderdorf, the

Red Cross and UNICEF for their support in dealing with this problem. We already have one SOS village operating in Azerbaijan and another is being constructed.

Azerbaijan's poverty reduction strategy includes promoting employment, establishing a targeted social welfare system, improving social protection for vulnerable people — including children — socially reintegrating disabled children, monitoring cases of child labour, etc. The 2001-02 cooperation programme signed by the ILO and Azerbaijan provides for national strategies on employment and safety at the workplace, the creation of a national information centre on safety at the workplace, the improvement of our labour inspectorate and the promotion of social dialogue. At the same time, we plan to establish a child labour monitoring centre together with the UNDP.

I think ILO support in providing advanced research methodology and creating a database for this centre would be very useful. I believe that Azerbaijan, trusting in democratic methods, will successfully develop cooperation with this authoritative international Organization to ensure that the ILO's basic principles are observed at the national level. I should finally like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the World Day against Child Labour celebrated on 12 June 2002.

Mr. SMITH (*Government delegate, Jamaica*) — We congratulate the ILO for promoting the universal application of the principles and goals of decent work to the now expanding informal sector. It is a decision of considerable developmental input.

The existence of the informal sector *in our jurisdiction and region* is rooted in multiple causes. An expanding labour force, a drift in employment relationships, from regular full-time to temporary and part-time work arrangements, barriers and constraints establishing and operating in the formal sphere, recession and the impact of structural adjustment policies are but some principal causes.

In truth, regional governments have tolerated some informal activities as a means of reducing open unemployment, while giving preferential treatment to the modern sector. This constituency of "non-standard" workers function without collective voice in the labour market. Among other things they experience unstable and irregular employment prospects.

They operate outside of legal and regulatory frameworks, with weak legal or social protection. They are exposed to discrimination in access to productive resources. Against whatever positive contributions they make to national production, they are also seen as unfair competitors with formal enterprises.

They tend to free-ride by avoiding market rules, business costs and some state obligations.

Above all perhaps they suffer "decent work deficits", which means greater exposure to risks in health, reduction and erosion of rights, social exclusion and denial of social protection. Their disconnection from governance practices such as social dialogue reinforces exposure to poverty and dependence. Some within the informal sector are also subject to locational constraints because they operate in urban residential premises, in the open, with inadequate space, utilities and protection against work-related hazards.

*Jamaica* therefore identifies fully with the ILO agenda aimed at starting the transition towards sustainable decent work in the informal sector. But the starting point must be the design of a comprehensive, integrated and partnership strategy, focused and providing support services via appropriate opportunities and incentives.

The ILO-provided framework for action is worthy of serious, collective pursuit. Certainly, public-private partnerships are key. Labour rights must be improved and employment-intensive projects developed. Greater investment in knowledge, skills and social protection is obligatory. Good governance principles such as enforcement of contracts and protection of property rights must be accorded priority status.

And the development and expansion of micro-enterprises is a key policy tool. These policy interventions would help to reduce the risks associated with “informality” and “decent work deficits”. Let it be said, however, that the route to transition from informality will take time. It requires policies that promote economic efficiency but must avoid dependence on purely international market mechanisms.

Strategies for adjusting cultural practices must relate to contextual circumstances. Temptation to choose “solutions” off the shelf must be resisted. Gaps in research on the informal situation must be bridged.

Technical guidance and assistance must be provided. But realization of the developmental potential of the informal sector would only come with changes in the world political and trading situation that now militates against weaker partners.

*Jamaica* broadly supports the development objectives embodied in the Conference theme of this 90th ILO Session. And we ask for pragmatic implementation approaches that do not leave the weaker States any further behind.

*Original Arabic: Mr. DJILANI (Employers' delegate, Tunisia)* — On behalf of the employers of Tunisia, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to chair this session of the Conference and I wish him every success in his task. I would also like to thank the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, for everything that he has done to ensure the success of the various sessions of the International Labour Conference and for having raised important issues which have enabled us to gain a clearer insight into current world problems.

The main challenge facing us today is how to combat unemployment and ensure both work for everyone and the means of making a decent living. The situation has become worse since the advent of globalization, the scaling down of protectionist measures and the opening of markets. Many changes have taken place and developing countries are having to contend with major difficulties owing to their different level of development compared with that of the countries of the North and their lack of experience in the field of modern technologies.

Employment is both an indicator of development and an important factor making for social and political stability. For our countries it is today essential that we ensure competitiveness and create new jobs. Tunisia, having ratified a number of WTO Conventions and signing a partnership agreement with the European Union, has striven to overcome the adverse repercussions of globalization and has drawn up a na-

tional general training scheme designed to raise the output of institutions. Training workers has been one of the pillars of this development and we have encouraged the improvement of vocational training systems. Similarly efforts have been made to persuade companies to run such training programmes themselves.

Furthermore, we have set up a national solidarity fund on the proposal of President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, as well as the Tunisian Solidarity Bank, which finances youth projects and a national employment fund, which is responsible for assisting the vocational training of young people. Meeting the challenge of employment is a collective responsibility; its aim must be to improve the competitiveness of institutions.

A few years ago, a new notion of trade-union action was devised, which applies to employers' organizations and workers' organizations and is based on the promotion of a national dialogue. We consider that all the social partners should help to strengthen this dialogue, so as to consolidate Tunisia's social achievements, which President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has constantly encouraged.

Coping with the effects of globalization is not a national problem; today we must all pull together to narrow the gap between the countries of the North and the developing countries and to lay the foundations for sustainable development. We appreciate the ILO's efforts to assist developing countries, especially those in Africa.

Once again, I would like to thank the ILO for its endeavours to help us solve the economic and social problems and the challenges facing us.

Mr. VERMEEND (*Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands*) — Today's trade is marked by globalization. National economies are becoming more interwoven every day. These developments must go hand in hand with social policy; a social policy which is based on ILO labour standards, and the principle of decent work. In recent years the ILO has put a great deal of effort into the implementation of its new policy, as formulated in the Decent Work Agenda.

Let me mention a few results — worldwide there is a strong commitment for fundamental labour standards. The elimination of the worst forms of child labour has become priority for many countries. More attention is being paid to social security, and we must not forget the launch of the Global Employment Agenda to stimulate job creation.

This International Labour Conference offers the opportunity for expanding the Decent Work Agenda. I am very happy that the theme decent work and the informal economy is on the agenda of this Conference, because it highlights once again the fact that all those who work have rights at work.

In developing countries in particular the informal economy generates many jobs at relatively low costs, but often these jobs are completely lacking in any legal or social protection. The elimination of all forms of exploitation and inhuman labour conditions should be our first priority; what we need is a concrete plan of action with practical recommendations for action in the fields of research, information, technical support and training.

The ILO is a key organization in the fight against injustice. This year, the third Global Report has been issued with the title *A future without child labour*. The

Government of the Netherlands is committed to combating child labour and this commitment has been reinforced by our new partnership programme with the ILO. Other forms of injustice also call for attention; for instance, the situation in Burma. The Government of Burma has taken a few first steps in the right direction however, the Netherlands see no reason as yet to lift the sanctions imposed two years ago.

Finally, a brief remark about the Working Party on Globalization. The Government of the Netherlands is looking forward to the findings of the Royal Commission on Globalization, which will be presented at the International Labour Conference in 2003. The ILO should continue to address the issue and strengthen its cooperation with other multilateral organizations. Decent work for all workers in the formal and informal economy is the *most* important challenge for the ILO and therefore governments, non-governmental organizations, employers' organizations and trade unions will all have to work together to achieve this.

Mr. MCKENNIREY (*Government adviser and substitute delegate, Canada*) — The past few years have marked an extraordinary period for the ILO. The ILO is today at the centre of global change, driven by an emerging new global consensus, and, at the same time, the ILO is itself in the process of major internal changes driven by the need to adjust to many new demands.

The adoption of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 1998 expressed a global consensus on the most basic rights that every human being should enjoy, no matter where he or she is working on this planet. And this consensus, as we well know, extends not only to all governments, but to all of the unions and employers of the world as well.

The adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), was followed, amazingly, by the ratification by over 100 nations within two years. A number of governments took the courageous step of making time-bound commitments to implement this new Convention, which is an instrument that — if implemented — has the potential to literally transform the lives of millions of children around the world. Again, we are witnessing a truly exceptional worldwide consensus. And today the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, established by the ILO just this year, is already at work and gaining growing momentum. The decision to establish this Commission is itself a further expression of global consensus.

Internally, the ILO is also changing profoundly, with new confidence drawn from the concept of decent work. The system of Conventions and their follow-up mechanisms is being modernized. We also see the ILO becoming more effective, more relevant, and more useful to governments, workers and employers across a spectrum of serious domains. This is particularly true and important for nations which have the most urgent needs. In that sense, Canada welcomes the Director-General's pursuit of a constructive, practical, and consensus-based approach to the situation of workers in the West Bank and Gaza, where the ILO's technical help can make an invaluable contribution to improving a critical situation.

In June of this year Canada will be host to the G8 Summit, where the agenda will focus on three, also urgent, priorities: strengthening global economic growth, building new partnerships for Africa's devel-

opment, and fighting terrorism. The G8 Labour and Employment Ministers met in Montreal in April of this year as part of summit preparations, and the ILO was a welcome participant at this meeting. The ILO is becoming the place, *par excellence*, to address the human challenges of globalization. Its mandate is focused on what working people must do to survive in the world today, what conditions and pressures they will face, and what opportunities they will have. Despite what has been accomplished, the need for the ILO to fulfil its mandate grows ever greater.

Globalization places enormous pressures on governments, as well as workers and employers; pressures often as great, or greater, than the forces inside our national borders. We need to channel these enormous pressures through effective international rules which can provide every nation with the space and the opportunity to succeed.

Governments will need to coordinate their efforts as never before in order to ensure that the forces of international competition work for us, and not against us, in a well ordered international economy. This is much easier said than done, and yet it is urgent. For this reason, efforts such as the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization are so important. We need new ideas that are realistic and have been formed through dialogue, compromise and consensus.

In closing, allow me to summarize three points. First, the ILO is on the move; this Organization is making historic steps forward. Secondly, remarkable worldwide consensus has been achieved on extremely important and fundamental matters, and this consensus can, and must, be extended. Third, we need to find new ways to deal with the pressures of globalization; ways that are fair and provide greater and wider opportunity for all nations.

Canada agrees with the directions the ILO is taking and looks forward, with great anticipation, to the report of the World Commission.

*Original Spanish: Mr. DÍAZ GUERRA (Under-Secretary for Labour, Spain)* — I would like to begin by joining the speakers who have preceded me and expressing our congratulations to Ambassador Elmiger on his appointment to preside over this 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. His election as President is a guarantee that our work will be carried out efficiently. The Director-General's Report submitted to this session of the Conference contains a summary of what the Organization has done in 2000-2001 biennium. This summary includes a description of the objectives of the ILO in the new phase, from when Mr. Somavia took office in March 1999. I would like to say that my country has supported the basic objectives in the ILO's decent work programme right from the start (in Spanish, we would probably say "dignified work"). We have also supported the new structure adopted by the Office based upon four strategic objectives, namely labour standards and fundamental principles and rights, employment, social protection and dialogue, with gender equality and development as across-the-board subjects.

Since Spain joined the ILO in 1919, as one of the founding Members of the Organization, it has maintained a firm resolve to comply with the principles and objectives of the ILO. It is a member State which has ratified the largest number of Conventions, namely

128 Conventions, and has applied them satisfactorily and has always cooperated with all of the other Members of the Organization.

The Kingdom of Spain actively contributes to the financial support of the Organization. It ranks No. 8 in the regular budget and has an important role in the extra-budgetary contributions. This support is also shown in collaboration with the IPEC Programme and in the financial support given to dozens of technical cooperation programmes mainly developed in Latin America and in North Africa. We have also supported the numerous ILO publications produced in Spanish, including the *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety*, thanks to cooperation between the Office and the Spanish Administration.

My Government would like to express our support for the Director-General's initiative to enhance the technical cooperation programme for Colombia. Therefore, we support the proposal to allocate part of the surplus pursuant to the settling of the regular budget of the ILO during the 2000-01 biennium to this programme.

We would also like to support efforts which have been made recently to try to reconcile international trade at the global level with the respect for workers' rights, such that the increase in liberalization and globalization occurring in commercial exchanges always goes hand in hand with social progress and decent living and working conditions.

I would now like to briefly mention the reforms that have been taking place in Spanish labour legislation since the last session of the Conference in June 2001.

First of all, I would like to refer to the implementation of the agreement for improving and developing the social protection system which was signed with the social partners on 9 April 2001. Pursuant to this agreement, recent approval has been given to legislation to establish a gradual and flexible retirement scheme.

This legislation is aimed at encouraging workers to stay in the workplace longer, by giving incentives to those who choose to work after the age of 65, which is the legal age of retirement. This system of gradual and flexible retirement is part of European discussions on the subject, and is in line with what was agreed by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union at the Barcelona Summit.

I would also like to refer to the recent process of social dialogue which the Government began in April and which, unfortunately, has not been accepted by the trade union organizations. The objective of the unemployment benefits reform is to improve the operation of the labour market and give unemployed people the incentive to go and look for work. This reform coincides fully with what was agreed at the recently held Barcelona Summit according to which employment policies should be adopted to taxation systems and unemployment benefits so that going to work is advantageous and to encourage active jobseeking. The proposed reform, however, also involves the maintenance and modernization of the existing rights to unemployment protection. This proposed reform also provides for considerable improvements in the labour market, like the establishment of a contributive system for casual farm labour, which is currently lacking in Spain. It would also increase the number of people who can benefit from the labour insertion scheme, called the "*Renta Activa de Inserción*". It would also provide new benefits to

encourage women to return to the workplace after maternity leave and for people over the age of 52, to increase their chances of integration into the labour market.

This is a continuation of the structural reforms undertaken by the Spanish Government since 1996, since when unemployment has fallen from 22 per cent to 11 per cent and 3 million new jobs have been created.

As regards the Spanish Presidency of the European Union during the first semester of 2002, I would like to highlight the importance of the Barcelona Summit. During this European Council, the so-called "Social Summit" became institutionalized.

Finally, other achievements during the Spanish Presidency should be noted, for example, with regard to social security for immigrant workers, Regulation (EEC) No. 1408/71 was approved. The European Union would like to contribute to peace in the Middle East and with this in mind it is prepared to support the creation of employment and social dialogue, and the reconstruction of the Palestinian economy, as an integral part of regional development. Therefore, we support any efforts made by the international community to strengthen their efforts to help the Palestinian Authority and, in particular, to reconstruct their economic and social infrastructure.

*Original French:* Ms. QUINTIN (*representative, European Union*) — I would like, first of all, to congratulate Mr. Elmiger on his election as President of the Conference and thank Mr. Somavia for his excellent Report, *ILO programme implementation 2000-01*. This Report highlights three issues with which the European Commission concurs fully and which constitute the global social agenda for the years to come. Reinforcement of cooperation between the Commission and the ILO has enabled us to achieve greater convergence in our analysis and points of view, and recent meetings between our two institutions have shown the vitality of that convergence.

The first issue is the promotion of fundamental rights. The elimination of child labour here is one of our main goals. All Member States of the European Union have ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), thereby supporting the efforts of the ILO, which should be congratulated for its Report and its proposal for a plan of action. This struggle is part of a global framework of promoting fundamental rights and dignity at work, as the Commission highlighted in a communiqué on this issue in July last year. At European level we have a charter of fundamental rights and the Commission has proposed that this be incorporated in the European Community treaty. We are continuing to pursue this goal through our assistance programmes as well as development of our trade policies.

The second issue is the promotion of quality. Here the EU and ILO agendas coincide completely with regard to decent work. The objective which the European Councils in Lisbon and Barcelona have proclaimed is to create more jobs and better jobs. These European Councils have developed a comprehensive approach to quality, which includes ongoing training throughout a person's career, involving workers in the running of their firms, equality of opportunity and welfare at work. On this last issue, the European Ministers have approved a new strategy proposed by the Commission which aims to strengthen prevention

and to reduce new risks such as stress and harassment. I am pleased to note that the ILO Governing Body has decided to place a new strategy for health and safety at work on the agenda for the next session of the Conference in June 2003.

The third issue, last but not least, is the promotion of true global social governance. The European Union supports this in all of its international bodies and the Commission presented the European vision in its communiqué of July 2001. Social governance entails an integrated political agenda enhanced by economic, financial, trade, social and employment policies. It involves all social players in these objectives — public authorities, social partners, civil society and business.

These are the foundations of the Union's economic modernization strategy which was approved in Lisbon in March 2000. We are aiming to re-establish full employment by the end of this decade. The commitment of all players is therefore crucial and the European Union is using all the instruments available to it, including developing new methods of governance based on the coordination of national policies in a context of common objectives for employment, the fight against exclusion and the question of pensions.

Furthermore, European social dialogue is making important strides through recent agreements on teleworking and another on the development of life-long training. The European Commission will break new ground next month in presenting a communiqué that will develop a framework for our activities. The Commission is therefore pleased at the setting up of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and wishes every success to its co-chairpersons Ms. Halonen, the President of Finland, and Mr. Mkapa, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Commission hopes that their work will contribute to calming the fears arising from globalization and enable us to find ways of reconciling economic efficiency and social justice in this magic triangle of competitiveness, growth and employment. The European Commission is ready to make a full contribution to this important initiative geared to the emergence of balanced social governance in globalization.

*Interpretation from Arabic:* Mr. AL-NATSHEH (*representative, Palestine*) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! It is indeed a pleasure to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election, and to wish them every success in their task. It is also my pleasure to convey to you all, brothers and sisters, the greetings of our people standing steadfastly in the land of peace, the greetings of President Arafat, Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, the only leader in the world to be besieged by tanks in his own headquarters. Greetings to you all from the children, the women and the civilians who face death every day in their homes which are demolished over their heads. Greetings from the workers, men and women, who are being killed at the roadblocks and barriers erected by the Israeli army. Greetings from the girl and boy students, from the doctors and nurses, from the pregnant women who deliver stillborn children at these barriers, from the sick who die at the barriers because they have been prevented from reaching the hospitals. Greetings from the farmers whose farms are being laid bare, from the workers whose factories are being destroyed. Greetings to you from all of them,

and also a question addressed by them to you as an international organization that has its principles concerning freedom, democracy and human rights — a question addressed particularly to the workers. The question is: Are we not human beings, to be subjected to this killing, this imprisonment, this torture, this hunger and this siege? Do we not have rights like all other human beings that have to be safeguarded? Is it not our right for our children to live like all other children in peace and happiness? Is it not regrettable that every other people in the world have a right to their State and to their independence, except for the Palestinian people? Is the silence with which such crimes are being met a sign that there is racial discrimination between the Palestinian people and other peoples of the world? Words cannot describe what is happening in the Palestinian territories. What you are learning through the media represents only a very small part of the tragic reality. Allow me to give you only two examples of the massacres, the destruction and the killings that are taking place. The first is what happened in the Jenin refugee camp and the second is what took place in Nablus, where buildings were demolished over the heads of children and women, on a par with the atrocities committed at Auschwitz and during the Holocaust. The international community was unable to send a mission, a mere mission, to observe what was happening there. The Secretary-General called off a mission that had been established by a UN resolution, merely because Israel refused it access to the camp.

For more than 20 months now, the Palestinian people, their towns, their villages and their camps have been suffering a military siege unprecedented in history, which has raised the number of the unemployed to approximately 400,000 workers and has dragged approximately 70 per cent of the population down to the poverty line. As mentioned in the report of the Director-General, this has led to a financial crisis and other damage as a result of the destruction, to the violation of human rights, to loss of lives, to constraints on the freedom of movement, to the looting of private property, to the destruction of homes, to the confiscation of land to build even more settlements, and much more, as you have seen in the reports of many organizations. Allow me to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to the Director-General for the positive points and constructive recommendations in his report. The time has come for all of us to assume the responsibilities concerning peace in Palestine in particular and in the region in general. It has become obvious that dialogue with tanks and planes is to no avail. It renders the crisis more acute and fans the flames. Bloodshed can only beget bloodshed and occupation can only lead to resistance. The violation of rights leads to despair and pushes people to resort to all means of revenge. That is why our people are appealing to you, appealing to your peoples and to your governments, to endeavour to put an end to the aggression against our people, to put an end to the occupation of our territories, so that our people may hope to achieve their right to their independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital, the right of the refugees to return. I hope that you will all be aware that our people want to achieve their objectives through peace — yes, through peace. But if the occupiers insist on remaining in our territories, our people will not relinquish their right to resistance.



No, they will not relinquish their right to resistance against occupation, a right recognized by all international laws. Events have shown us that there can be no peace with occupation, no security with aggression. Let us all stand by a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for the Arab Palestinian people in particular, and for the Arab people in general. Put a stop to aggression against Palestine, the Golan and Lebanon. Put an end to the embargo imposed on Iraq, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Sudan. Let us all endeavour to raise the banner of peace not only in Palestine but in the region and in the world as a whole.

In conclusion, greetings to you all, the greetings of freedom and peace.

Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employers' technical adviser and substitute delegate, Argentina*) — Allow me to begin by congratulating the President on behalf of the Employers' group of the Conference. The first programme implementation report prepared by the Director-General is a useful approach that should lead the Organization towards a better understanding of its own performance. It bears testimony to the ongoing change and modernization of the internal decision-making process within the ILO.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that this is very much a first attempt to assess the Organization's performance against its objectives and performance indicators.

Employers see the Report as important for two reasons. Firstly, it lends weight to our belief that the ILO objectives are most effective when created in direct response to the true needs of the constituents, who are in the best position to ensure that the work programme of the Organization is relevant to the modern world of work.

Secondly, it gives us a sense of how the Office is progressing with the implementation of the various reforms required by the Governing Body and by this Conference.

One of the most important of these reforms is in the area of standard setting and these will be put to the test next year when the integrated approach will be applied to the area of health and safety.

It is therefore important to remember what the integrated approach is endeavouring to deliver. According to the Governing Body in March 2002, the integrative approach "involves better preparation for standard setting, through a comprehensive analysis by the Office of existing standards, their synergy, shortcomings and impact", focusing on means to increase the impact of existing standards through promotion and technical cooperation. Such a plan would include proposals for new standards or revisions of the standards and other appropriate normative action as well as guidance on objectives and content in order to make the entire set of ILO instruments more coherent and modern and suitable for wider global application.

This integrated approach can therefore also be a strong contribution from the ILO to the modern world of work.

Today, there is a myriad number of debates going on within various international forums. Many of these focus on the problem of eradicating world poverty, a goal that has also started to emerge in some of the debates in this Organization.

The more strategic approach adopted by the ILO helps to ensure that it moves from being a merely

reactive organization to one that is proactive, by actually confronting the real issues facing constituents as identified by them.

We cannot solve the problem of world poverty on our own, but we can make a positive contribution by promoting enterprise creation, entrepreneurship and the creation of productive employment consistent with the principles of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Similarly, the debate on what is commonly known as corporate social responsibility has seized the imagination of many, but it is perhaps not appropriate here. It is above all an individual business initiative and must reflect the realities of the business concerned if it is to have any real practical meaning. It is not a replacement for failures or gaps in national legislation. It is a reflection of a company's voluntary commitment to move beyond its legal obligations. It is therefore natural that there are diverse approaches and no "one-size-fits-all" model, even though many companies do engage in external dialogues.

Business needs to be able to respond with flexibility and be encouraged to find innovative approaches. This could of course include deciding that compliance with the national legal framework is itself a sign of a good business. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that companies should not be expected to take on the role or responsibilities of governments.

The implementation report is one way of assessing performance, identifying gaps, and considering how best to respond. There is a need to continue strengthening the tripartite constituents to further enable them to work with the Office and assist in the actual delivery of the various programmes identified.

We must be clear that labour and social policy is our mandate, and our programmes need to support and strengthen this.

We in the Employers' group wish to continue to work with the Office in the creation and implementation of its future programmes. We can make a valuable contribution by bringing business issues to the fore. It is through us that the business voice can be heard in this Organization, and we do expect the Organization to work with us in this regard.

However, although we are the voice of employers, it is through ACT/EMP that our programmes are identified and largely delivered. ACT/EMP is our conduit into the activities of the ILO.

We believe it is important for ACT/EMP to be adequately resourced and supported by the other sectors of the ILO. We do not believe that employers' activities should be weakened or subsumed into other programmes.

The Director-General's Report shows the need to continue and strengthen the active partnership policy and technical co-operation programme for the occupied territories.

I think there should be an ongoing dialogue at all levels and between all parties. In particular, we have to promote small enterprises, as it is from them that the most effective impetus will come for the creation of new jobs. Youth employment and training opportunities for young people should also be promoted.

Our involvement in the process is the most effective contribution that the ILO can make to improving the situation for workers and employers in these territories. We share joint responsibility for supporting the ILO in this task, helping to open up new prospects for

social justice as part of the efforts being made to establish peace.

Tripartism has been at the heart of the historical success of the ILO. Its future success relies on the strengthening of that tripartism, its ability to deliver its mandate, meet the expectations of its constituents, and meet the performance objectives it sets itself.

The reality of the world of work is changing fast, and we must follow this process closely and look to provide answers to emerging problems in advance. That is our tripartite responsibility. We are already on the right track with the ILO and its constituents moving forward together.

*(Mr. Rampak takes the Chair.)*

Mr. HERCZOG (*Government delegate, Hungary*) — It greatly facilitates the evaluation of the *ILO programme implementation 2000-01* that this time a well-structured and clear Report has been prepared. It is also important to note that the initial steps of strategic budgeting have been successfully introduced within the ILO. Comparing the system of measurable performance indicators, related targets and achievements, Members are given a realistic opportunity to objectively assess the activities of the Organization.

In my contribution, I would like to focus on three subjects.

First, from among the ILO's strategic objectives, Hungary considers that promoting and realizing standards and fundamental principles and rights at work is the most important one.

Here, I would like to touch upon some of the relevant operational objectives and their implementation. I express my Government's appreciation concerning the high achievement rate of the targets. Some areas require further efforts. The current low rate of reports received on the implementation of Conventions is not acceptable. It is an important achievement that the follow-up to the Declaration has become operational. It is true for both reporting systems of the follow-up that the objective and promotional approach used is successful in identifying countries and areas requiring technical assistance. As a result, major programmes have been launched. I urge that further support from the ILO's regular budget and from external resources should be provided to technical assistance in the framework of the Declaration.

Second, I attach similar importance to Strategic Objective No. 4: Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue. While acknowledging the relevant achievements, I find it regrettable that the initiative of promoting the ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), with the programme marked 4b.2, and programmes under 4b.3 addressing gender equality issues, failed to reach their respective targets.

At this point, allow me to interrupt the evaluation of the Director-General's Report as issues of social dialogue have become very topical in Hungary recently.

A new Government took office in Hungary late in May with the declared objective of dealing with employment policy and labour as priority issues. In line with this objective, policies concerning social dialogue, employment and labour issues, labour market training and equality opportunities at work are coordinated once more in one ministry.

In formulating and implementing our policies we will particularly rely on the possibilities inherent in social dialogue. The Government endeavours to conduct consultation with a view to reaching agreement. These consultations will cover the most relevant economic issues.

In our work we wish to rely on our excellent relationship with the ILO. My Government greatly appreciates the activities of the ILO Office in Budapest and continues to provide every condition necessary for its successful and long-term operation.

Third, here I return to the Report of the Director-General, and more specifically to the issues of external relations and partnerships, to which I address particular importance.

It is an important element in the ILO's strategy to have its presence and policies widely recognized within the international community, more specifically in its relation with the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. The results achieved over the last biennium are appropriate. At the same time, I think that these developments, as well as the views put forward in the Governing Body's Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization, justify a more active approach representing the Decent Work Agenda in the course of the ILO's international cooperation. The ILO should particularly rely on its field structure and on the activities of the International Policy Group.

Ms. SHOULEVA (*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria*) — At the outset, please allow me to congratulate the President and his deputies on their election and the assumption of these responsibilities. I am confident that under their able guidance, this session of the Conference will be a success.

May I also assure you of the full support and cooperation of my country for your important work. Let me also commend the ILO Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, for his tireless efforts to achieve decent work worldwide.

As seen from his Report, the ILO may be proud of its accomplishments. It has become an effective tool in bringing about policy changes in our complex and globalizing world.

It is an undisputable fact that the success of each economy depends on three main factors: the growth of production and income, the amount of rights and freedoms in the labour sphere, and the adequacy of the social security and social protection systems.

Our cooperation with the ILO has proved to be of considerable help for the efficient, practical implementation of these main factors, which are at the centre of my Government's programme.

Let me share some of the results of this cooperation. The Republic of Bulgaria was among the first countries to ratify a package of fundamental ILO instruments, including the core ILO Conventions in the sphere of labour rights. This shows our will to pursue active policy in this field. At the present stage of development of countries in transition, such as Bulgaria, it is especially important to overcome the problem of insufficient wages. We consider this to be the key in promoting decent work.

Against this background, in the context of the Organization's four strategic tasks and as part of the Cooperation Agreement between the ILO and Bulgaria, several consultation missions were carried out

by ILO representatives and tripartite seminars were organized on the following topics: social dialogue, equal opportunities for women and men; the regulation of payment through social dialogue, and the protection of labour remuneration by means including guarantee funds.

The long-term ILO project “Training Through Integrated Labour Inspections”, funded by the German Government, will be accomplished by the end of August this year.

Bulgaria also participates in the most extensive technical cooperation programme within the framework of the ILO: the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

As already pointed out yesterday by my delegation, a team of sociologists has drawn up a national report on the employment of children, which was discussed by all parties concerned at a special seminar organized with the financial support of the IPEC. The seminar concluded that the problem of child labour in Bulgaria is not as acute as in other countries.

Nevertheless, we are continuing, through the national action plan, to work towards the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. By taking part in the technical cooperation programme in implementing the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Bulgaria is introducing a substantially new system of industrial relations exemplifying the country’s democratization and decentralization process. This activity is being carried out on the basis of continuing dialogue with social partners and NGOs.

We highly value our cooperation with the ILO and the active partnership with the multidisciplinary team for Central and Eastern European countries. We strongly believe that with the ILO’s help, Bulgaria will achieve its goal of ensuring decent work for all, which is an essential part of every society’s social development and criterion for progress.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the countries that supported Bulgaria’s candidacy for membership in the Governing Body of the International Labour Office. Let me assure you that Bulgaria will spare no efforts and will do its best to generate new ideas for the effective realization of the strategic goals of our Organization.

Mr. HUSSAIN (*Government delegate, Pakistan*) — Allow me at the outset to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. We are confident that under his dynamic and sagacious leadership this session of the Conference will achieve its objectives.

Pakistan is passing through difficult times. Domestic economic constraints, resulting primarily from our security compulsions, continue to restrict the Government’s ability to act quickly and decisively. Nevertheless, we have resolved to move forward. The reforms initiative by the Government in all spheres of life will continue to be implemented.

At the 89th Session we informed this Conference of a far-reaching social agenda launched by our Government. The agenda, which provides for massive reforms in the labour laws, aims to make the public sector more responsive to the needs of the poor and the workers. Our goal is to create and expand economic opportunities for workers by instituting policy measures towards greater social inclusion, political empowerment, economic equality and provisions of greater financial and social security.

This strategy replicates the ILO’s four strategic objectives. The following steps taken by the Government of Pakistan speak for themselves: ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) — may I say that Pakistan has already ratified seven out of the eight core labour Conventions of the ILO; constitution of a labour advisory board, an apex body for tripartite consultations on policy issues; promotion of bilateralism and social dialogue through the Workers — Employers Bipartite Council of Pakistan (WEBCOP) — the Government fully supports this initiative of employers and workers in promoting the creation of provincial chapters of WEBCOP to provide a forum for a continuous dialogue between our social partners; increase in the monthly minimum wage for unskilled workers; consolidation of existing labour laws into six broad categories, the details of which were provided last year and are to be approved shortly; enhancement of maternity benefits for female workers; a 100-per-cent increase in workers’ compensation in case of death or serious injuries; an increase in the old-age pension for industrial workers; implementation of a national action plan and policy for the elimination of child labour, which is being pursued in partnership with the ILO; and formulation of a national action plan and policy for the abolition of bonded labour in Pakistan.

Poverty reduction through employment generation and development of small and medium-sized enterprises, coupled with the increased social protection and dialogue, is the top priority objective of the government’s endeavour.

Following the ILO’s Global Employment Forum, Pakistan initiated a tripartite dialogue to evolve a national employment strategy, which seeks to create two million additional jobs. The national employment strategy is an important component of our poverty reduction strategy, which Pakistan is pursuing with the help of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The technical advice provided by the ILO has been of great value.

It is, however, important to underline that, in an increasingly globalized interdependent world, the lives of people, especially workers, are also affected by policies and decisions emanating from outside their countries, for instance, inequitable global trade rules, unpredictable and volatile capital movement, gapping Official Development Assistance and artificial and discriminatory barriers to the transfer of technology for peaceful purposes.

A successful employment strategy at the national level is, therefore, inextricably linked to an enabling international economic, financial and trading environment. “There is an urgent need for a more accountable and just international economic order based on greater financial flows to the developing world through debt relief and access to markets of developed countries, especially in the agriculture products and labour intensive manufacturing.”

We are encouraged by the results of the Global Employment Forum. The Forum not only rose to the challenge of addressing the synchronized slowdown of the global economy, the fall-out of the events of 11 September, but it also confirmed that a coherent framework for employment and job creation is critically dependent on good global governance. The ILO, and in particular the Director-General and his team,

deserves our commendations and support to promote and implement the findings of the Forum.

The Director-General's Report is a comprehensive account of implementation of strategic objectives and budgeting. It documents the significant progress achieved in different programmes. My delegation would like to place on record its appreciation of, and gratitude for, the excellent work of the Director-General and his Office.

My delegation would especially highlight paragraph 37 of the Report, which underscores the need for consistent financial and technical support from the ILO to enable developing countries to implement effectively the obligations resulting from new ratifications. In this regard, Pakistan looks forward to a sustained engagement by the ILO in supporting our national objectives.

While requiring further operational clarity, decent work remains an important conceptual and operational tool. It is important to convert the decent work paradigm into a coherent policy.

Last year, Pakistan proposed that the ILO should undertake practical programmes at the national level involving all the stakeholders. A solid empirical foundation of decent work, based on the experience gained at the national level, in view of specific circumstances and possibilities, would pave the way for integrating decent work into all operational objectives of the ILO.

Pakistan remains seriously concerned with the deteriorating social and economic situation in the occupied Arab territories. As stated by the Director-General in his report to the Conference, this situation is "deteriorating daily, with rising levels of poverty and unemployment, which has become in practice a widespread humanitarian crisis." The Palestinian economy is grinding to a halt due to the policy of closure, fiscal crisis and damage and destruction resulting from the military operations conducted in the occupied territories.

The ILO must take urgent measures to address the situation and immediately put in place an extended technical cooperation programme. We also call upon the occupying power to immediately cease these military operations in the occupied Arab territories.

The ILO's vision is based on the recognition that poverty anywhere constitutes a threat to prosperity everywhere. In a world, where 2.8 billion people survive on US\$2 per day, and more than 1 billion on even less, there cannot be a task more urgent for the international community than combating poverty. Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, poverty is a breeding ground for conflict, violence and even terror. Solid foundations for peace and stability cannot be laid in the quagmire of poverty and exploitation.

The ILO's role is crucial in the creation of an enduring global peace and a just international, economic and social order. We are confident that together we will rise to the occasion.

Mr. SOODHUN (*Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations, Mauritius*) — I should like first to congratulate the President on his election. It is with great emotion that I am addressing this Conference today, not only as the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations, but also as someone who has been associated with the world of work as a trade unionist for over 20 years.

It is my duty to convey the deep appreciation of my country to the Director-General, Juan Somavia, for his significant efforts to promote the concept of decent work.

Decent work remains a central and permanent priority in our strategy to eliminate poverty, especially at this juncture of world development, when globalization is facing the "crisis of legitimacy and creating the silent sense of powerlessness in many families", as the Director-General himself stated at the Global Employment Forum last year. The reflection which the ILO has engaged on the social aspects of globalization and on employment through the Global Employment Forum gives us hope that issues such as poverty alleviation, labour rights and social protection will be addressed comprehensively.

The Government of my country is itself presently facing complex policy choices of modernizing the economy, enhancing competitiveness, promoting the protection of fundamental rights and maintaining social stability. Guided by the concept of decent work, it has developed an action plan against poverty and is allocating substantial funds for the integration of the vulnerable groups through micro credit schemes and community development projects. Wage compensation is granted to workers every year, based on the rise in the cost of living, with full compensation to lower income groups and old persons. Since last year, the payment of an end-of-year gratuity has become a standing feature.

Employment creation remains one of its most urgent priorities through strategies for training and re-skilling of workers, investment promotion, co-operative projects and entrepreneurship development, especially for women.

The protection of fundamental rights is being strengthened with the review of the labour legislation, on which tripartite consultations are presently being held. In this context, I am pleased to announce that the Government of Mauritius is proposing to ratify the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), after consultation with the social partners. The Government will also introduce a comprehensive sex discrimination bill. The ratification of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), is equally being examined. This reform is motivated by the fact that procedures and structures which have been in existence for 30 years cannot be expected to respond adequately to the imperatives of the new economic environment.

We have initiated major reforms so as to modernize the labour administration services and to make them more accessible and closer to the workers, through regionalized offices.

Much emphasis is being laid by the Government of my country on social dialogue and tripartism. It has established a National Economic and Social Council, which includes trade unions, employers, NGOs and government, to advise on economic and social policies. Conciliation and mediation mechanisms are being improved. A Guide on Industrial Relations Practice will be introduced, together with a code of practice on a conflict-free workplace and a campaign to promote the concept of collective bargaining at enterprise level will be organized. However, the success of these policies depends largely on transparency, so-

cial dialogue, confidence-building and mutual respect on the part of the social partners.

The Government of Mauritius is giving a special attention to migrant workers and Guidelines for Employment of Guest Workers will be disseminated to ensure that rights of migrant workers are protected.

We are addressing the issue of social protection in different ways. A study on work and the family has already been conducted and will be followed by a tripartite conference to develop strategies, which would aim at reconciling family priorities with work imperatives.

I am also pleased to mention that the Government has developed a national strategy on HIV/AIDS and a national coordinating committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister is monitoring the implementation of the plan.

Health and safety at work has been one of the major preoccupations of the Government. Legislation on occupational safety and health is being reviewed in order to respond to the technological changes and the new workplace risks. A national policy on occupational safety and health has been developed. A study on asbestos has been carried out and an action plan is being formulated together with regulations for the control of asbestos at the workplace. A national awareness campaign, focusing on accidents at work, will be held this year with the aim of developing a coherent strategy for the prevention of workplace accidents.

Though the rate of child labour is quite insignificant in Mauritius, the Government is strongly committed to preventing all forms of child exploitation. Major reforms of the education system are being carried out with massive investment in school infrastructures so as to ensure that every child not only finds a place in a primary and a secondary school, but also receives quality education. We are equally establishing monitoring mechanisms as required by Convention No. 182 and hope to be guided by the technical expertise of the ILO in this respect.

With the pressure being exerted by globalization, countries, especially small States like ours, rely to a large extent on ILO support for the translation of the goals of decent work into reality. It is our sincere wish that additional resources would be dedicated to sustain our efforts. In this respect, we would venture to propose that, in view of the specific nature of the issues facing Africa and its people, the organization of a regional ILO conference on decent work for the African region would help to identify problems, formulate strategies and mobilize resources.

Before I conclude, I wish to take this opportunity to inform my OAU colleagues that my country has offered to host the next OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission next year. I have the sincere pleasure to extend a warm invitation to all OAU delegations.

I should also like to extend our gratitude to the ILO for the support which it has provided to us for various projects and the continued encouragement which we have received from the Director-General.

*Original Portuguese: Mr. JOBIM FILHO (Minister of Labour and Employment, Brazil)* — I would like to begin by congratulating the President on his election to preside over the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. I am sure that he will conduct our discussions in this forum with even-handed competence. I would also like to take this opportunity to

congratulate the ILO in the person of Ambassador Somavia on its accomplishments in the 2000-01 biennium. The Report submitted for the first time in a strategic form is evidence of the efforts made by this Organization to fulfil its mandate as effectively as possible in the light of the seriousness of its objectives.

In accordance with one of the central concerns of this Organization, promoting decent work is a priority in our country. The Brazilian Government has been implementing a set of actions to combat child labour, forced labour, discrimination, to combat labour in the informal jobs market and to promote safety and health in the workplace, and the results of these actions speak for themselves. The number of working children and adolescents in the age range 5-14 years fell from 4 million to 2.9 million between 1992 and 1999. The Government's goal is to remove at least 500,000 children from work each year in the period 2000-02. As part of this effort, more than 65,000 inspections were carried out from 1999 to 2001, for the first time reaching into the informal market as well. Indeed, as from this year, checking for the existence of child labour has become routine in all inspections.

To stop the needier children returning to work because they have no alternative income for their subsistence, around 800,000 grants are being paid. For the Brazilian Government, a child's place is in school. In this regard, I should like to remind everyone that the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration has achieved considerable success in education too: around 97 per cent of children between seven and 14 are at school and approximately 8.5 million of them are benefiting from the school grants programme.

Still on the subject of decent jobs, through joint action with other governmental bodies in society, the mobile inspection group has been able not just to eliminate centres of forced or degrading labour but has also helped workers thus released not to return to their previous situation. In this connection, the Brazilian Government is taking action in the training sphere especially intended for workers thus released. The Government has also submitted a bill to Congress to extend unemployment insurance benefits to these workers. Through these measures the vicious circle is broken whereby, for want of any other option, workers might find themselves forced to return to their previous situation.

The promotion of decent jobs cannot dispense with action taken to fight discrimination in jobs and professions. The Government is encouraging the establishment of centres in all the Ministry of Labour and Employment's regional offices. More than 60 centres are already in operation and they receive accusations of discrimination on account of gender, race, colour, age, sexual orientation, physical handicap, etc. They work to make those involved sufficiently aware of how to resolve conflicts through negotiation.

Standards of health and safety in the workplace have significantly improved. With more inspections and with the introduction of prevention programmes to lower the rate of occupational accidents and sickness, we were able to reduce the death rate by 23 per cent between 1998 and 2000. The goal is to reduce the rate by 40 per cent by 2003.

In regard to the question of improvements in the quality of jobs, Brazil has created a number of formal jobs since 2000. Between 2000 and 2001, the country has created more than 1.2 million formal jobs. This can be attributed to an association between economic

policy, the implementation of ingenious ways of creating more formal jobs and the relentless action of labour inspections.

The search for alternative means of formalizing labour is one of the priorities of the Brazilian Government. At present, a study is under way to support the introduction of simplified procedures for putting so-called casual workers on a more formal basis. About 10 million people are thought to have such a status.

The Brazilian Government, employers and workers, and also the MERCOSUR government partners, are observing with growing concern the wave of protectionism taking hold in developed countries, where export barriers are being imposed against developing countries and farm subsidies are being increased. These practices depress the labour market in developing countries. They encourage informal work, make labour relations more insecure and lead to social unrest.

I wish to emphasize Brazil's determination to go on supporting the High-Level Tripartite Working Group on Maritime Labour Standards established by the Governing Body of the ILO, in order to secure a set of maritime Conventions scheduled to come into effect by 2005.

As is clear, the Government of Brazil is fully committed, together with its employers' and workers' representatives, to improving the conditions and prospects of our labour market on an ongoing basis. There will be no lack of boldness in making further progress, keeping in mind that one of the essential purposes of the State is to help its citizens achieve their full potential, both professional and human.

Finally, I would like to wish success to the new Governing Body as it begins its administration at this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (Mr. RAMPAK) — Before I close the morning session the Clerk of the Conference has some announcements to make.

*Original French:* The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — The Conference has a request for the right of reply. In accordance with what was decided by the Officers of the Conference and drawn to the attention of the Conference by its President, Mr. Jean-Jacques Elmiger, and that at the third sitting last Monday, the response must be brief, must not exceed two minutes

and must deal solely with the point under discussion. In no circumstances should it be used as an opportunity for a new statement and the language used in the right of reply should be parliamentary in nature. As also decided by the Officers there will be no right of reply to the reply.

The PRESIDENT — As per the explanation by the Clerk of the Conference a right of reply has been given. There is a procedure in place governing the reply.

Mr. LEVY (*Government delegate, Israel*) — I will respond, if briefly, to the Palestinian representative regarding his choice of denigrating language, as well as the substance of his speech, unbefitting the principles and values the ILO stands for. The recent suffering of both sides is a result of the Palestinian decision to resort to violence and terrorism. What you define as resistance, in which 520 Israelis were killed and thousands wounded, is in fact suicide bombings, in buses, in restaurants. During the ILO deliberations alone, two suicide bombings took place, killing 18 Israelis and wounding 50.

The Palestinians had the chance at Camp David in July 2000 to attain the goals pronounced here by this spokesperson, but it would have been through negotiations, not through speeches about victories attaining all their goals, and none of their interlocutors. They chose violence, like the violent words expressed in this hall. But they still have the chance to end the violence, which will also end restrictions, end closures, and then talks can be renewed.

Palestinians and Israelis are neighbours. They are destined to live side by side. Even during the recent clashes Israel continued to promote the well-being of the Palestinian workers, protecting their social rights, transferring funds to workers' personal bank accounts and developing industrial sites to create employment.

We support the Director-General's efforts to enhance technical cooperation with the Palestinians. Unfortunately, their representative here, Mr. Al-Natsheh, has consistently preferred making rabid speeches in this hall, rather than working together in the ILO's spirit of dialogue.

*(The Conference adjourned at 12.50 p.m.)*