



Reply by the Director-General to the discussion of his Report

1. Introduction

I found this year's session of the International Labour Conference exceptionally rich. We have a broad and steadily deepening consensus over the goal of decent work for all. Furthermore we have the results of the first two years of a new approach to strategic budgeting that is enabling us to target resources and measure achievements. But everybody knows we are just starting and need to learn rapidly. We need to do more and do it better. Nevertheless, you transmitted a sense of confidence that we are making progress on many fronts; a confidence reflected throughout our tripartite structure.

I must congratulate Jean-Jacques Elmiger and his Vice-Presidents on the way they have conducted our business. They maintained a brisk and steady pace with courtesy and respect to all delegates. It was particularly appropriate that Mr. Elmiger was in the chair this year when Switzerland, our generous host and founder Member, decided to join the United Nations. I also want to thank the Chairpersons and Officers of our Committees who organized work so well that many of them did not use the full time allotted.

In the formal plenary sessions, 347 speakers contributed to the debate. My only disappointment is that only 45 were women. That is 13 per cent; about the same as last year. I urge all three groups to reflect over the year ahead on how to ensure a stronger participation of women at this the highest level of international social dialogue. After so many unsuccessful calls to move forward on this issue, should we begin thinking about setting a target in the coming years? In doing so you may wish to draw on the ILO's own gender audit approach, which is helping the Office to highlight advances made and points of weakness in our gender awareness and develop ways of remedying deficiencies. We will be making proposals to the November session of the Governing Body on offering this service to our constituents.

We heard two thought-provoking speeches from our guests, the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Barbados. Both gave us an historical perspective on the new challenges of globalization. For me, their underlying message was that the diversity of our countries' experience, the cultural specificity of nationhood forged in many cases by the struggle for independence, is a rich resource that the process of globalization cannot be allowed to undermine. Both saw globalization as a means of progressing the development of their own countries if forms of governance can be found that are balanced and fair. Dr. Mahathir stressed that, "most importantly, the globalized world must not be for capitalists only. The social needs of the citizens and the workers in the poor countries must be given equal consideration." Prime Minister Arthur put it well when he said, "the free market cannot do it all. It does not contain the sum total of human endeavour, needs and concerns."

A homogenized global culture would be a contradiction in terms. Respect for diversity enriches us all and is the only way to build a world at peace with itself. Shared values, of which I place fundamental principles and rights at work at the core, are cornerstones of systems of governance that enable people to realize their own special and unique capabilities and bring them to the service of the community.

It is of course quite impossible to do justice to all your contributions. We will however make full use of them as we prepare our Programme and Budget for 2004-05 and implement that of the current biennium. Let me nevertheless react to some of the main themes, which I will group under four sections.

2. Turning vision into action

Nearly all speakers had something to say about the new style of implementation report we have this year, commenting both on the results and on our new methods of work. Most were gratifyingly supportive but included ideas for improvement and constructive criticisms. Mr. Potter, Employers' delegate from the United States, warned, "the Report would lead one to believe that the ILO for the most part has achieved its mission and should close up shop". But as he himself acknowledged, we are a long way from realizing our ultimate goals in terms of jobs, rights, social protection and social dialogue. The Report, which covers our work over a two-year period, attempts to measure both whether we delivered the programmes we planned and also the impact of our activities. On both scores you concluded that we come out quite well, but he and others are quite right to point out that we need to set increasingly rigorous performance indicators that relate to the needs of constituents and be more aggressive in evaluating how our interventions can best help to redress decent work deficits in a globalizing world. It is a major challenge to tripartism.

Minister Blinkeviciute of Lithuania was one of many who appreciated "the 'lessons learned' approach taken in the Report". Let me say we learned a lot from the comments of recipients of our technical assistance and providers of financial resources to our programmes over the last two weeks. Minister Kanou of Japan reminded us forcefully that "if social justice is to become a reality, and if the ILO is to exert its full impact, confidence of Members in the ILO is essential". We cannot afford to waste a centime, cent or yen. That requires constant attention to setting priorities and improving the performance of our operations. Minister Mogami of Botswana focused on this issue in his speech concluding that decent work country programmes were a valuable tool for the more effective delivery of an integrated service and should "formally and systematically involve the ILO constituents in planning and implementation".

Resources

The ILO has an exemplary record of financial management attested by our auditors over the years. But we must not confuse accounts with accountability. You rightly want to ensure that the Governing Body and ultimately the Conference is deciding where we put our resources. It is taxpayers' money and you have to be able to answer questions in your parliaments and assemblies on the what, where and why of the ILO activities. The ILO has always exercised financial prudence. In the past, when it was anticipated that there might be shortfalls in income, measures were taken to cut back on programmes in consultation with the Governing Body. Although the Financial Regulations allow for borrowing when there is insufficient income, we have always chosen to avoid indebtedness and thus also avoid supplementary assessments on member States. It was a direct result of this responsible financial management that when large arrears were received in the last biennium, these funds were not required for the repayment of any debts. I am grateful to all

concerned, and especially those member States facing the difficulty of managing cuts in public expenditure at home, that a solution has been agreed. It allows the ILO to devote most of this cash surplus to investing in priority activities and improving the capacity of the ILO to meet the growing demands for our services which have been difficult to fund on the basis of a zero growth budget as explained in the Strategic Policy Framework. We will continue consultations and address the issue in terms of specific activities at the November session of the Governing Body. We will also report on progress in implementation.

Changing how the ILO operates

The ILO, like its constituents, must innovate constantly to keep pace with the needs of workers, enterprises and governments in a fast-changing world. Over the last two years we have restructured our headquarters operation to consolidate our knowledge and expertise under the four pillars of employment, social protection, standards and social dialogue. Within these new arrangements we have eight InFocus programmes that target areas where we need to act particularly rapidly. Many speakers said that they have found this approach useful. It is helping to make the ILO more visible and responsive. The next steps are to strengthen our capacity at the regional and subregional levels to better connect our knowledge base to the specific problems faced by countries and to ensure that the whole package of ILO expertise is integrated and its impact multiplied. As Ms. Brighi, the Workers' delegate of Italy, pointed out "the interconnection between the child labour programmes and those on workers' rights, social dialogue and decent work should also be promoted continuously". In order to assist our sector specialists in making these connections, I have this year established a Policy Integration Department at headquarters and we are setting up decent work teams at the regional level to similarly improve the coordination of our work. We have already started to experiment with decent work country programmes that pull together the range of our activities and connect them to countries' overall development plans. I intend to make this approach a feature of our next round of programming.

Sustaining progress

A constant theme in the debates was "so far so good, but keep it going". One of the main reasons for introducing strategic budgeting was to create a tool for institutionalizing change. By setting targets and measuring performance we can judge what more we need to do. The Governing Body, in evaluating the implementation report before sending it on to the Conference, urged us to improve our indicators and set more challenging targets. We are therefore working hard to develop a decent work indicators' database and next year's International Conference of Labour Statisticians will provide an opportunity to work with experts on building collection systems that will give us a better foundation for analysis. We may well find that better information will mean that we need to refocus our activities. Furthermore, as we increase our transparency, our constituents will become increasingly aware of the size of the decent work deficits they face and the potential of the Decent Work Agenda as a means for integrated action. The real test of the relevance of our ideas is whether they resonate in national tripartite institutions. Numerous speakers, notably Minister Rial of Argentina, supplied examples of creative consensus, often in the most difficult of circumstances, brought about through social dialogue. This is the engine room of the Decent Work Agenda and I urge you to keep us up to date with your own work so that we can use your energy to help us maintain progress.

3. Tools for action

Both in our plenary discussions and in the Conference Committees we spent a considerable amount of time discussing how our tools for action were working and developing new directions and instruments.

Child labour

The plight of children who cannot play and learn because they work touches a raw nerve everywhere. I am sure all of us wish we had the powers of Harry Potter to wave a wand and change their lives. But we all know it is not that easy. Our third debate on a Global Report prepared in accordance with the follow-up procedure agreed upon under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, *A future without child labour*, provided us with an opportunity to analyse the scale and nature of the challenge and the effectiveness of our actions.

A number of speakers were alarmed at the scale of the problem quantified by the figures presented in the Global Report, especially those on the number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Several asked us to develop better, more reliable and up-to-date data. Most made it clear however that, irrespective of exact figures and statistical methodology, the problem is enormous and that what counts is, as Mr. Brett, the United Kingdom Workers' delegate urged, comprehensive and urgent action to "guide these children out of the workplace and into school". There was strong support for the analyses contained in the Global Report, for the stocktaking and for the new global estimates.

I also observed, through the lively debate, that the experimental formula of an interactive session was appreciated. It can be further improved upon, as several delegates suggested, and we will do so. The suggestions made in the concluding chapter of the Global Report, namely to reinforce the work of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), to mainstream the effective abolition of child labour in the Decent Work Agenda; and to forge even stronger partnerships and alliances for the elimination of child labour, were widely endorsed. As Minister Okuyan of Turkey highlighted "When children are exploited through labour, an important potential of the country is lost". We will now prepare a plan of action, to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 285th Session, in November 2002, building on these three conclusions.

There is no room for complacency. By the opening of this session of the International Labour Conference, 122 countries had ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and a number of others announced their intention to join them soon. IPEC has grown impressively with 75 countries receiving assistance and 26 helping us to finance our activities. We manage this with leanest of machines but have doubled our delivery rate over the last three years. We aim to continue this improvement through our comprehensive national time-bound programmes. Three countries already have such programmes and more are in the pipeline. The Global Report, *A future without child labour* attracted massive publicity worldwide and drew attention to our first World Day against Child Labour on 12 June and the "Red Card to Child Labour" campaign. We must maintain this commitment and scale up and spread our programmes. Donors' support has been magnificent but I say to them all: "stay with us through to the final whistle". As Minister Mdladlana of South Africa warned "if not rooted out, child labour poses the greatest threat to the Decent Work Agenda that we all espouse and seek to promote".

Informal economy

Minister Villaran de la Puente of Peru got it just right when he described the goal of the Conference in its discussion of the informal economy “We are trying to create rights for those who presently have none; we are trying to give the majority of the population which is excluded from the modern world access to its benefits”. The Committee on the Informal Economy endorsed an approach based on reducing decent work deficits in order to address the problems of the informal economy. The decent work approach has the merit of being able to take into account the considerable diversity of situations and their underlying causes in the informal economy. It would comprehensively apply the ILO’s four strategic objectives for the promotion of rights, more and better jobs, social protection and social dialogue to the informal economy. The general discussion also emphasized the idea of a transition from the informal economy to the formal economy – this is very much in line with the ILO’s goal of achieving decent work progressively, with a particular focus on the informal economy where the deficits are most serious and work is performed outside the scope or application of the legal and institutional frameworks.

Although the discussion was very intense and sometimes difficult, there was a strong shared sense of purpose among all Committee members to come out with specific and practical guidelines for the ILO to help member States and the social partners more effectively to redress decent work deficits in the informal economy. The Committee called for an identifiable and highly visible ILO programme of work on the informal economy that should focus on issues of governance, effective representation, employment generation, social protection and poverty reduction. We will now get an integrated and innovative programme under way, drawing on expertise from all four technical sectors and field offices to deliver specifically designed strategies and programmes to reduce the decent work deficits in the informal economy and thus alleviate poverty. As Minister Kapuya of the United Republic of Tanzania emphasized “more and more people opt for the informal sector, mainly due to economic hardships facing them as they are unable to find jobs; hence they join this sector as a survival strategy”. We must reverse this trend.

Rather than a new organizational unit within the Office, the programme of work on the informal economy will be linked to the ILO’s major strategies and programmes, including, in particular, the strengthening of social dialogue, the Global Employment Agenda, the promotion of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, and the campaign to extend social security, including through initiatives such as the Global Social Solidarity Trust Fund and many others. The Committee underscored the importance of the ILO’s work on the informal economy to the Millennium Development Goals and the Youth Employment Network at the international level and to achieving the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) at country level.

I congratulate the Committee for having produced extremely valuable conclusions analysing the nature of the informal economy, the problems those who live and work in this sector face and the policy failures that trap half the world’s workforce in conditions which are an integral part of the global decent work deficit. We will continue to work with our tripartite constituents on the programme called for in the statement and together reach out to the new membership-based organizations active in the informal economy.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are one of the most powerful tools in the drive to create decent jobs, alleviate poverty, fight social exclusion and further sustainable development. More than 100 million people have found gainful employment in or through cooperatives, and close

to 800 million people worldwide are cooperative members. Cooperatives range from small grass-roots initiatives to multimillion-dollar businesses and operate in every economic and social sector. As Mr. Barberini, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, stressed “cooperatives are a form of enterprise that put people first”. Through hard work over two years, the Committee on the Promotion of Cooperatives prepared the new Recommendation, which will guide our constituents in tapping that vast potential through group entrepreneurship. As the Recommendation reaffirms, cooperatives have a distinct identity as businesses that can and do compete successfully with other forms of enterprise in the market-place, but that exercise social functions that justify special conditions. Cooperatives empower people by enabling even the poorest segments of the population to participate in economic progress; they create job opportunities for those who have skills but little or no capital; and they provide protection by organizing mutual help in communities. These three elements – empowerment, opportunity and protection – build a road out of the poverty and exclusion of the informal economy.

Cooperatives need a conducive legal, institutional and administrative environment in which to emerge and grow. Because they are enterprises that are member-based and rooted in communities, cooperatives are powerful vehicles to stimulate local economic development and group entrepreneurship, and to build local networks with employers and unions, amongst others, that contribute to social protection and social dialogue in communities. Furthermore, they belong to a vibrant, global movement united by a unique set of principles that can establish links between local economies and the global market. In this context, I would like to stress that the new Recommendation will be of universal applicability, whereas the Cooperatives (Developing Countries) Recommendation, 1966 (No. 127) that it replaces, applied to the developing world only.

Occupational accidents and diseases

The Committee on Occupational Accidents and Diseases completed the three tasks included in the agenda item, namely proposed texts for a Protocol to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), a Recommendation covering a new list of occupational diseases and a new mechanism for updating the list. The Protocol provides basic principles for recoding and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, which support the strengthening of national- and enterprise-level action for the collection and analysis of accidents and diseases. These data are essential for developing effective national policy and programmes, and the new instrument will contribute greatly to the improvement of safety and health at work.

Another key achievement concerns the list of occupational diseases, which had not been revised for 22 years. The Committee came up with a new list of occupational diseases as an Annex to the proposed Recommendation, together with a new mechanism for updating the list more frequently through meetings of experts, who will advise us on the latest developments in member States and new scientific knowledge. This new list of occupational diseases will stimulate the national review process and dialogue on the identification and prevention of occupational diseases. The new mechanism could be a model for other subject areas of the ILO that require flexible mechanisms for review and update.

Application of standards

The Committee on the Application of Standards held very interesting and complex discussions on a wide variety of issues. In the general part of its discussion, the Committee began a discussion of its own working methods and ways in which its functioning could be improved. This resulted in a decision to ask the Office to carry out informal consultations

over the coming months, and to present an options paper to it at the next session of the Conference.

The General Survey of the Committee of Experts, discussed by the Conference Committee this year, was on the Dock Work Convention, 1973 (No. 137) and its accompanying Recommendation. While there was not full agreement on the continued relevance of Convention No. 137 in a rapidly changing economic and technological environment, there was agreement on the need to adapt to the changing situation of cargo handling and to protect the workers concerned in doing so.

Pursuant to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Myanmar, adopted in 2000 by the Conference, the Committee held a special sitting again this year on the application by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). It discussed not only the observation from the Committee of Experts, which it noted with deep concern, but also the developments that had taken place since December 2001 in the wake of the report of the High-Level Team, which freely conducted an evaluation of the situation in the country last year. The Committee welcomed the establishment, in May 2002, of a Liaison Officer ad interim, whose first report had usefully been made available to the Committee, but regretted that other proposals from the High-Level Team had not been followed up. In general, it insisted on the need to make verifiable progress not only from a procedural but also from a substantive point of view. It encouraged the Office and the Director-General to pursue their efforts resolutely on all issues, to maintain the dialogue and to report to the Governing Body in November. In this respect, Minister Winn of Myanmar stated “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”. This is a good statement that must be supported by the necessary follow-up work on this case. As always, the Office is available to fully cooperate to this end.

In addition to this special sitting, the Committee carried out the examination of 22 other individual cases covering freedom of association, forced labour, discrimination, child labour, employment policy – the whole range of concerns addressed in ILO standards. Unfortunately, one country – Belarus – did not attend the Conference and its case was not discussed. I trust that the Government’s membership in the new Governing Body will help the highest authorities in Belarus to understand the country’s obligations as an ILO Member. They must address the very serious questions being raised by our supervisory bodies; clearly freedom of association is at risk.

While in some cases the Committee found reason to welcome the measures that had already been taken, or that were being taken, by governments to apply Conventions, it also found it necessary to adopt special paragraphs to express concern over other less positive cases. Specials paragraphs on Ethiopia, Sudan and Venezuela noted serious problems encountered in applying important Conventions. The Committee also requested several governments to accept direct contacts or other technical advisory missions, or to ask the Office for assistance.

Integrated approach to standard setting

In the plenary sessions, a number of speakers commented on the new integrated approach to standard setting and the related area of technical assistance. I am sure all of us were interested to hear Minister Al Sho’ala of Bahrain describe the constitutional reform process in his country, which includes a new national labour charter that has clearly taken inspiration from the values of the ILO. He explained that the principles of the new

constitution include "... the right to work of each citizen and the right to choose one's work in accordance with public order and morals, and of the duty of the State to provide job opportunities for all citizens, in addition to prohibition of forced labour, and ensuring freedom of association and trade unions". We have made a promising start in our dialogue with the Gulf States.

Our approach is based on promoting fundamental principles and rights at work, and extending to a wider discussion of how standards in general relate to employment, social protection and social dialogue as a means of creating a social framework for international economic integration. Technical assistance is a key tool in helping countries to appreciate the value of our standards and to find ways to incorporate the principles in our Conventions and Recommendations into law and practice. But, as Minister Menkerios of Eritrea remarked, reviewing our standards in an integrated way can amongst other things help to make them "more practical to use for fledgling countries embarking on the development of their labour and social legislation". Our discussions next year on safety and health standards promise to be most interesting.

I must also note that at this Conference we agreed to withdraw 20 Recommendations that have become obsolete. This is the most recent product of an ongoing effort by the Governing Body to ensure that our standards are kept up to date. I very much agree with Mr. Funes De Rioja, Employers' Vice Chairman of the Governing Body but speaking on this occasion on behalf of the International Organization of Employers, who recalled the approach agreed by the Governing Body in March of this year saying that we should develop "proposals for new standards or revisions of the standards and other appropriate normative action as well as guidance on objectives and content in order to make the entire set of ILO instruments more coherent and modern and suitable for wider global application".

4. The Global Policy Agenda and the role of the ILO

World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization

Many speakers referred to the pressures that international economic integration is placing on our societies. However, I also heard many statements expressing optimism that a new approach could bring the potential benefits of globalization to the people and countries now marginalized from the process. As Secretary Chao of the United States said "On the one hand, many benefit from its enormous opportunities, on the other hand, there are those who fail to gain access to the full benefits of expanded trade because fundamental freedoms and individual human rights have not been fully implemented.". There was much agreement on the importance of rights, especially those contained in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as a foundation for an inclusive strategy for the governance of globalization, and on social dialogue as a vital mechanism for developing cohesive national and international policies. From Singapore's Workers' delegate, Mrs. Yacob, we heard that in relation to globalization "it is in the interest of both government and businesses to have strong trade unions to articulate and represent the voice of workers and ensure that balanced, fair and sound social and economic policies are formulated". But it will not be easy, as Mr. Prieto, the Employers' delegate from Mexico reminded us, "it is time for our aim of reversing the trend of growing poverty, which compromises dignity and stability, to become a readiness to act steadfastly".

The setting up of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization was widely welcomed and there are high expectations for its report. I think we can all take pride that the standing of our Organization has attracted 25 eminent people from different

walks of life to invest their time and energy in such a complex task. The fact that this Commission is headed by two sitting Presidents – Her Excellency Tarja Hallonen of Finland and His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania – was highly appreciated. I will inform them of the support you have offered and the ideas and information that were conveyed in your contributions.

Decent work and the reduction of poverty

Minister Hjort Frederiksen of Denmark summed up the views of most delegates when he said that “with 1.2 billion people in the world living below the poverty line, and half a billion working poor living on less than US\$1 a day, it is absolutely crucial and timely that the ILO has adopted a Global Employment Agenda”. Until we see a globalization that prioritizes the creation of employment and the reduction of poverty, the whole concept is going to remain dogged by controversy and division. It is, of course, right to remember that unemployment and poverty were around long before we discovered the word globalization, but competitive markets or financial stability are, at best, means and not ends. The end is surely decent work for all because that is the surest route out of poverty and an anchor for the family security that is essential to peaceful communities.

Minister El Amawy of Egypt spoke for many when he said, “we look forward to the translation of the results of the programme developed by the [Global Employment] Forum from the level of ideas to that of deeds ... [with] the highest priority to creating jobs and alleviating poverty”. Many delegates urged the ILO to press on with the elaboration of the Global Employment Agenda, calling for both increased support to the social partners at national level and a stronger influence for the ILO in the development strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions. Minister Fillon of France underlined this saying “We must prevail upon the international institutions concerned to progress towards better governance in favour of employment. France will do its utmost to ensure that this Global Employment Agenda serves as a reference document for the international community”.

I have received and understood this message.

But let us not fool ourselves; we also need an enabling macroeconomic environment that actively pursues the goal of decent work and job creation. We need active market policies whose objective is to generate more opportunities for productive and sustainable work. This is probably the biggest failure of the present form of globalization – we have already seen that passive, trickle-down policies have not reduced poverty and have expanded the informal economy. This is a key issue in the dialogue between governments and the Bretton Woods institutions. In this connection, many of you requested, in our bilateral meetings, that we assist you in your discussions with the International Monetary Fund. You made it a point to indicate that pursuing the Decent Work Agenda in your dialogues with the Bretton Woods institutions was a positive way to ensure that the need for sound macroeconomic management responded to national development objectives. Almost every speaker referred to the fact that more and better jobs was a foundation for long-lasting social and political stability.

The Decent Work Agenda is a development tool and we must continue to research and test it to make it a relevant framework for constructive dialogue with our partners in the multilateral system on meeting the Millennium Development Goals. If governments want the ILO to be a regular participant in high-level policy-making they can make it happen. For our part, we will deepen our analysis of the ways in which the four pillars of decent work contribute to productivity growth, improved economic performance and poverty reduction in different country circumstances, as called for by a number of speakers

including Mr. Khan, the Workers' delegate of Bangladesh. Demonstrating that connection convincingly is a key to further work on the Global Employment Agenda.

5. The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories

My Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories was discussed by nearly all speakers, demonstrating the depth of concern across the world for the families living through the nightmare of the current conflict. Some felt that the choice of terms used in the Report betrayed a bias, or that in describing suffering we did not explain its causes. The large majority of voices, however, supported its objectivity and its conclusions. The need for assistance to stimulate employment by rebuilding the infrastructure of the Palestinian economy and society, and the potential value of social dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian social partners, were strongly endorsed. Many speakers urged us to investigate, without delay, the scope for a Palestinian fund for employment and social protection. I shall begin this work by allocating ILO resources.

The ILO has, on the basis of a long engagement with the social partners, built a platform of trust that enables it to act in a defined area that is nevertheless of great significance on the road to an enduring peace. The next few months could be critical. We will move with urgency and endeavour to make a contribution to easing the humanitarian crisis in the occupied Arab territories and to the reconstruction of a social foundation for peace.

6. Conclusions

We will be guided in the years ahead by the resolution adopted at this Conference that encourages us all to renew our efforts to strengthen tripartism and social dialogue at home and here at the ILO across the range of all our activities. You may recall that, in my first speech to the Conference three years ago, I called for a cohesive and creative tripartism capable of the leadership and innovation needed to make social dialogue a normal practice in modern societies. The resolution recognizes the value of dialogue with other civil society organizations that share our values, both at national and at international levels. At a time when many international organizations are finding international consensus difficult to find, the resolution shows that the ILO has the potential will to move forward and to deepen our commitment to tripartism.

So, I believe you can leave Geneva satisfied with a job well done. The real test of our work is in your countries. Social dialogue and tripartism get their life from the interactions of governments, unions and employers in the national setting. Our job at the ILO is to help create conditions for you to do your work. The better the dialogue in each member country, the stronger the ILO's voice internationally. The influence of the ILO and of national social dialogue are closely linked. The tighter those links are, the stronger we will be in the struggle for social justice and peace.
