



# Provisional Record

Ninetieth Session, Geneva, 2002

## Thirteenth sitting

Friday, 14 June 2002, 10.05 a.m.

*Presidents: Mr. Elmiger, Mr. Rampak*

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

*Original Spanish:* Ms. IGLESIAS (*Minister of Labour, Venezuela*) — I must mention that my country, Venezuela, is going through a very difficult situation. In 1998 we began a process of strictly peaceful and democratic changes in Venezuela. This process has led to a new constitutional order approved by the people in a referendum through the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. These changes have taken place with the participation of Venezuelan people, not only through elective procedures, but also through their decisive participation as principal actors. It is around this axis that the process of transformation has been built; a process which has the aim of achieving fundamental ideals relating to social justice. Venezuelans are taking on these changes as an historic challenge. This challenge includes our own national issues and those created by the growing globalization of human relations.

In this way, we would like to bring attention to common areas between the strategic programme of the ILO and its four main objectives, and the content of our Constitution, in particular the main issues: fundamental rights in the workplace, decent, dignified and productive work, social protection and security and social dialogue as a democratic instrument. With these goals in mind and these common areas, for a long time now, and I can reaffirm this today, Venezuela has ratified many Conventions of the ILO, whose specific objective is to improve the living conditions of the working class as well as their trade union and democratic rights.

As representatives of the Government of Venezuela, we support the achievements described by the President of the Conference and by the Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body. Nevertheless, official statements about achievements are one thing, but something very different is the great divide that exists between the small group of countries, whose powerful influence governs the world, and the majority of poor nations, which includes Venezuela.

It is no secret, as the majority of people who preceded me have mentioned, that the reasons for this global divide between the rich and the poor in the world are found in the unjust and senseless way in which power is exercised today. We have seen an exclusive programme which is technocratic, mercantile, or which amounts to “wild capitalism” in the words of His Holiness, the Pope, where the powerful are fully responsible for social injustice, poverty and imbal-

ances in the world today. This programme is also expressed politically in all of our countries.

Given this scenario, one of the paths we have chosen is integration. Already nearly two centuries ago, the freedom fighter, Simón Bolívar introduced this concept, which is now a pressing requirement. Given the alternative of a common and voracious market, all we can do is follow an approach of bringing people together with concrete policies in as many areas as possible.

We refer to the above because in Venezuela we have chosen an original, unique, independent, democratic and peaceful approach, which, also requires co-ordination on a continental scale for policies with the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

This approach to which I keep referring, and which we Venezuelans have chosen as a sovereign people, was brutally attacked by dark forces who, on 11 April, tried to overturn the Government with a coup against the democratic institutions of our country, with a complete disregard for all of the legitimate and legally established forces. The action taken by our brave people, and the institutional attitude adopted by the national armed forces, made it possible to re-establish the state of law and democracy in our country in only 48 hours. Most of the people on the front line of the process of change which Venezuela is going through are workers.

I would like to say to you that for us democracy is not an empty word. Exercising our democratic rights means claiming our right to wealth, equal opportunities, both social and political, to participate in collective decisions, the respect of the will of the people and, above all dialogue, and lots of it, so that we can understand each other. Proof of our great belief in dialogue is the formation of the Venezuelan delegation accredited by the Government to this session of the Conference. Here, with a representative of the Venezuelan Workers' Confederation, is one of the political actors who intervened along side the former president of Fedecamaras to participate in the actions which encouraged the *coup d'état* in my country. It is now his duty to explain himself before the Venezuelan courts and the Venezuelan people.

Fortunately, this can be done in democratic conditions, and he can exercise all of the rights to which he is entitled as a Venezuelan citizen. We are prepared to continue being tolerant and to respect the great principles of humanity. We are willing to learn to overcome all dogmatism, even though we still have to live alongside the dogmatic people. We think it is worthwhile trying to do so. The future belongs to those who are able to fight to build the dream of a strong country and a world in which peace based on justice reigns. In

order to do so, we are going to have to move towards dialogue, without this leading to impunity.

This is the reason why Venezuela, as a country and government, as a nation of workers trying to overcome poverty and backwardness, adheres to the popular and democratic causes of the world, such as people's rights to autonomy, self-determination and sovereignty, the respect of immigrants, the recognition of indigenous communities, attention to women's issues, respect for the dignity of children and their right to have a childhood in which they can play, love and learn, among so many other legitimate causes in the world today.

On behalf of my people and my Government, I would like to thank you for your attention and for the solidarity accorded to us during difficult times. We would like to send our brotherly greetings to you.

Mr. SYED MUHAMAD (*Government delegate, Malaysia*) — On behalf of the Malaysian delegation, I wish to congratulate the President on his unanimous election to preside over the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. I also wish to congratulate the Employer and the Worker Vice-Chairpersons for their election. We are confident that under their able leadership this Conference will be guided to attain its desired objectives.

Promoting social justice through the Decent Work Agenda is a strategic move adopted by the ILO. We believe that the Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference have served well to promote this objective. We believe that all the Conventions served well to promote social justice. However, currently the resources at the disposal of the ILO have been narrowly focused on promoting a few Conventions termed as fundamental Conventions. This promotional exercise should not amount to marginalizing the other Conventions, which are also important to promote the welfare of the working community. It should be emphasized that the changing working environment has made it imperative for all Conventions to be reviewed to ensure their relevance. However, we welcome the work done by the Working Party to identify the up-to-date Conventions and recommend the withdrawal of the outdated Conventions.

In this regard, the Malaysian delegation welcomes the efforts undertaken by the ILO to review the supervisory mechanisms. We would like to reiterate our position that the review should be a view, among others, to enhance transparency in the selection of cases and to ensure that the promotional approach has a common thread running through all these mechanisms.

The Global Report, *A future without child labour*, brings forth the hard facts about the prevalence of child labour globally. It is disheartening to know that the Asia-Pacific region harbours the largest absolute number of working children, i.e. some 127 million, constituting 60 per cent of the total working children. A problem of this massive scale requires the commitment of the governments, employers' and workers' organizations, international organizations and multinational enterprises to mitigate the negative impact on society and the nations.

Socio-cultural practices do inhibit effective implementation of the programmes to alleviate them. Intervention by international organizations, with the cooperation of the government concerned, could produce

the positive impact desired. It is pleasing to note that the ILO, through its IPEC (International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour) has made inroads into at least 75 of the developing countries to address this problem. The Malaysian Government welcomes this endeavour by the ILO and hopes for the continued cooperation of the donor countries to enable greater geographical coverage.

The Malaysian delegation welcomes the initiation of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. In this regard there are countries which are of the opinion that globalization, if left to market forces, could lead to the marginalization of a great number of developing countries. These developing countries are not well prepared to face the challenges of this phenomenon. They do not have the infrastructure and the technical know-how to be effective players in the field of globalization.

On the other hand, we have developed countries and world institutions urging developing countries to open up their borders for a freer flow of goods and services.

These contradicting views expressed by the various groups should be reconciled to enable appropriate programmes and projects to be formulated and directed to the targeted areas. Malaysia is looking forward to receiving an objective report in this regard.

Technical assistance and technical cooperation programmes have been the primary modes for the ILO to promote compliance with ratified Conventions, to achieve its objective of promoting social justice. Experience has shown that this interaction between the ILO and the member State is invaluable to ensure the effectiveness of these programmes. We support the ILO Recommendation to deploy a major portion of its budget surplus from the last biennium to be utilized for providing technical assistance, especially to implement programmes that would have a multiplier effect on employment generation. This move would certainly assist the developing countries which are suffering from scarcity of resources to implement such projects.

Finally, we believe in tripartism as a means to promote social justice and economic development. It has worked well in our country to instil the industrial harmony which is essential for a country's development. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Government of Malaysia has ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

Mr. GONZI (*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Social Policy, Malta*) — On behalf of my delegation, the Government of Malta and the people of Malta, allow me first of all to join my colleagues in congratulating the President on his appointment as President of the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference, but also to express my sincere appreciation for all the work that has been done and is being done by the ILO in the field of labour and social issues at a time when the world is facing enormous social and economic changes. Change has always been part of human nature. It does not and should not surprise us. What is different today is the fact that the changes we are witnessing are not only taking place at an unprecedented pace, but they are also happening within a context of globalization brought about by a number of factors, chief amongst which are the advances in

information technology that were made during the past few years.

This reality poses new challenges for us all, including the ILO. Globalization is not an issue that is restricted to any economic dimension. On the contrary, it is a people issue, and therefore it has a human and essentially social dimension that we need to address in a concerted and strategic manner. This is a message that was reiterated and emphasized this same week during the World Food Summit held in Rome. It is a message which requires all countries and all international organizations to come together and join forces in order to make this world a better place in which to live. It is within this context that I would like to express my Government's appreciation for the Director-General's Report on the ILO's programme implementation, indicating the progress that has been registered towards achieving the four strategic goals laid down in the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

During the past three years, the Government of Malta has been working incessantly to upgrade the general labour and industrial relations infrastructure on the island. With the technical help of the ILO, we have strengthened the national forum for social dialogue by providing a legislative framework, setting up the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development. Also, with the help of the ILO, we have set up a new authority that is responsible for health and safety at the workplace, and have introduced new legislation setting down standards in all aspects related to health and safety, as well as the elimination of occupational risks to workers.

We are now at the crucial stage where we are proposing to radically upgrade our labour laws and our industrial relations law. This is the most challenging task that my Government has undertaken in the interest of meeting the economic and social requirements of my country. Of course, national priorities are a paramount consideration in this exercise, and we are therefore determined to strike the balance between the essential requirements of our island nation and the social investment in our human resources that is a prerequisite for economic success.

My Government believes that strengthening and improving living and working conditions inevitably stimulates economic growth. Achieving this target will bring Maltese workers' rights at par with those of the most advanced countries, but it will also improve competitiveness and productivity, because it includes measures that will increase our female participation rate through family-friendly provisions. It also includes measures that will increase our national effort to invest in lifelong training and education. These ground-breaking initiatives are totally in line with all the four strategic objectives outlined by the Director-General in his Report to this Conference. They will also allow Malta to align itself fully with all the ILO Conventions that have already been ratified, but more importantly they will allow us to ratify another nine existing ILO Conventions, which so far have not been ratified by Malta.

Allow me to make two final points. Firstly, my Government wishes to acknowledge and endorse the contents of the first Global Report on the effective abolition of child labour. It charts the significant progress that has been made, but also reveals that there is still a considerable way to go. In particular, I would like to express our support for the action plan that has been

outlined. Fortunately, Malta does not have a child labour problem. However, we embrace a policy that continuously aims to enhance inclusiveness in our society. This includes children. In this context, I have the pleasure to inform this Conference that the Maltese Government has recently decided to enhance the existing local child-oriented services by setting up the office of a Commissioner for Children, who will provide a national focal point for the formulation of policies that are children- and family-friendly.

The second and final point refers to the Report by the Director-General dealing with the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. Let me say that the Maltese Government endorses the statement made in the Report that global security and local security are indivisible. Similarly, we support wholeheartedly the second statement, that political security cannot be sustained if it is not grounded in economic and social security.

The Maltese people count themselves amongst those peoples of the world who continue to believe that there is a way forward based on a just and fair solution for both sides, but the international community needs to do its utmost on all those fronts that can stimulate a constructive peace process, including a concerted effort to see the creation of an economic and social framework that gives a ray of hope to the people involved in this tragic conflict. For this reason, we share the vision and we support the conclusions and proposals put forward in the Report.

*Original Vietnamese: Mr. TRAN VINH (Deputy Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam) — It is an honour for me to represent the Government delegation of Viet Nam to speak at this important Conference.*

The Vietnamese delegation would like to express its sincere congratulations and appreciation for the Global Report *A future without child labour*. The Report enables us to envision a comprehensive picture of child labour in the world, via which we can identify global challenges of eliminating child labour, particularly the worst forms of child labour, so that we can jointly work out a plan to turn our political commitment to build a better world for children and for all of us into action.

At this Conference, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Vietnamese Government to sound policies and practical actions to prevent and eliminate child labour in Viet Nam. Following the ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), Viet Nam is going through the final legal procedures to ratify the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and is embarking on a national programme against child labour with IPEC. Among the policies and measures, our Government has always granted priority to eliminating two major root causes of child labour: poverty and illiteracy — in particular, by pouring greater investments into the national programmes on poverty alleviation and on primary education, with special attention being paid to poor and disadvantaged localities. Moreover, raising the awareness and responsibility of the public, business and families for, and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of, policies on childcare and protection are also among our Government's priorities.

In order to build a future without child labour, there needs to be unceasing, comprehensive, and long-term efforts of the Government and the whole

society, and effective support from the international community, especially from the ILO. I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for the support Viet Nam has always received from international and non-governmental organizations, especially from the ILO, in its concerted effort.

Since the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, Viet Nam has made a number of significant moves towards achieving the ILO's four strategic objectives to promote decent work.

Last April, the National Assembly of Viet Nam approved the Revised Labour Code after in-depth discussion and consultations among employers and employees, which were conducted in a transparent and democratic manner. The underlying reasons for this amendment are to bring the Code closer to new changes in the economy and economic management mechanism in Viet Nam to create a more favourable legal environment for employment generation, and to protect the legal rights and benefits of employees as well as employers. The revision has also brought Viet Nam's Labour Code up to international labour standards and practices, thus facilitating our international integration.

Toward the objective of promoting tripartism and social dialogue, the Labour Code has been revised to grant greater autonomy to employers and employees in labour-related negotiations and decision-making, and to confine the Government's role to support, supervision and administration. The State also encourages democratic practice at enterprise level and sound industrial relations in the workplace through social dialogue.

In an effort to extend the coverage and effectiveness of the social protection system, the Vietnamese Government is now preparing a draft Bill on social security to be submitted to the National Assembly. The introduction of this Bill is intended to extend the coverage of our social security scheme to small enterprises, rural and agricultural areas and the informal sector, making the social security scheme and policies more comprehensive.

Regarding employment promotion, the Government has already developed policies on, and incentives for, national and foreign investment. Two years after the introduction of the enterprise law, over 42,000 new enterprises and 300,000 new household businesses have registered. Since then, Viet Nam has been able to attract an extra US\$4 billion in investment and has generated 750,000 new jobs.

The Government delegation of Viet Nam attaches great significance to the discussions at this Conference on the promotion of cooperatives and the on informal economy, in which Viet Nam, as a developing country, has much interest. In parallel with development of policies on promoting cooperatives and the informal sector, policies on protecting workers engaged in these sectors and ensuring their equal entitlements in social security, occupational safety and health to those of workers in the formal sector are essential as well.

On this occasion, on behalf of the Government delegation of Viet Nam, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the ILO for its support and assistance to Viet Nam in the past years. The conclusion of the Viet Nam-ILO agreement on establishing an ILO Office in Hanoi has opened the way to closer cooperation between ILO and Viet Nam. We look forward to expanding further the valuable support from the ILO in

the coming years, which will help Viet Nam, on the one hand, to achieve the strategic objectives of the ILO and the ILC resolutions and, on the other hand, to accomplish our own socio-economic development strategy for the international integration process.

May I wish the Conference every success.

Mr. MARICA (*Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment, Suriname*) — I want to start by thanking the President for giving me the floor and congratulating him on his election as President of this Conference.

As Minister of Labour for Suriname, I want to state that it gives me great satisfaction to read from the Report of the Director-General that in the most recent biennium the ILO has met, or even exceeded, many of the targets set under the four ILO strategic objectives.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the ILO and its member States on these notable and important achievements.

I am convinced that the Director-General's Report can be used as a guideline to improve the ILO's work in the 2002-03 biennium since the problems and obstacles experienced in 2000-01 are well identified in this Report.

The globalization process taking place in our world has a substantial negative impact on the economies of developing countries. Therefore, labour markets in almost every developing country are under severe pressure. Although economic stabilization was achieved in Suriname last year after several years of instability, it is still seriously threatened, partly as a result of globalization.

Suriname risks seeing massive job losses in the formal economy, whereas the informal economy is growing considerably.

The formal economy experiences unfair competition from business in the informal economy since the latter has lower overheads, mainly because of low wages and the absence of social benefits.

This situation has compelled employers in the formal economy to draw the Government's attention to the growth of the informal economy and the resulting inequalities.

The Government of Suriname is giving special attention to these problems, as well as the necessity to downsize and restructure the public sector which is subject to overemployment. Suriname is in the process of identifying and developing measures to tackle these problems. These measures will mainly be focused on the creation of productive employment, while financial support to workers who lose their jobs because of mass layoffs will be applied as a short-term measure. A structural approach to the creation of productive employment will involve the improvement of vocational training, the development of cooperatives, micro and small enterprise and the development of infrastructure.

In my speech at the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference last year, I indicated that preparations for initiating social dialogue were in the final stage. I am pleased to inform the Conference that recently, structural tripartite dialogue has become operational in Suriname.

Paragraph 158 of the first part of the Global Report: *A future without child labour* identifies three levels of causality. However, poverty still remains the root of child labour, therefore if we want to achieve a

future without child labour we should strive for a future without poverty.

Although child labour seems to be a relatively minor problem in Suriname, my Government believes it is of the utmost importance to ratify the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The figures in Part 1, section 2, of the Global Report are shocking and should inspire every government to work towards the eradication of child labour.

Finally, I would like to state that Suriname supports the commitment of the ILO in making decent work a reality for all workers and employers. In this regard, I can inform the Conference that the sanctions for violating certain labour laws have recently been adjusted in Suriname in order to improve the effectiveness of labour inspection.

Another activity that has been undertaken with the objective of reducing the decent work deficit in Suriname concerns a media promotion campaign to increase workers' and employers' awareness of labour laws. The Ministry of Labour has clear indications that the promotion campaign is producing positive results.

*Original Portuguese:* Mr. PITRA DA COSTA NETO (*Minister of Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola*) — It is in a context of challenge and hopes that we are holding the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference which I have the great pleasure of attending on behalf of the Government of Angola.

Despite the enormous difficulties and the many uncertainties which exist today it is our firm belief that the road to decent work lies in the enhancement of human dignity, an updating of the structures of our States and growing economic competitiveness. These are imperatives and there is no turning back.

There is a need for greater solidarity and social justice in order to achieve cohesion, stability and development in each and every country. Regional integration in full respect of the specificities of each State today is a fundamental requirement for our societies in this globalized world. Each day the words "the days of sacrifice and courage to gain the right to live and act in freedom and human dignity" increasingly reflect our nightmares and dreams, which combine to motivate us to build a world in which peace and dignity reign.

Angola, after 30 years of war, has now at long last taken the first steps towards peace, without the guns, which have finally been silenced, without the destruction caused by landmines and without the terrible struggle of brother against brother. However, the number of dead, the number of widows, orphans and maimed, is enormous. Behind us is a long line of destruction. There are 100,000 people that are maimed, 4 million people are displaced, 90 per cent of all industry is paralysed, of the 85 per cent of the economically active population which was involved in farming, only 20 per cent now remain in this sector. As you can see the socio-economic picture is very dire indeed. While we know today that only lasting peace can lead to development, the fact remains that the reconstruction of the economy and the social fabric of Angola is a gigantic task.

From this podium I should like to renew the appeal on behalf of the Government and the people of Angola to the international community, to all govern-

ments, international organization and institutions of good will to support the people of Angola at this crucial time, especially in the area of humanitarian assistance and community rehabilitation. On behalf of the sons and daughters of Angola, may I say that a commitment has been made for peace and national reconciliation, the principles and values of democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, macroeconomic stability, incentives for and protection of private investment, as well as better material and living conditions for the people of Angola.

The central topic of this session — a future without child labour — is not only very topical for everyone, but for my country very timely as it fits in very well with the efforts which are being made by my Government, after so many years of war, to establish the fundamental conditions for life with dignity for all children in Angola. Child labour in Angola has been the dire consequence of this very lengthy war, and of the resulting economic, family and social crises. Adverse factors such as urban and rural poverty associated with food shortages, the decrease in the production capacity of families and the fall or total interruption of basic social services are factors which have contributed to child labour, which is of course totally undesirable in my country.

However, efforts are being made to invert this trend. The Angolan Government submitted to Parliament a national plan of action to counter the sexual and commercial exploitation of children, setting up a system of guarantees which will protect the fundamental rights of children of risk. At the same time a specialized agency has been set up to establish partnerships for the adoption of programmes and actions to benefit children. A special juvenile court is also being set up, which will give legal protection to children and will defend their rights and interests.

I should also like to remind you that Angola has adopted all the ILO core Conventions, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

Now with the peace that we have regained and our national reconciliation that is growing increasingly stronger with our will to rebuild our country together in solidarity and respect for one another, with the understanding and support of the international community, Angola is preparing for a new cycle of its existence and will do its very best to achieve the decent work that our Organization advocates.

*Original German:* Mr. BARTENSTEIN (*Federal Minister of Economic Affairs and Labour, Austria*) — First of all, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on the fact that he and the Office successfully took the road of strategic and results-oriented budgeting in the 2000-01 biennium. However, the Organization will have to work constantly on improving the concept. Austria has always advocated expansion of the ILO's cooperation with other international organizations. What strikes me as positive in this connection is that cooperation has been stepped up in some areas, for example regarding the United Nations Global Compact, and that the ILO's general presence in the international community has been actively strengthened. I hope that in particular cooperation with economically oriented institutions — such as the Bretton Woods institutions, UNCTAD, the WTO and also the OECD — can be intensified and that these

organizations will also make their contribution to the work of the ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. Austria has always supported the World Commission, and I hope that its work will lead to a better distribution of the benefits of globalization.

A special concern of mine in this connection is also last year's reform of the EU's General System of Customs Preferences, which extended the special incentive system for the social sphere to include observance of all eight ILO core Conventions. I welcome the fact that the ILO, following the call of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2000, created the Global Employment Agenda at the Global Employment Forum in November 2001.

The EU's employment strategy shows that regional cooperation, when combined with national action plans, can improve the employment situation. During the economic cycle 1997-2002 — in other words, the first five years of the EU's employment strategy — Austria succeeded in increasing employment by 102,172 workers, or by 3.5 per cent. The unemployment rate in Austria was 3.6 per cent in 2001, after the Netherlands and Luxembourg the third lowest rate in the EU. According to Eurostat, the average unemployment rate in the EU in 2001 was 7.8 per cent. Austria's rate will increase slightly this year, but we are aiming for full employment again now that an upturn in the economy has begun.

I am pleased about the growing popularity of ILO programmes promoting small and middle-sized businesses. In the field of occupational safety and health, the ILO is also doing a lot of good work. HIV/AIDS has triggered a global crisis that is jeopardizing social and economic progress. I therefore welcome the ILO's increased commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and I am sure that the ILO, as the eighth co-sponsor of UNAIDS, will contribute its expertise from the labour sphere.

In Austria, too, we have concentrated during this legislative period on improving occupational safety and health. Together with our social partners, we have carried out major reform whose aim is to reduce the number of accidents and check the incidence of occupational diseases. In 2001, the number of accidents at the workplace fell by 7 per cent compared to the year before, and the number of fatalities dropped by 10 per cent. So Austria is doing well in this area compared to other countries around the world, and has the second-lowest accident rate in the EU.

Austria is particularly committed to promoting, both nationally and internationally, social dialogue and tripartism. A smoothly functioning social partnership is particularly necessary to carry out reforms so that socially viable solutions can be found. New regulations on severance pay are currently being drawn up in Austria based on a proposed consensus between the social partners. The old regulations are giving way, in an innovative reorganization, to a mobile system financed by employee contributions.

In December 2001, Austria ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), making it one of the countries which has ratified all eight core Conventions. In addition, Austria will soon ratify the Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning trade child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography. The federal Government has also decided to ratify the Additional Protocol on the involve-

ment of children in armed conflict. The overwhelming success of the IPEC gives us hope for a better future for the world's children.

I am pleased at the use of the contribution that Austria made in 1998 to combat the sexual exploitation of children in some African countries. This issue is of particular concern to Austria. Hence, we are taking selected measures against child sex tourism. For example, we have produced an in-flight video which is shown on long-distance flights, and a code of conduct for the Austrian tourism industry has been adopted.

Mr. WINN (*Minister of Labour, Myanmar*) — On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, may I first of all congratulate the President on his unanimous election to the high and esteemed office which he truly deserves. We are fully confident that with his vast experience, foresight and wisdom, this august assembly will come to a successful conclusion.

I also wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Director-General for his Report submitted to the Conference and my profound appreciation to the Governing Body for its report on the activities and achievements of the last year.

Allow me first of all to touch briefly upon the technical items placed on the Conference agenda. At this session, the topic on promotion of cooperatives will be discussed for the second time and we are pleased to participate in its adoption as a Recommendation.

Another technical item which I would like to emphasize is entitled *Decent work and the informal economy*. In developing countries, especially the least developed, the informal economic sector has been gradually growing and expanding unnoticed and undetected. This sector can provide enormous opportunities for self-employment. For years this informal economic sector has been functioning almost independently and little attention has been paid to it. We are encouraged that it is now becoming a concern of the ILO.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the item concerning withdrawal of obsolete Recommendations is commendable. We are living in an ever-changing, ever-growing and ever-advancing world. It is therefore only natural that some of the Conventions and Recommendations which are no longer compatible with the current situation should be reviewed and their validity given careful consideration.

May I take this opportunity to apprise this august assembly of my Government's endeavours to resolve the long-standing issue between Myanmar and the ILO. Myanmar has demonstrated its political will to eliminate forced labour through consistent cooperation with the ILO. In this regard four technical cooperation missions from the ILO have visited Myanmar since the year 2000. Apart from these TCMs, the most significant demonstration of our spirit of cooperation was when we welcomed the visit to Myanmar of the ILO High-Level Team (HLT), headed by Sir Ninian Stephen, former Governor-General of Australia.

The HLT stayed in Myanmar for about three weeks. In its report it acknowledged the full cooperation extended by the Myanmar authorities and the freedom of movement and access enjoyed during its stay in the country. When the ILO team visited Myanmar, the legislative executive and administrative measures had already been implemented. The supervisory mechanism, that is the Ministerial Level Super-

vision Committee and the Implementation Committee for the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), have also been functioning in accordance with their respective mandates and the HLT could see for itself the full measures we have taken for the abolition of forced labour in Myanmar.

On completion of its visit, the HLT recommended to the Governing Body, inter alia, an ILO presence in Myanmar. I would like to inform this distinguished gathering that Myanmar and the ILO have reached an agreement for the appointment of an ILO liaison officer. This is an important step forward. It is further demonstration of our positive and constructive gestures of continuous cooperation with the ILO.

Myanmar has spared no efforts in the implementation of ILO Convention No. 29. I would like to reiterate before this assembly, our political will to continue our endeavours until forced labour is eliminated, and our commitment to continue cooperating with the ILO to the fullest possible extent. In our humble opinion, these positive efforts deserve recognition. We are looking forward to support from the ILO and its constituents in reviewing of our situation with an eye to lifting the sanctions imposed on Myanmar under article 33 of the ILO Constitution.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that unprecedented extreme measures and drastic action taken by the ILO against a member State should come to an end as soon as possible. This would allow Myanmar, a long-standing responsible Member of the ILO, to regain its original status and fully enjoy its constitutional rights.

We do hope that the ILO and its Members will cooperate in this crucial endeavour as a positive gesture in response to Myanmar's honest cooperation with the ILO.

Mr. AL-AYYAR (*Minister of Electricity and Water, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Kuwait*) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! May the peace of God be upon you.

It is an honour and pleasure for me to participate in this session. We hope that it will enable us as social partners to carry out the work which has been assigned to us, in order to fulfil the objectives of the International Labour Organization as set out in its Constitution and reaffirmed by the Declaration of Philadelphia.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for the report which he has submitted to us on the third category of principles as part of the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which is the elimination of child labour. This report includes important information on the problem of child labour, which affects some 200 million children, most of whom are in the developing countries because of the difficult living conditions and poverty there. In our opinion child labour is a moral and humanitarian challenge which calls for firm and immediate action. Children who work at an early age are deprived of the best years of their lives. They have no access to basic education and cannot acquire new skills. They thus cannot fully develop socially and psychologically.

Of course we have recently become aware of the seriousness of the problem of child labour and of the need to take action without delay. Still, the International Labour Organization, with its institutions, must redouble its efforts in order to provide assistance to

those who need it, so as to do away with poverty through the implementation of projects and programmes that benefit the least developed countries in the world. These countries will then be able to increase their resources and capacity to protect children so that they can respond to the efforts of our Organization, which adopted the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

The Government of Kuwait attaches much importance to the issue of child labour. We have adopted new legislation based on the precepts of Islam and our 1962 Constitution. Some of the major achievements we have made in this regard include the signature of the 1989 Declaration on the Rights of the Child and ratification of the 1991 Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratification of the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the adoption of new laws prohibiting the employment of children under 18, be they Kuwaiti citizens or foreign citizens working in Kuwait.

In Kuwait we do not have a problem with child labour in any economic sector because Kuwaiti families have a high standard of living.

The Government provides family benefits to those who need them, to ensure a decent living standard.

Children are entitled to basic education up to the age of 14, and university education for both boys and girls is provided by the State for free.

The State provides curative and preventive health services for children and mothers throughout their lives, and this has made it possible to lower the infant mortality rate.

Children with special needs, such as orphans, the handicapped, those who have unknown parents, juvenile delinquents and the children of prisoners also benefit from psychological, social and medical protection.

I must mention the sad state of affairs of children in Palestine and their families who are victims of sieges, assassinations and arrests, whose houses are destroyed and who are deprived of their most basic rights under the Israeli occupation. The occupation carries out state terrorism and defies international law.

Kuwait too has been subject to inhuman practices. We have no news of 600 Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq, including children deprived of their parents, medical care and education, without even mentioning the suffering they and their parents have had to endure every day for the past 11 years. We therefore call on the international community to support our legitimate calls for these prisoners to be freed. We hope that this will happen in the near future.

Finally, we pray that governments, employers and workers can fulfil the noble objectives set out by the ILO to secure a future without child labour so that children can enjoy the benefits of their most basic rights and have access to education, to health care and to food, and so that they will not be subjected to exploitation of any kind.

*Original Russian:* Ms. KARAGOUSOVA (*Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Kazakhstan*) — Allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to greet all participants in this session and wish everyone fruitful cooperation towards attaining strategic objectives in labour relations

and social welfare. I congratulate the President on his election to his post and wish him every success.

Our delegation would like to emphasize the significance of the ILO's decisions to study the social aspects of globalization and to formulate effective measures to prevent its negative effects. This is particularly important for countries with transition economies where the issues of employment, the competitiveness of their national labour forces, the development of a real labour market and mechanisms to adapt the system of social protection to international requirements are and will become acute problems. Since Kazakhstan understands the importance of these questions, we are working on them and we thank the ILO for choosing our country as one of the areas where the pilot project on decent work will be implemented. We also understand our responsibility in solving these problems, since unemployment, poverty and a low level of social protection fan the flame of various types of extremism and terrorism and destabilize society. Our Head of State, Mr. Nazarbayev, and our Government are doing a lot to widen international contacts and to devise a balanced social policy. One of the main achievements of these efforts is the fact that, ever since its independence, Kazakhstan has had social and political stability.

This does not mean that we have no problems, we have many. But, together with the ILO, we are trying to adopt a constructive approach to solving them. The ILO report on decent work has prompted further work on improving labour relations and the legislative framework. Already this year there will be amendments to the labour law with labour guarantees and basic systems of incentives for legalizing labour relations. All this will be reflected in the new labour code on which we start working in 2003.

It is vital for us to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, which is becoming a very significant problem as migration increases in Kazakhstan. In our country, under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, a special study has been carried out. Its findings served as a factual basis for work on this issue.

As part of international efforts to expand the legislative framework Kazakhstan has acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and has ratified one of the ILO's core Conventions — the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

We have prepared and sent to the Governing Body a national report on the implementation of the declaration on the adoption of effective measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Kazakhstan. There is close cooperation among the educational and health organs, employers' associations, trade unions and law-enforcement agencies with a view to identifying and eliminating child labour in its worst forms. The Global Report on child labour occupies an important place in this work and spurs us to improve and rationalize our efforts to eradicate child labour.

Our future depends on the fate of our children. The Government of Kazakhstan therefore continues to make every effort to secure the all-round development of children, protect them from violence and ensure conditions for their proper physical, moral and psychological development. In the very near future we will be ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which is already before our Parliament.

A lot will also depend on fruitful international co-operation. Only by joining forces can we really ensure that our children have a stable future without violence and exploitation.

Mr. MARSH (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, New Zealand*) — This year, for the first time, the Director-General's Report provides a strategic report on the 2000-01 ILO programme. And it sets out examples of the kind of help the ILO has provided, and accounts of cross-sectoral activities and regional activity reports that graphically show the ILO's ability to make a difference in the world of work.

The breadth of the ILO's work is remarkable, all the more so given the diversity of races, cultures and economic development within member countries. However, that very diversity raises an issue regarding the development of new Conventions and Recommendations. We continue to question whether some Conference participants involved in drafting instruments appreciate the need to take account of the varied situations of individual countries.

The New Zealand Employers' delegation has in recent years become increasingly conscious about the unsustainability of one-size-fits-all solutions. Different countries do things in different ways, as the ILO will understand through its many grass-roots activities. Unfortunately, Conventions, Recommendations and Protocols are still often developed with the one-size-fits-all approach. The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), in force from February this year, is an example. This Convention, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2000, has attracted only three ratifications. Of the ratifying countries, one — Bulgaria — had signed the original Maternity Protection Convention of 1919, while another — Italy — had signed the 1952 version. Only one country — Slovakia — is a new signatory. Contrast this with the number that have ratified the Worst Form of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which entered into force the following year. The latest figures for this Convention show 124 ratifications.

Why should one Convention succeed and another fail? The answer is prescription.

The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) defeated the intentions of the Employers who asked for its revision by being even more prescriptive than the Convention it replaced. But prescription does not just lie in the actual wording of Conventions. There is always the risk that if a complaint were made to the Committee of Experts, the Committee could read into a Convention requirements which the Convention itself does not contain. The Committee on Freedom of Association's determination that [Convention No. 87](#) requires strikes on economic and social grounds to be considered lawful, even though an employer has no control over such a strike, is a clear example, and this hinders ratification. Frankly, it is currently the key stumbling block to New Zealand moving forward on this issue.

Looking forward to next year, the ILO will be considering Conventions that bring together and integrate occupational safety and health. We welcome that integrated approach. But it is not just about standards, it is about looking at the whole range of actions at the ILO's disposal, including research and technical cooperation, and deciding which is the most appropriate solution to the specific matters under discussion. We tie such an approach back to the strategic ob-



jectives in the Director-General's Report, particularly the promotion of rights at work and the creation of greater job opportunities.

Nothing can substitute for good governance and sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies to create and foster sustainable employment. That is not to say social goals must be sacrificed to economic efficiency. But again it is accepting that there is no one right answer, and that it is vital for each country to adopt an integrated policy strategy focusing on job creation.

Further, there must be an integrated approach between governments and the private sector in order to make meaningful job creation happen. Governments must adopt policies that encourage entrepreneurial capability, foster sound investment and enable markets to function effectively. The economic climate must be supportive if real job creation in the private sector is in fact to occur.

That integrated approach, based on a country's national conditions, whatever those conditions may be, is now widely accepted by countries wishing to implement their own concept of decent work.

We accordingly commend the ILO's recognition of the same fundamental necessity of following an integrated approach to its own strategic goal-setting, and to its heralded approach to standard setting.

In conclusion we look forward to the theory being transformed into practice, and indeed reality.

*Original Chinese: Mr. XU (Workers' delegate, China)* — First of all, please allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the President on his election. At the same time my congratulations also go to the three Vice-Presidents. I believe that under their leadership this session of the Conference will be a complete success.

In his Report to the Conference the Director-General has set out the activities of the ILO in the first biennium of this century and described the progress made by the ILO in the implementation of the concept of decent work, reaffirming its efforts to promote employment, reduce poverty and boost social progress. We would like to express our appreciation for all these endeavours.

Economic globalization has been positive in promoting global economic development, but opportunities arising from it are distributed unfairly and unevenly. The developed countries are the largest beneficiaries of economic globalization, while most of the developing nations do not have a fair share of its benefits. The gap between North and South is widening even further. With a view to closing the gap, mitigating the negative consequences of globalization and achieving common progress, the developed countries should take effective action to help the developing countries accelerate their economic growth and social advances.

Economic globalization has produced increasingly widespread implications for labour relations in various countries. The ILO should attach greater importance to the irreplaceable role of trade unions in the world of work, further strengthen technical cooperation with the trade union organizations of various countries, in particular the developing countries, increase inputs into the capacity building of trade unions and worker education and training, continuously improve the tripartite mechanism and promote social dialogue so that trade unions may occupy a larger role.

With the development of a socialist market economy in our country, profound changes have taken place in China's economic and labour relations. WTO membership has made such relations more complicated. Under the new circumstances, the Chinese trade unions take it as their fundamental function to safeguard the workers' legitimate rights and interests, put more effort into organizing workers in non-state enterprises, promote the collective bargaining and collective agreement system and improve the structure of workers' participation at the workplace, in management and supervisory roles, with the workers' congress as its basic form.

In 2001 a national tripartite consultation mechanism was set up in China, putting the trade unions in a better position to participate in the economic and social policy-making process.

In today's world the most pressing and outstanding problem is poverty and unemployment. The Chinese trade unions have paid more attention than ever to workers' employment and social security. We shall be actively involved in the forum on employment in China, which is to be sponsored jointly by the ILO and the social partners in Beijing in October this year. We will also actively promote the re-employment of laid-off workers and make the utmost of our own advantages to help the laid-off and the jobless to meet their basic needs and find new jobs. At the same time, we urge the Government to speed up the formation of a social security and relevant legal system.

It is our hope that the ILO will make a greater contribution to the lofty cause of promoting employment, eradicating poverty, protecting workers' fundamental rights and creating a world of decent work for all.

*Ms. STO. TOMAS (Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines)* — Two days ago, on 12 June 2002, the International Labour Organization celebrated its first World Day against Child Labour. More than 100 years ago, on 12 June 1896, the Philippines declared its independence and claimed its rights as a sovereign nation. These two dates are connected, not just by an alignment in the Gregorian calendar, but also by a common and consuming objective: the desire to break free from an oppressive state of things.

The statistics are stark enough. Let me quote from the impressive ILO Global Report entitled *A future without child labour*. One in every six children, between the ages of 15 and 17, or 246 million children, are involved in child labour; one in every eight children, about 179 million, is exposed to the worst forms of child labour; 111 million are involved in hazardous work, and 59 million more, between the ages of 15 and 17, are similarly situated. Of the total number, 8.4 million children are in slavery, trafficking, prostitution, armed conflict, and other definitely unacceptable situations. What is to me particularly heart-rending is that more than half — in fact 60 per cent — of these endangered persons are in my part of the world, the Asia-Pacific region. My own country accounts for about 3 million of this total. Truly, child labour is an oppressive state of things from which we should all break free. But how do you win freedom from something so pervasive, something that for a long time has been regarded with benign indifference or neglect?

In the Philippines we have done a number of things. We have integrated the battle against child labour into virtually every government programme. In vul-

nerable geographic areas we have set up poverty-free zones, where the convergence of government services and private sector assistance has meant auxiliary community growth and self-reliance. In addition to the usual growth indicators, a crucial measure of success is the number of children who are brought back into school because their parents have been made more productive through relevant skills development, and are subsequently the beneficiaries of improved income streams. The public education system, on pain of disciplinary sanction, has been directed to accept all children, particularly those who are unable to afford the traditional financial requirements of school attendance, such as uniforms, and parent-teacher association fees. Our law enforcement agencies, in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development, routinely watch airports, bus stations and harbours for the movement of young people being brought into urban centres or plantations as a cadre of labourers, in spite of our pre-emptive measures of a movement to Save the Children or Sagip-Bata. Where children have already been lured or recruited into the invisible labour force they become the subject of rescue operations, and are brought to half-way houses and eventually returned to their parents under supervised care.

We have also sought the cooperation of all sectors, particularly those of our social partners in labour and management, for the mitigation of this social menace. Our Employers' groups have set up awards for child-friendly establishments, and there are companies which have adopted policies to abolish child labour in their establishments. Workers' organizations in our tourism industry, for instance, have profiled child workers and have used this profile as advocacy reference for collective bargaining purposes, as well as for mobilization and labour education. As our Employers' and Workers' representatives are speaking today as well, I will leave the further articulation of their initiatives to their designated speakers.

We have also committed ourselves to the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, through a time-bound agenda that seeks to benchmark performance against the promise of a consensual plan to eliminate child labour. By targeting children in identified worst forms of child labour, the interventions have become more focused and progress over time is more easily monitored. To reinforce all this we have ratified [Conventions Nos. 138](#) and [182](#) in record time.

These are some of the things we have done. We are looking at other possibilities that may have worked elsewhere, which is why we have listened with keen interest to the discussions of the Director-General's Report; but the question will continue to be asked, are these initiatives enough? Probably not, but we will chip away at this rock of a problem until it is no more. For freedom, whether from exploitation or as a goal of struggles for national independence, is never won in an instant. It is not granted by a benevolent presence, either, we earn it by our resolve, we earn it by fighting the forces of neglect, indifference and, in many instances, the forces of greed and evil that lie in the hearts of some men and women.

We intend to wage this war against child labour because it is easier to campaign for a future without child labour than to imagine a future without children

at all. We cannot allow child labour to rob the next generation of their dreams by forcing them into adulthood ahead of what their young minds and bodies can absorb or understand.

In this same Conference we are tackling the issue of the informal sector. The informal sector is growing. The shift in technology has brought about a shift in the economies and occupational structures of our nation. Where retooling cannot happen fast enough, the informal sector is likely to expand, and may likely aggravate child labour. Where parents lose their jobs, children may move into the breach. Because they are insufficiently trained, or precisely because they are young, children will likely wind up in dirty, dangerous, or demeaning jobs.

A future with our children assures us that humanity lives on in its most noble form — one that recognizes that the children are, in fact, our future. Your election, Mr. President, and the long Swiss tradition of protection and respect for the least able among us, and the continued advocacy of Mr. Somavia, give me confidence that the journey of a thousand miles has begun, and we are all walking in the right direction. May that journey be short and fruitful, because certainly the world can only be the better for it.

Mr. MARONI (*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Italy*) — First, I would like to reiterate the appreciation and full support of the Italian Government for the activities of the ILO, and for the work of its Director-General in the areas of the promotion and respect of fundamental rights at work.

The Italian Government reaffirms its strong interest and support for the standard-setting activities of the Organization. To date, Italy has ratified 108 Conventions, 90 of which are still in force, and is concluding the ratification process on the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 ([No. 167](#)), and the Health Protection and Medical Care (Seafarers) Convention, 1987 ([No. 164](#)).

Two days ago, we discussed, in a special sitting of the Conference, the Global Report prepared by the ILO on the effective abolition of child labour. Italy has already expressed its view on this Report.

On the occasion of the World Day against Child Labour, on 12 June, we organized in Rome, in cooperation with the local ILO Office, a successful event to illustrate the first results of a study commissioned by the Italian Government from ILO and ISTAT (the Italian statistics office) on the occurrence of child labour in Italy.

The results of this study, as far as child labour in Italy is concerned, fortunately show a much more positive national situation than the one shown in the ILO Report. The figures are quite different from those referred to in the ILO Report, which is based, unfortunately, on an unofficial estimation made by one trade union organization in Italy and never confirmed by any official institutions.

Nevertheless, I would like here to confirm the full support of the Italian Government for ILO actions against child labour both at the global level and through national and regional programmes, and underline, in this context, the valuable contribution of social partners and civil society.

Italy supports the work of the Committee on Occupational Accidents and Diseases. Health and safety at work is a priority for my Government. We support, therefore, all national and international efforts aimed

at preventing and reducing work-related deaths and injuries.

For the first time last year the ILO dealt in a global way with social security. Fully aware of the strong differences in social security systems worldwide, we nevertheless believe that a debate on access to health could be a good starting point to make world public opinion aware of the role played by social security for citizens and workers.

I would like to stress that Italy attaches great importance to the technical cooperation programmes as necessary tools to implement the strategic objectives of the Organization. We consider it essential to bring the delivery of technical cooperation into line with the task that the ILO has set itself, to promote the concepts of decent work as a tangible proof of its support for the Decent Work Agenda.

Italy has confirmed last year's level of its voluntary contribution to the ILO for the year 2002. In addition, new multi-bilateral initiatives have been approved and the activities under the trust fund to promote decent work through training development, named UNIVERSITAS, continued through the approval of the respective plans of operations.

In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficacy of our cooperation with the ILO and to ensure coherence of the Italy-ILO technical cooperation programmes, we would be interested in organizing our collaboration with ILO in a more structured way, through regular tripartite consultation and possibly by establishing a framework agreement.

Italy continues to support the International Training Centre of the ILO based in Turin, both through annual contribution to the regular budget of the Centre and through the co-financing of training activities. Such contributions for the year 2001 totalled an amount equivalent to US\$12.5 million, which represents roughly one-third of the total budget of the Centre. I am pleased to announce that, thanks to a considerable financial contribution by local authorities, the Centre will be able to radically modernize its structure, in view of the increasingly important role it is called to play within the context of the Decent Work Agenda.

We support the full integration of the Turin Centre into ILO policies. In our view, each ILO programme should contribute human and financial resources to the Turin Centre, in order to draw full advantage of this training structure.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you that the first international meeting that I attended as Italian Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, was the International Labour Conference last year. I wanted to give a signal from the outset, of the attention and consideration that the new Italian Government intended to pay to the ILO, its Governing Body and its Director-General. I wish to reassure you that this attention and consideration continues. I reaffirm our full political will to enrich and strengthen our cooperation with the ILO.

*(Mr. Rampak takes the Chair.)*

Ms. PONCINI (*representative, International Federation of University Women*) — I would like to thank the President and warmly congratulate him and the Vice-Presidents of this session of the Conference on their election, on behalf of the International Federation of University Women, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Zonta

International, the International Council of Women, Soroptomist International, and as President of the Geneva-based NGO Committee on the Status of Women, a coalition of over 60 non-governmental organizations.

We highly commend the Director-General for his Report *ILO programme implementation 2000-01* which we find is innovative, audacious and illustrative. The fact that it is focused on results, targets, benchmarks and outcomes gives a clearer picture of the quantity and quality of activities undertaken. In particular, we are gratified that the ILO is the first among the United Nations agencies to embark on a participatory, comprehensive gender-equality audit. This is a significant milestone in identifying gaps and progress in securing the fundamental rights of working women and gender equality and in taking the special temporary measures called for in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Report does not, however, highlight the significant efforts of ILO-specific in-house technical services, such as SECTOR, to systematically integrate gender-equality issues into their planning processes, notably of technical meetings. These efforts should be coordinated at policy level in order to be coherent within the Organization and extended outside to the ILO constituents.

We suggest that in order to make these means of action more viable and sustainable in advancing the status of women to an even-level playing field, they have to have a human face, a spirit and a vision. What we mean by this is that we have to look deeper into the indirect causes that have for years been difficult to struggle against because of their invisible nature, such as mental attitudes and behavioural patterns, cultural traditions, institutional barriers, gender-related paradigms and models which exclude the equal voice and participation of women. Women are particularly ignored in policy formulation and decision-making.

The vision should not only be a look at the "flavour of the month" but must relate to trends that are changing the nature of work itself and the whole globalization process. Some of these are technological developments where robotics, notably burgeoning in the manufacturing sector, are replacing human resources. These human resources, mostly uneducated and unskilled, are women who are forced into the informal economy where they do not enjoy decent work or social protection.

We recognize that some women, because of their educational opportunities and skills, have been able to enter the labour market of the new economy as self-employed or micro-entrepreneurs. But these women are a minority.

We congratulate the ILO for taking the initiative to include the topic of the informal economy in this year's agenda and thank it for allowing us to organize an informal tripartite panel on the issue of women's role and position in this sector. The meeting, which attracted a very large audience, provided a broad overview of major challenges. One notable observation is that children constitute the largest number of workers in this sector, especially girl children who are prevented from going to school more than boys. The consequence of this phenomenon is that all sorts of employers have a tendency to resort to child labour, thereby creating the vicious circle of adult unemployment.

Finally, I would like once again to draw attention to the fact that 83 years ago, when the ILO was founded, women constituted a rather small proportion of the labour force and were to be found in limited traditional sectors, such as agriculture, textiles, nursing and teaching. Article 3 of its Constitution was considered a tool enabling women to participate in the ILO Conferences and meetings. But, today, women make up more than half of the labour force, especially in the informal sector, and are also important contributors to the creation of employment. This optional provision is therefore obsolete and limits women's participation at all levels of decision-making, especially at the top policy level. Women's organizations working with the ILO since its inception therefore urge the member States to undertake a revision of this Article 3, which states that women should be included in the delegation *if* the Conference is to consider questions affecting women. That is a very significant statement.

Mr. SAMARASINGHE (*Minister of Employment and Labour, Sri Lanka*) — My congratulations to the President and the Officers of the Conference on their well-deserved elections. My congratulations also to the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, for his excellent leadership of the ILO to attain its goals.

I am pleased to inform this august assembly that the newly elected Government led by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe, has expressed a vision that coincides with the policies of the ILO and in particular with the Decent Work Agenda. The focus of our development strategy is also to provide quality employment.

In this context, the functions of my ministry have been expanded and entrusted with the subjects of both employment and labour. To give effect to the policies of the new Government, we embarked on formulating a national employment policy. To view all issues in a broader perspective and to ensure acceptability to all the stakeholders, a tripartite advisory committee was appointed and a website inaugurated to ensure people's transparency, accountability and participation. With the commitment of all those involved, we have been able to present a comprehensive draft national employment policy in a very short period of time.

Creating a globally employable and competitive workforce has been the vision behind the national employment policy. Manpower planning, education, including language skills, training for lifelong employability, demand-driven training for potential migrant workers, promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employment with a view to achieving sustained rural development, providing equal opportunities to all sectors of our society, realignment of partnership of stakeholders to build a stronger tripartite foundation, and the establishment of a user-friendly employment sourcing and delivery system, are the main initiatives of the draft national employment policy. By and large, the draft national employment policy shares many a common ground with the ILO Global Employment Agenda 2001, and consequently we look forward to working with the ILO in its implementation.

Our Government recognizes the need for coherence in economic and social policies in the process of development. The Director-General's Report reflects the progress in achieving near-universal ratification of

the eight fundamental Conventions. Sri Lanka has already ratified seven of the fundamental Conventions, and during the biennium 2000-01, both child labour fundamental Conventions were ratified; enabling legislation is ready to give effect to these Conventions. Currently, we are working with the ILO for a study and tripartite consultations to be carried out to determine the feasibility of ratification of the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) — the only fundamental Convention not ratified by Sri Lanka. In this connection, I have proposed to hold a tripartite workshop in August this year with the participation of all stakeholders, supported by the ILO.

We are determined to give full force to the provisions of the ILO Conventions we have ratified. We were able to make remarkable progress in promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining in workplaces, particularly in the export processing zones (EPZ). Recently, at a workshop chaired by me and held under the aegis of the ILO, the EPZ employers and trade unions arrived at a consensus for a work place to give full effect to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and a tripartite committee is currently working on the modalities of implementation under the guidance of the ILO. This renewed partnership is the outcome of my concerted efforts to revive social dialogue at the national level, and the determination to move towards meeting challenges posed by globalization, demand for good labour practices and good governance.

I am happy to inform you that we have embarked on giving Sri Lanka its first national productivity policy, which we hope to complete by 31 July. This too has been done with a view towards developing a highly excellent and talented human resource pool that would enable Sri Lanka to meet domestic and global labour market needs as well as competitively to attract potential foreign investors. Once again, transparency, accountability and people's participation have been foremost in our minds when we have been embarking on this initiative.

We are also working towards ensuring decent shelter for the working population of the country and returning migrant labour, and in this context we appreciate the ILO's support in developing a workers' housing policy for Sri Lanka. Work in this connection has also commenced and we are hopeful of having it in place shortly.

The effects of globalization have also had a significant impact on my country in many areas, in particular with regard to migration. Over 10 per cent of our people have become international migrants and most of them work overseas and contribute towards our economy. With the continuous trend for liberalization of trade coupled with the transmigration of skilled and unskilled workers, more and more Sri Lankans are looking for opportunities abroad for their upward mobility. In this context, we look forward to participating actively in the preparatory process for the discussion on migrant workers, leading up to the session of the International Labour Conference in 2004.

After two decades of internal strife in the north and east of the country, a peace initiative has been launched with greater vigour and commitment by the new Government. A permanent ceasefire is in place, and many confidence-building measures have been undertaken to create the necessary conducive envi-

ronment to commence negotiations towards a final settlement. In this regard, we appreciate the support given by the international community. As the peace process builds up and consolidates, we anticipate a greater need for international organizations such as the ILO to be involved to provide their expertise on projects of relevance. Peace, no doubt, will pose new challenges.

Finally, peace is not sustainable without the provision of income-generating activities. The benefits of peace must be felt by the people who have been victims of the war. We are therefore aware that demand for employment and for income-generating activities will grow in the immediate post-conflict period. Therefore, driven by the need to achieve sustainable peace, the national employment policy has made special reference to conflict-affected areas and has come up with a post-conflict strategy in this respect. We would be pleased to see the ILO, together with other agencies, taking an important role in this field.

*Original Spanish:* Mr. CHAHIN LUPO (*Minister of Labour and Small Enterprises, Bolivia*) — I should like to congratulate the President on his election.

“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.” This is what I said yesterday at the end of my statement on the ILO’s Global Report, *A future without child labour*, because I firmly believe that it will be possible to find policies to overcome existing inequalities only on the basis of a social doctrine with a new focus on the human being rather than one which regards money as all important.

Poverty has the face of hunger, of cold, of crying, of unemployment, of rage. It demands our immediate attention.

Yesterday, Juan Somavia informed us of plans and the studies concerning globalization and its imbalances and concerning economic openings. He spoke to us of governability and equity and appositely added that society was apprehensive but that the ILO has invaluable legitimacy. I fully agree with what Juan said, because I consider that the ILO’s invaluable legitimacy will enable it to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* financial institutions. In this connection, when my colleagues, the Ministers of the Andean and Central American area and, I am sure, of MERCOSUR, signed an historical declaration on cooperation and integration, they demanded that the ILO should constitute the voice of equity *vis-à-vis* the international financial institutions.

We are obliged to reduce the budget deficit which is exacerbating the economic, political and social imbalance which is reflected in unemployment. The entrepreneurial sector must take on new roles with high levels of skills and efficiency so as to offer comparative advantages and be able to compete on demanding markets. The labour sector must be equipped for unsuspected new roles and types of employment. Governments must come up with transparent public policies which will lead to social and legal stability.

There is no doubt that small businesses are the biggest employers. In Bolivia, 80 per cent of the labour force work for small, mostly family businesses.

Consequently, our Government has just adopted policies designed to make employment less vulnerable and insecure, so that the large percentage of the economically active population employed in small and very small firms has rapid access to business development services such as training, technical assistance, support to marketing, microcredits and market prospection, which will allow them to improve their skills so as to raise the productivity of these economic units. We have some successful examples of small businessmen who are on the right path towards sustained growth and who are meeting difficult challenges in order to create secure, decent jobs and to complete efficiently, while at the same time laying the foundations for all-round development.

In order to boost and strengthen small and very small enterprises, the “business card” has been created to enable businessmen to compete on the domestic market. Parliament is now examining a Bill on the strengthening of small and very small companies. We have introduced modular plans on training, entrepreneurship and retooling for this sector.

In view of the high percentage of unemployment, the Government has raised some US\$100 million for the National Emergency Employment Plan (PLANE) and is promoting the revival of the labour exchange as well as the plan to set up an exchange for subcontracting with the private sector.

We are in intense negotiations to open up the industrialized countries’ markets for products manufactured in our countries, in order to generate more income, raise production and create more jobs.

With a great effort we are building a culture of peace through social dialogue which has allowed us to meet major social needs and articulate them in state policies reflected in the so-called “Dialogue Act”, a legal instrument, which will allow us to channel resources from transfers into public investment in local authorities rather than using them to pay external debt. Bolivia with its diversity and rich multiculturalism firmly believes in this process of inclusion and cooperation and that we will be able to overcome our joint difficulties and plan for a future of social justice and security only through plural and participative democracy.

*Original Laotian:* Mr. PHENGKHAMMY (*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Lao People’s Democratic Republic*) — The delegation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic has the honour and great pleasure this year of attending the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. I should like to congratulate Mr. Elmiger, who has been elected as the President of this Conference; I believe that his rich knowledge, experience and wisdom will lead this Conference to a successful conclusion.

The Report of the Director-General consists of important points that can be seen as a new step for strengthening our role for the protection of the basic rights of workers and aiming at creating mechanisms and various measures to address justice in society.

The Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO relating to the basic rights of workers are most important to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, when it comes to guaranteeing fundamental rights, and to other member countries of the ILO. They importantly contribute to fundamental rights at work and protect the benefits of workers throughout the

world. The ILO should try in this regard to continue its efforts to attain its lofty goals.

In 2002, the Lao population will reach 5.4 million, about 51 per cent of whom are in the workforce; four-fifths of the employed people work in agriculture, and most of them have shifted from dispersed subsistence modes of production towards initial market-oriented production.

Thirty-six per cent of the total families are still classified as poor families. The basic economic infrastructure is still vulnerable; the role of science and technology in our economy is still limited, and the public education system is not yet mature.

The development gap between urban and rural areas is extensive. However, we still possess favourable conditions and potentials in many areas, such as abundant resources. Our central location in the subregion facilitates the socio-economic development of our nation.

With regard to labour affairs, we currently face some problems and obstacles, such as an increase in unemployment in rural areas and unemployment among young high-school leavers. The main cause is that the new positions available cannot sufficiently meet the demand of the young people who are entering the labour market, and some new jobs require highly skilled labour, and we are now short of such labour, due to a lack of funding and basic techniques to develop labour skills. We have labour migration to urban areas and in some cases to neighbouring countries. This has caused negative social phenomena.

To address the abovementioned problems, we have so far invested in upgrading and setting up intensive public vocational training centres, in parallel with the promotion of expansion of private training centres and the state employment service enterprises established in most provinces throughout the country. By doing so, we have provided our people with some employment. In the near future, we will strongly develop labour skills and create new job positions, thus reducing unemployment progressively.

On social security, I take pleasure in informing you that at the beginning of June 2001, a social security regime for workers in the private enterprise sector was implemented for the first time by the Social Security Organization. This is a self-governed organization administered by the administrative council which consists of three parties: the government, employers and labourers. Up to now the council has managed 107 enterprises, accounting for 26,652 workers. However, the social security regime is implemented only in Vientiane and we plan to expand its administration to the provinces shortly.

I am also pleased to inform you that we cooperate with the International Labour Organization in implementing and developing the Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and to establishing steering committees for this purpose at the national, provincial and district levels.

We are now conducting activities such as community awareness and microcredits for target groups, so that they can undertake agriculture and handicraft activities which can provide permanent jobs for people locally. This can limit the movement of labour and trafficking in children and women. The project enjoyed good cooperation from people and the authorities at the grass-roots level.

Since the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a least developed country, and most of its population

live in rural areas, their lives are based on subsistence farming. Therefore, rural development and human resources development are government priorities. The short- and long-term strategy and the planning of its activities for solving labour problems focus on rural development and human resources development.

The Lao Government will strive to reduce by half the incidence of poverty in the country, which affects 36 per cent of the total population at present. By 2010 the Government will strive to alleviate poverty in the country.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic expresses its thanks to the friendly countries and the international organizations for the support they have given us, and we wish the 90th Session of the Conference every success.

Mr. ZINCK (*Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity, Fiji*) — It is a great honour for me to address this 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. On behalf of the Fiji delegation, I extend my very warm and sincere congratulations to the President of the Conference on his election.

You have, Mr. President, very amply demonstrated great ability and efficiency over the last few days which, I am sure, will go a long way towards ensuring the smooth running and successful outcome of this session of the Conference.

I am happy to assure you of the fullest cooperation and support of the Fiji delegation in completing the tasks which we have before us.

The Global Report, *A future without child labour*, quite clearly describes the follow-up actions taken to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. A lot has been done but there still remains a great deal to do.

We, as custodians of our children, must plan for more than a lifetime, and we must educate more and more of our children because it is through education that they can participate meaningfully in the development of their own selves and contribute effectively to the development of their countries.

The Government of Fiji wholeheartedly shares the ILO's concern regarding child labour and, towards that end, has ratified both the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). We agree with the ILO that as long as child labour continues, the goal of decent work cannot be achieved.

Reflecting our continuing support for the work and ideals of the ILO, Fiji has ratified the remaining five core Conventions this year. We are now in the process of reviewing our laws and practices in order to align them with the provisions of the core Conventions.

I am pleased to report that ratification of the Conventions is the outcome of the joint efforts of the Government and the social partners, and this marks a significant phase in our history.

Following the political events of the year 2000, I am happy to announce that our country has recovered from the brink of anarchy and today is again enjoying peace and stability through the resilience and goodwill of all our people.

Investor confidence has been restored, tourist arrivals are at a record high and the Fiji economy is projected to grow by 5 per cent. The ten-month-old democratically elected Government is implementing policies which will assist our country in achieving

further economic growth, political stability and a better quality of life for all our people.

Having ratified the core Conventions, we are very anxious to give them full meaning and apply them in law and practice. We look forward to the ILO providing technical assistance to ensure full compliance with the Conventions.

Closer to home, the ILO Office for the South Pacific in Suva is now of greater strategic importance, especially in view of the recent membership of the Solomon Islands and Kiribati and the wide geographic area that it covers. In order to better serve the needs of our region, we believe the Suva Office in Fiji needs to be strengthened with additional staff and resources, and thus reduce our reliance on the ILO Regional Office.

As a small island developing economy, we are very conscious of the effects of globalization and the rapid progress made in the development of information technology. Globalization has rapidly transformed production processes, facilitated the mobility of goods and services and factors of production and provided a basis for new forms of economic activities.

These changes have significantly altered the very basis of our economic activity and thus have profound implications for industrial relations, in particular the role of trade unions.

The informal economy, we believe, should be given priority in our deliberations as this sector contributes very significantly to the well-being of the large majority of our rural and urban dwellers and to raising their standard of living. The discussions that we have had here will undoubtedly give us a deeper insight and appreciation of the informal economy and guide our thinking in resolving the problems faced by our workers.

It is worth noting, however, that the lack of legal protection and lack of representation of workers' rights in the informal economy is a source of major concern. We urge the ILO to explore all possible means of affording the workers in the informal economy the necessary protection.

Finally, my delegation notes with deep satisfaction the detailed discussions on a Protocol and a Recommendation on the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases. We fully support the inclusion of a revised list of occupational diseases that will be contained in Schedule I of the Convention on employment injury benefits.

Our Occupational Health and Safety Department is already in the process of developing a list of occupational diseases based on the proposed Protocol.

At the same time, we are actively undertaking a review of our labour laws to align them with new developments in the labour market and with the ILO Conventions that we have recently ratified.

I would urge the ILO to vigorously pursue the path that the Governing Body and this session of the Conference has mapped out for the future, in particular the elimination of child labour and the provision of decent work for all.

In conclusion, let me assure you that the Government of Fiji is committed to working with the social partners to eliminate any forms of child labour and assist ILO initiatives in this regard.

*Original Russian: Mr. POTAPOV (representative, General Confederation of Trade Unions) — I would like, on behalf of the General Confederation of Trade*

Unions, to congratulate the President on his election to this lofty and responsible post and to express our confidence that under his leadership the Conference will successfully achieve its objectives.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions appreciates the ILO's activities carried out in 2000-01 to resolve issues relating to decent work and to implement the four strategic objectives, including the ILO's efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

We believe that a cornerstone of the ILO's future activities will be the Global Employment Agenda. It is to the ILO's credit that it has taken the lead in the United Nations system in tackling this problem.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions and its national and sectoral trade union affiliates fully support the key provisions of the Global Employment Agenda, which include ensuring decent work for all conditions of equity, safety, stability and respect for human dignity for all working people; the creation, within the next decade, of a billion jobs; and a reduction in the number of poor quality jobs.

The rapid development of globalization is increasingly impacting on the social and economic situation in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. This means that our regions' trade unions are again confronted with issues relating to the social protection of workers and the defence of their rights in conditions of economic transition. One example of our work in this field was the broad and representative tripartite international conference held by our confederation in February this year on the subject of globalization of the economy, regional integration and the influence of such processes on the situation of the workers in the CIS member States. Approximately 1,000 delegates from 18 countries took part. The conference considered issues such as the social consequences of globalization, its impact on labour relations and the situation of workers, employment and the creation of conditions for decent work, trade unions activities to defend the rights and interests of workers in multinational cooperations, occupational safety and environmental protection and the role of WTO and other monetary and financial institutions in shaping the global economic system.

The conference paid particular attention to compliance with the ILO's international labour standards and, above all the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the recommendations of the Global Employment Forum. It is regrettable that no representative of the ILO took part in the conference.

We wholeheartedly welcome the ILO's efforts to develop tripartism and social dialogue. This is a very topical issue for the trade unions of the CIS countries. We fully support the Report's conclusion that social dialogue is not yet used to the full, and that its significance is still undervalued, particularly in strategies related to employment, labour relations and the social protection of workers.

Our confederation has closely followed the standard-setting activities of the ILO. We believe that ILO social and labour standards are the basis for national legislation in the field of labour relations, and encourage all our member organizations to support the ILO's standard-setting activities and supervisory mechanisms. Our confederation has worked hard to see to it that in recent years almost all the CIS countries ratified seven core Conventions of the ILO, and to ensure that they are about to ratify the Worst

Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Belarus and Ukraine have already ratified that instrument

Given the outlook for broad development of the ILO's activities based on the current restructuring of its action and the new approaches to its objectives illustrated in the Director-General's Report, we may hope for a universal and integrated approach to meeting the basic needs of workers in all regions. We are certain that the trade unions in our region will find their place in this activity. We are ready to carry out joint activities.

Cooperation between our organization and the ILO could take place in such fields as the joint training of trade union officials of CIS countries in the most important areas of labour relations, including social dialogue, tripartism and compliance with basic ILO standards, and joint studies into the important aspects of labour market development and our confederation's participation in measures carried out by the ILO in our region.

*Original Spanish:* Mr. GODOY MORALES (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Guatemala*) — The Government of Guatemala would like to extend its greetings to the participants at this session of the International Labour Conference and state, once again, the importance of the role of the ILO alongside governments and productive sectors in achieving a more just world for all.

The Director-General's Report to the Conference raises fundamental issues addressed by the strategic objectives, which we support and have included in our labour policies in Guatemala.

I would like to share with you some of the measures we have been taking in this regard. Last Wednesday, 12 June, I spoke before the Committee on the Application of Standards about the considerable steps which we have taken to achieve compliance with international and national standards in the field of labour, and that through a legislative amendment explained, in particular, the Ministry of Labour was given the power to impose sanctions, which will promote the establishment of a culture of respect for these standards. I also stated our appreciation for the recognition of progress given us by the Committee of Experts in its report and for that contained in the 50th anniversary report of the Committee on Freedom of Association.

With the collaboration of the ILO's IPEC we have created a national plan for the abolition of the worst forms of child labour, which today covers some 14,000 children who had been working in the fire-works industry, in quarrying and in coffee and vegetable production. The cooperation of the Ministry of Education in granting scholarships has been vital for the success of this programme as has the provision of skills or resources for children's parents to increase their incomes. We are trying to make this a cross-cutting issue in the different branches of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in order to make it a sustainable programme in the future.

According to the 2001 national study on human development carried out by the UNDP the Guatemalan economy has a high capacity for job creation, as compared to the average of Latin American countries. Nevertheless, 76 of every 100 of these jobs is created in the informal economy. This is why the ILO goal of achieving decent work is one that Guatemala shares

fully and it is a high priority in our policies on poverty reduction. We would like to thank the ILO for its cooperation in carrying out a study entitled *The labour market and poverty reduction strategies in Guatemala — Challenges and guidelines for action*. This document is serving as the basis for a tripartite discussion on job creation.

In the area of skills building and occupational training we have allocated private funds through recent tax reforms and we have signed a loan agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) for US\$10 million for the general and occupational training of populations in the extremely poor rural areas of Guatemala. In the same way, Spanish cooperation has enabled us to modernize our national employment agency and we have been able to see better results in responding to our labour market.

As is understandable, with three-quarters of all new jobs being created in the informal economy, vulnerability vis-à-vis social protection is a major challenge for us. This is why reform of our social security system is one of the commitments which the Government made this year in January in Washington before the Consultative group on Guatemala, promoted by the IADB for the purpose of reviewing progress made in respect of the peace agreements. One of the first steps will be to broaden our health coverage as of September for workers in the formal sector in regions where they do not yet benefit from such protection.

To assist working mothers the Ministry for Labour, in collaboration with the Presidential Secretariat for Women and the Secretariat for Welfare, has carried out an actuarial study in order to set up a national childcare system.

Given the long internal armed conflict in Guatemala, which has left scars of confrontation and mistrust among the social partners and between them and the institutions, the strengthening of tripartism and social dialogue will be a high priority for us in repairing the social fabric and rebuilding trust.

In this connection, we are turning our attention to job creation and we will soon be contacting the tripartite commission about the discussion for the implementation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the request for the ILO to establish a regional office in Guatemala, as well as labour legislation reforms which are currently pending.

We wish to pursue all of these efforts in conjunction with the ILO and we would once again like to thank the ILO for its assistance and cooperation.

*Original Russian:* Mr. MIROSHNYTCHENKO (*Employers' delegate, Ukraine*) — Thank you for granting me the opportunity to address the Conference and congratulations to the President on his election to this lofty post. I would also like to thank the organizers of the Session for their excellent preparations, as ever. This Session is examining important questions such as the development of cooperatives, the registration of workplace accidents and first aid, the informal economy, the withdrawal of Recommendations and so forth.

The Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General deserve our full attention, profound analysis and extensive discussion in the hope that the appropriate final documents will be adopted.



The Ukrainian Employers' Confederation considers it extremely important to examine the issue of decent work in the informal economy. There are some details in the Report on employment in the informal sector in the Ukraine. However, they are far from complete, offering a poignant example of the problem. Our Confederation is working with the state structures to seek ways to ensure a smooth transition from the informal economy to the formal sector for employers and workers. We are focusing on simplifying procedures for setting up small enterprises and cooperatives and on the lack of legal and social protection for all those active in the informal economy. We also support the need to adopt new ILO Recommendations to assist cooperatives.

At the same time, we share the position of the Conference Committee that cooperatives play an important role in generating employment and raising incomes and standards of living. There is a link between the first two questions and the proposal on procedures for notification and registration of workplace accidents and the development of a mechanism for the regular updating of the list of occupational diseases. There is a need for dynamic change in these areas to keep pace with scientific and technical progress and with increasing environmental concerns, including in the workplace. Without these changes we cannot even come close to ensuring decent work for all, which is why we support the need for an international instrument in the form of a Protocol, as proposed by the ILO.

As regards the withdrawal of 20 Recommendations, we can agree with this, given that most of them have been replaced effectively or have become invalid because of their time limits.

In Ukraine, our Confederation unites 16 major national employers' organizations which are responsible for 80 per cent of the country's GDP. The role of employers has been further strengthened as a result of the adoption of legislation on employers' associations in 2001. However, our employers continue to have considerable problems including fierce competition, globalization, the weak economy, the need to attract foreign investments and the considerable fiscal burden placed on companies which is one of the main reasons for the slow payment of wages arrears. As regards foreign investment in the Ukrainian economy, we are open for this and intend to create competitive conditions in order to attract it.

In the context of today's discussion, we should emphasize that through their efforts our employers are helping to create socio-economic stability and a positive image of the employer in the country. This has been assisted over the past two years by a national competition to find the best employer of the year in which small, medium and large enterprises across the country participate. This competition helps to stabilize the situation on the labour market, to protect and modernize existing jobs and to create new employment. It also encourages the implementation of international labour standards, the promotion of decent work, as advocated by the ILO and the dissemination of best practices in the companies.

Since 2001, Ukraine has been implementing an ILO technical assistance project on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and a project to eliminate child labour. Our Confederation is one of the participants in these projects and it is addressing such important issues as the reform of labour legislation,

labour inspection systems, freedom of association and equality in the workplace.

The second project is based on the principle that child labour leads to poverty and that children are the future of the entire country and continent. So, it is important to make every effort to create conditions which prohibit child labour. We note the effectiveness of the ILO's measures in the Ukraine and hope to see these continue to develop as a result of close cooperation between ILO and the International Employers' Association.

The Ukrainian Employers' Confederation will always be ready to cooperate and use its capacities and resources for the successful implementation of joint projects with the ILO in the Ukraine.

*Original Russian: Mr. EREMEEV (Employers' delegate, Russian Federation)* — The Director-General's Report to this session of the International Labour Conference provides a multifaceted and impressive picture of all four strategic sectors of our Organization's activities during the past two years. We are also pleased to note the results of the implementation of core regional and intersectoral programmes. Unlike last year, the Director-General's Report was presented in advance during this session, which, as our discussion shows, has considerably increased the efficiency of our work. Moreover, we would like to thank the secretariat for its excellent structuring of the Report, which shows the state of progress in each sector in a concise but informative way.

In February this year, Russian employers, together with the trade unions and government representatives, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Russian tripartite commission on labour relations. Many of our colleagues from countries with developed market economies and labour relations systems that have been perfected over decades may consider this to be insignificant. However, looking back, we Russian entrepreneurs can appreciate the progress our country has made in such a short time: from a totalitarian State controlling everything and everyone to the creation of a sound foundation for a liberal economy and the basis of a civil society, one of whose important elements is tripartism.

The Russian tripartite commission is becoming more effective in coordinating the interests of the social partners at the federal level. It provides a forum for joint work by employers' associations, trade unions and the Russian Government on such important documents as the draft labour and housing codes, proposed pension reform and the special federal programme "Promotion of Employment by the Russian Federation in 2002-2005", as well as the conclusion of the general agreement between the trade union associations, the employers' associations and the Government covering the period 2002-04.

As Russia's WTO membership application progresses, the Russian tripartite commission is taking an increasingly active role in analysing the socio-economic consequences of membership. But further development of social dialogue, particularly at regional level, is being hampered by what we believe to be Russian businesspersons' insufficient recognition of their shared corporate interests and social responsibility, as well as their failure to understand the importance of running a business on the basis of a dialogue with trade unions and workers. Although more and more businesspeople are beginning to realize that

solving social welfare and labour issues is an important factor in raising productivity, it is estimated that contracts reached by collective bargaining cover no more than 75 per cent of the staff of large enterprises.

In small and medium-sized enterprises, the figure is considerably lower. Russian employers' associations believe the current problems can be solved by raising businesses' social responsibility, taking on new members — particularly small and medium-sized enterprises — and diversifying and raising the quality of services provided to their members, including the creation of information and analytical databases.

We view the Director-General's Report on the ILO's activities during the past two years through the prism of the urgent tasks Russian employers must solve during this transition period. Russian employers highly value the cooperation and mutual trust that has been developed with the ILO Office in Moscow and the International Labour Office as a whole. We hope these relations will develop and deepen further.

The recently signed programme of cooperation between Russia and the ILO for 2002-03 details Russia's priorities in the areas of labour rules and principles, employment, social protection, and the development of a social dialogue. At the same time, a number of special projects provided for in the programme aim to assess the socio-economic consequences for Russia's integration into the international trade system, including WTO membership. But given the start of work on a plan of measures to implement the programme, I cannot help but express concern at the decision-making mechanism for project prioritization.

The ILO, like other international organizations, is driven by its Members and not by the secretariat. Only the Members are empowered to take decisions on matters of principle, particularly when they concern the Members themselves. Without questioning the relevance of such activities as fighting AIDS and child neglect, we would like to emphasize that Russia has many other problems which urgently require the ILO's technical assistance.

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome the upcoming visit to Moscow by Mr. Juan Somavia. We are certain that the ILO Director-General's visit will make an important contribution to cooperation between Russia and the ILO, as well as to the further development of the social partnership system in our country.

Mr. VARELA (*Employers' delegate, Philippines*) — May I, on behalf of the Employers' delegation of the Philippines and on my own behalf, congratulate the President on his election to preside over the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

We also wish to commend the Director-General on his Report with its comprehensive review of the performance of the ILO regarding the attainment of its targets and objectives and the implementation of its programme in the context of opportunities for greater institutional relevance and of resource constraints.

The Report gives an overview of the depth and breadth of the global projects initiated by the ILO under the Decent Work Agenda, based on the four strategic objectives, namely, the promotion and realization of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, the creation of greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income, the enhancement of the coverage and

effectiveness of social protection for all, and the strengthening of tripartism and social dialogue.

It is encouraging to note that each of these key objectives has been geared to specific results through a framework of operating plans whose end products are so defined as to be measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. The extensive evaluation of how the whole ILO action programme was implemented, what contributed to the successful implementation, the deviation from prior expectations and areas for improvement should give the member States of the ILO a better appreciation of the dynamics of the vision and mission of the Organization.

We would like to make a special mention of the adoption of the concept and practice of strategic budgeting in the management of the affairs of the ILO. While a sense of unity and commitment is necessary for any organization to move forward, there is also a need for a systematic approach that will efficiently and effectively translate the best of plans to tangible results through well-coordinated actions. To be action-oriented and results-driven at a time of rising expectations is the only way to sustained relevance. Certainly we highly welcome the introduction of strategic budgeting with its focus on greater accountability, close monitoring of programme implementation, accent on key result areas, cost rationalization and resource maximization.

Hopefully, the culture of performance, which is what strategic budgeting is all about, will become pervasive throughout the ILO and its membership. This may take some time. What is important is the fact that the ILO, through the Director-General, has made a significant start.

Another aspect of the Report of the Director-General of particular interest to us was the observation that the level of performance in pursuit of ILO objectives in member States could only be achieved with the active involvement of ILO constituents. For this reason, we welcome the announcement of the Director-General that the decent work country programme will be established. With this new approach we look forward to greater constituency involvement in planning and action.

Towards this end, we would like to share with the membership of the ILO our formal launching of the Action Programme for Decent Work: Philippines, on 13 May 2002 under the auspices of the ILO. The event was capped by a formal declaration of a joint statement of support signed by the representatives of employers, workers and government.

In the documentation of the Action Programme for Decent Work: Philippines, the ILO took note of the priorities and various activities of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) in implementing the Decent Work Agenda. As reported by the ILO, the ECOP places social dialogue and constituents capacities to participate meaningfully in this dialogue as a priority and central concern in the ILO's action for decent work in the Philippines.

Part of the Director-General's Report recognizes the commitment of ECOP and other business organizations in the Philippines to the principle of employment generation and facilitation in spite of uncertainties in the economic environment. To give substance to this commitment, ECOP, among others, has been working closely with the ILO to provide information, advisory and training services to small and medium-sized enterprises, which we consider to be key genera-

tors of employment. Also, ECOP has opened the door to small and medium-sized enterprises, and particularly to women entrepreneurs.

ECOP has a direct action programme in support of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). This entails nationwide accreditation and recognition of child-friendly and child-labour-free firms.

Parallel to the activities undertaken by ECOP on decent work, it has answered the call of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for business worldwide to help the social and environmental framework to support the continuation of free trade and sustainable development through the Global Compact Initiative.

Through the challenge and support of the ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), ECOP spearheaded the Global Compact Initiative in the Philippines.

It launched the Global Compact Initiative in 2002, and has mustered the support of a growing number of non-governmental organizations, trade and industry organizations and individual corporations, particularly the large firms together with their supply chains. ECOP then formed a steering committee to draw up the workplan to promote the Global Compact Initiative in the Philippines and to make it work at the enterprise level. As its first major activity, ECOP organized a national conference and exhibition of employers on 30-31 May to encourage Philippine companies to adopt the Global Compact Initiative and to institutionalize dialogue among all the stakeholders through the establishment of locally based multi-sectoral committees. No less than the President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, attended the conference as its guest of honour and keynote speaker, where she commended the ECOP for the bold initiative of getting together not only its tripartite partners, the organized labour movement and employers, the industry leaders and government, but also various civic and non-governmental agencies and key government line executive agencies to participate in a national dialogue using the nine principles of the Global Compact as a framework.

We, in ECOP, believe that in actively promoting the Global Compact Initiative in tandem with decent work, we are creating not only the momentum but a continuum to bridge and narrow the large decent work deficit in the Philippines.

It would be unrealistic to expect that all the strategic objectives of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda will be met with the highest performance rating in such a short time. To aim for a very high mark in our accomplishment target may be like wishing on a star, given present capacities and constraint. But still, we need an ideal, no matter how lofty, to sustain us in our continuing journey towards decent work everywhere.

The ILO has defined the vision. The challenge is to pursue that vision with a sense of mission.

Ms. LUCERO (*representative, Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists*) — Allow me to thank the President for this opportunity and at the same time offer him our congratulations. On behalf of the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists (BATU), the regional organization of WCL in Asia, we are pleased to share the following thoughts on the Director-General's Report.

As regards human rights and international standards, BATU believes that the core Conventions embody basic human rights and trade union freedoms that must not be compromised, and their observance must not rest upon the status or condition of a country's development. Thus, BATU fully supports the strategy of promoting the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, and underlines the importance of the ILO's role in providing technical assistance not only towards the ratification of the core Conventions, but more so on the application, enforcement and monitoring of compliance with these standards.

While the campaign for the universal ratification of the ILO core Conventions has had some positive results in the Asian region, significant gaps remain. Extensive and deep-rooted problems concerning the lack of freedom of association, forced labour, child labour and discrimination persist. The right to freedom of association is curtailed among many professions such as the public services, teaching and education in many countries. Even when workers are organized, the freedom to collective bargaining with employers is still very limited. Child labour is still pervasive and discrimination against women in many forms continues to plague the region, aggravating the culturally ingrained bias against women in some Asian countries.

The activities of the ILO with regard to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is laudable. But increased training for workers on the core Conventions will enable them to assist in monitoring compliance with the standards thereby facilitating application and improving their observance.

As regards social dialogue, BATU views pluralism and representativity as the core principles of social dialogue. Through social dialogue, groups and institutions — the social partners, workers, employers and governments — become key decision-makers. As key decision-makers, they share the responsibility for global governance with the international community.

Social dialogue requires effective methods to make it a creative, productive and empowering process. It does not transfer the responsibility of governance but shares it. Consequently, problems are seen in a broader lens because they are seen from diverse perspectives. Social dialogue generates widely supported solutions because all stakeholders own the proposed action and harness their capability to implement it.

As regards employment, BATU fully appreciates that work must first exist before decent work can exist and we fully support this strategy for the creation and maintenance of work for all. In Asia, this will mean education for all, access to training, and sound human resources development plans.

The growth of information and communication technology (ICT) must be used and harnessed to provide employment for millions of people. Studies made by the ILO on the gap between supply and demand in terms of ICT development must be used to generate more reliable job markets.

Mobility of labour and the challenges of migration must be addressed. Migrant workers' rights must be promoted and special attention must be given to them.

Home work must be protected and the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177) must be promoted to cover millions of workers who work from their homes.

Furthermore, while efforts made to create poverty alleviation schemes are laudable, vigilance must be exerted against “poverty-creating projects” which increasingly result in the dispossession of already marginalized sectors and causes displacement, social conflicts and the degradation of natural resources.

As regards social protection, BATU shares the ILO’s concern for the most vulnerable workers, the young, women workers, migrant workers and informal sector workers, and we are convinced of the urgent necessity to extend social protection.

In the area of social security in Asia, many social security programmes reach only a small minority of the population. New approaches are required to extend coverage of these programmes.

In conclusion, the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda, when pursued to its optimum, would greatly facilitate the elimination of poverty and hunger, the realization of universal primary education, gender equality, the combat against HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, improved maternity health care and reduced child mortality — the aims of the Millennium Development Goals.

*Original Russian: Mr. STOYAN (Workers’ delegate, Ukraine)* — First of all I would like to congratulate the President on his election to this important post and wish him every success in guiding the work of the Conference. We share the view of the Director-General that the lessons learned during the programme implementation will provide a solid foundation for achieving our long-term objectives. I would emphasize that these lessons are just as important to the social partners in the member States of the ILO.

Last year in the Ukraine, largely thanks to the development of tripartism and the strengthening social dialogue, our GDP grew by 9.1 per cent and industrial production increased by 14.2 per cent, while agricultural production rose by 9.9 per cent. The economic upturn led to an increased demand for labour, as a result of which unemployment fell somewhat. Thanks to legislative amendments adopted at the initiative of the Trade Union Federation of Ukraine, the legislation on unpaid leave was modified, and the number of workers on so-called administrative leave was also reduced. At the same time, in the trade unions’ view, the recent years have not been a watershed in terms of the fundamental principles and rights at work. There has been no improvement in social protection of workers which would have helped them adapt to the major economic changes. There is a need for better tax legislation which at present merely places obligations on taxpayers.

In this connection, we are counting on constructively working with the Government of Ukraine to prepare draft legislation to strengthen the social protection of workers. The priority in this connection is the Labour Code, and work on it has already begun.

The trade unions cannot accept the fact that out of 30 million able-bodied people in Ukraine, only 20 million work. In other words, one-third of our labour resources are not being used to create gross domestic product, which places an additional strain on those who do work. Five million Ukrainian workers are forced to work outside their country. Social protection in our country cannot be ensured without bridging the enormous gap between the current minimum subsistence level and actual social guarantees. The minimum wage is only 38 per cent of the minimum

subsistence level, and the minimum pension or unemployment benefit is, just over 7 per cent. Our specialists have calculated that at the current rates of increase, the minimum wage and pension will not reach the minimum subsistence level until 2025. In order to protect the basic rights of trade unions and workers, the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine drew up over 800 bills containing some 4,500 comments and proposals during the third session of the Supreme Soviet alone, and most of them were taken into account.

Our Federation will insist that wages should be given priority when payments are made, will try to bring the minimum wage closer to the minimum subsistence level and will insist upon amendments to the law governing collective agreements so that bipartite obligations are recognized at enterprises with any forms of ownership. We wish to see reforms that help the majority of the population, and not only individual groups. I consider that the discussion of the Director-General’s Report at this session will not only help us focus on the needs of workers throughout the world, but will also help enhance their social protection.

*Original Arabic: Mr. IBRAHIM (Workers’ delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)* — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! It is my pleasure to join the previous speakers in congratulating the President on his election to preside over the 90th Session of the Conference. We hope that it will be successful and that it will fulfil the aspirations of all the people.

On behalf of the General Association of Producers’ Union in the Great Jamahiriya, I should like to congratulate Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General, on the Report that he has submitted to the Conference, hoping that he will continue his sincere efforts aimed at highlighting many facts, and realities, particularly the issues contained in the Appendix, which concern the situation of Palestinian workers and Arab workers living under the yoke of Israeli occupation, who are the victims of hideous crimes, liquidation and extermination at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces.

We greatly appreciate the role of the International Labour Organization in implementation of its constitution and the Philadelphia Declaration, aimed at guaranteeing equality, freedom and justice for all, and at combating exploitation and injustice. Nevertheless, we call on this Organization, through the ILO, to redouble its efforts, because these objectives cannot be achieved without the elimination of all forms of colonialism, occupation and hegemony.

However, the Appendix to the Director-General’s Report, contains some gaps, and its evasion of glaring evidence that condemns the racist Zionist entity, which is responsible for horrendous war crimes committed against the defenceless Palestinian people. The Report only mentions a limited number of the abominable racist, Zionist practices, but it fails to mention the massacres perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces, nor does it mention the acts of liquidation, genocide and torture. The Appendix of the Director-General’s Report does not mention all this, yet the independent media have revealed the random daily bombardments of civilians, schools, hospitals and places of worship and the resultant destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure, as proof that the racist Zionist entity does not want peace and is pursuing a

policy of terrorism and occupation. We condemn all those who practice and support terrorism, financially, militarily or politically, but we strongly denounce whoever attempts to describe the Palestinian resistance for the cause of liberation and independence as terrorism or acts of violence.

We salute the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and intifada. We consider their struggle for a just and legitimate right, guaranteed by all the international conventions and practices, and consider it a defence for the sake of freedom, and a sacred struggle against occupation, oppression and the racist, Zionist hegemony.

The Report of the Director-General stresses the importance of prohibiting child labour. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya strongly supports this: our legislation system ensure the rights of children and their access to health care and education. All these rights are provided in Chapter 3 of the Green Book, which stresses the social aspect of the question, and the importance of children and their welfare. At the General Association we strongly support the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is endeavouring to ensure that justice for all prevails. The prevailing economic system does not meet the aspirations of all. We call on the workers to go beyond timid demands for wage increases, or improved working conditions, which only serve to sedate the workers. We have to go far beyond this; the workers must become the masters

of the means of production; they must free themselves from exploitation. The unions and associations must be the motive power behind this liberation. The workers must become genuine partners introduction and claim their share, thereby moving from the status of wage-earner to that of partners.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, supports the struggle of all oppressed peoples who are struggling to regain their rights. We ourselves have been the target of many desperate attempts, the last of which was what is known as the Lockerbie incident, by which the American administration tried to implicate the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in a matter which did not concern it, and imposed unfair sanctions and measures on our country, which had a damaging impact on the social and economic life of our country, the effects of which continue to be felt by all Libyan workers and citizens.

We should like to express our gratitude to all the African and Arab Leaders, peoples, and trade unions, and to all the friendly countries that supported us in this ordeal.

We reaffirm our support for the struggle of the Palestinian workers and the Palestinian People, as we support the right of the Syrian Arab Republic to liberate the occupied Golan, and the right of the Lebanese peoples to liberate the Shaba farms occupied by the Zionist entity.

*(The Conference adjourned at 12.55 p.m.)*

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