



Provisional Record

Ninety-first Session, Geneva, 2003

Sixteenth sitting

Saturday, 14 June 2003, 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wojcik

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

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

Original Arabic: Ms. ZAHY (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Morocco*) — May I start by congratulating the President on his election and also the Director-General of the ILO on his re-election, indications of the confidence we have in their abilities and leadership.

We are gathered here, as workers, in the spirit of optimism. We are trying to have confidence in the future, in spite of the violations of the legitimacy of the United Nations with resolutions that have not been upheld and respected. These violations have not only affected the legitimacy of the United Nations itself, but also that of its specialized agencies.

We, as workers, cannot allow the workers of the world to remain on the sidelines when it comes to taking decisions that concern them, especially in the international organizations that have created today's world and are creating tomorrow's world — the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. Workers have always suffered from the catastrophic results of structural adjustment policies that affect society as a whole: for instance, the liberalization of prices of commodities; the retreat or abdication of the State from social services like housing, education and health; privatization; and the easing of restrictions on trade. All this has led to a huge number of people becoming even poorer, and to that sad litany we have to add servicing of the external debt.

It is quite unacceptable that poverty should be seen as the fate of certain groups in society. It is the result of specific policies, which have been concocted in the laboratories of those international organizations that I have just named. The poverty we are looking at is the result of their policies — policies that prevent our governments from being able to answer our claims in any kind of positive way. The situation is perfectly clear.

Globalization policies have led to the destruction of the socio-economic structures that have, in the past, provided a certain balance in our societies. Humanity as a whole is suffering the negative effects of neo-liberal globalization policies that have varying effects at different times. In fact we have seen that the gap is getting wider and wider between states, regions, levels of society, men and women. We cannot expect

the market economy to solve all our problems; it is the terror economy because there is always a winner and a loser. We want some kind of regulation in our markets to make sure that this huge gap does not get even wider — either within countries or between countries, at the international level.

Besides all the things of which I have already spoken, there are other similar policies of domination under the auspices of the United States and in the world, either directly or through third parties. The occupation of Iraq and the destruction of its economic infrastructure as a result of an iniquitous war has led to the destruction of the State. It has led to more and more poor people in Iraq. More and more of those who used to work for the State are being sacked. Here and now, we call for the immediate withdrawal of American and British forces and the forces of the other countries and those under the auspices of the United Nations so that there is an end to this domination in order to allow the establishment of a free Iraqi State in true democratic fashion.

As for my country, in spite of the many difficulties that we have had to face, not least economic ones, and in spite of the fact that there is more and more poverty in the country, we fully support His Majesty, King Mohammed VI, in his struggle to combat poverty by attacking its causes. This fight will lead sooner or later to positive results. Our efforts are unceasing to regulate the relations between the social parties. Thus, following the agreements of 1 August 1996 and 23 April 2000, we have been able to move forward to negotiations and, on 30 April 2003, an agreement was signed between the social partners. This agreement has laid down the guidelines for several areas in the world of work.

Finally, we must be able to take urgent steps, and we ask that measures be adopted, to reduce the number of poor people. To do this, first and foremost, we have to cancel the external debts of the Third World and allow the money which is thereby saved to go into anti-poverty campaigns and social campaigns. Second, we must recognize the right of all people, including workers, to move around freely just as goods and capital do. Third, we must create international social networks and international social protection to allow people to live in dignity, and to protect them from all new forms of exclusion and slavery.

Humanity is a rich and inventive species. What we lack is a fair distribution of those riches in order for all to be able to live in dignity.

Mr. VAN VUUREN (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, South Africa*) — As a representative of the employers of South Africa and as a proud

South African, I wish to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference for what is fast heading to be another successful session of the International Labour Conference.

It has been an extra special session of the Conference for us, with the visit of our President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki. The South African employers associate themselves with the input that was made by our President, and particularly with his remarks on the poverty and hardship currently being experienced on the African continent.

South Africa has come through some difficult years post-apartheid, but, looking back, will regard them as successful years, especially in the field of transformation. In the same breath, we recognize that there is still much work that has to be done before we can speak of a normalized society.

We wish to acknowledge the important role that the ILO has played in the establishment and enhancement of tripartism in South Africa. The principle of tripartism is near and dear to the hearts of all South Africans as it is the application thereof that has brought about a miracle in our country — one that is oft spoken of throughout the world. Tripartism is being expanded within the African region and we are excited at being able to play an active role in the enhancement thereof.

One of the biggest challenges facing South Africa is the poverty of many of its people. This poverty is exacerbated by the huge disparities that exist as a result of past practices. In this regard, President Mbeki convened a tripartite Growth and Development Summit (GDS), which was held on 7 June 2003. Important community constituents were also invited to participate in the summit. At this summit, which has been hailed as a great success, a number of themes, with accompanying action plans, were agreed upon.

Following extensive discussions, the GDS adopted the following themes: more jobs, better jobs, decent work for all; addressing the investment challenge; advancing equity, developing skills, creating economic opportunities for all and extending services; and, local government action.

At the GDS, the social partners reaffirmed their commitment to social dialogue and working together to address the economic and development challenges facing our country.

They also committed themselves to a common vision for promoting rising levels of growth, investment, job creation and people-centred development.

South Africa has experienced a persistent structural and unemployment problem and, with it, household poverty and vulnerability. The social partners seek to promote sustainable jobs, more jobs and better jobs — in short, decent work for all. The constituencies have agreed that a range of immediate interventions are required and have reached agreement on the following initiatives: public investment, expanded public works programmes, sector partnerships and strategies, local procurement, small enterprise promotion, support for cooperatives and jobs impact and monitoring.

We recognize that the aggregate levels of fixed direct investment are a crucial driver of growth and that the current levels in our country are insufficient to achieve the desired growth and employment rates. Investment in productive assets and services, especially in labour-absorbing sectors, and investment in the social and economic infrastructure remain at levels well below what our society needs. Savings are also at

levels that will not allow the necessary level of investment to be achieved without relying on foreign sources of capital. It was therefore agreed at the GDS to find ways to increase the levels of domestic savings and investment.

Notwithstanding all of the important initiatives that countries embark upon, nothing can be more important than adequately addressing human resources development. It is in this area that proactive initiatives will lead to countries and their people becoming more self-sufficient and, in doing so, eradicating, inter alia, poverty. Inadequate attention is currently being given to human resources training and development. This leads to more and more reactive initiatives having to be embarked upon.

HIV/AIDS initiatives are finally receiving coordinated and centrally driven attention in South Africa. It will take much time, coordinated effort and resources to control and overcome this endemic. Tripartite discussions at NEDLAC, our tripartite body, have been under way for some time, and I am pleased to announce that a national framework agreement is soon to be signed and undertaken.

The role of the ILO and its staff is extremely important in assisting South Africa to achieve its tripartite initiatives. We congratulate the ILO and its staff on the work that has been done within South Africa and the initiatives that have been embarked upon.

Ms. BAKOKO BAKORU (*Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda*) — Permit me, first of all, to congratulate Mr. Wamalwa upon his deserved election as President and the Officers of the Conference. I have no doubt that they will successfully complete their tasks and come up with implementable conclusions. I also wish to congratulate and commend the Director-General for his revealing and thoughtful Report, *Working out of poverty*.

This Report draws our attention to the major challenge before us today, namely poverty. Poverty is not a new phenomenon; the ILO has dealt with it before. We need to deal with it now with the same spirit and vigour as in the Declaration of Philadelphia: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." This statement is as true today as it was when it was made in 1944. I want to urge the ILO community to sustain its focus and translate this into action with renewed impetus and harmony.

My Government has been tackling this problem for nearly two decades. We have implemented macroeconomic reforms since 1987, aimed at achieving economic growth of at least 7 per cent per annum, and thus reducing mass poverty. The agenda was macroeconomic stability, domestic liberalization, privatization and removal of barriers to trade and investment. This was strategic. We needed a conducive environment to achieve our goal, and that is the transformation of our people from the pre-industrial peasantry of today into an industrialized society. Therefore, my Government had to direct investment towards those areas that promote the evolution and productivity of human capital.

We are now assured of our footing as we move towards that goal. The implementation of the reforms we initiated has already reversed the negative economic growth trends that characterized our economy in the 1970s and early 1980s. We are aware of the fact that, despite the renewed economic growth, unem-

ployment and poverty are still major challenges that continue to confront us. As of now, 35 per cent of the population is living in poverty — that is about 8.6 million Ugandans — and they suffer the ravages of an unacceptable level of deprivation.

Our target is to reduce this extreme poverty to less than 10 per cent before the year 2017, which is in about 14 years' time. The task is huge, but the groundwork has already started. We need every worker to give his or her best in productivity. This means, therefore, that the employer should provide the necessary working environment. The principle is that every person must be treated with dignity and that work must be dignified.

Productivity is a challenge, because the majority of our population is poor, destitute, with no work, idle and jobless. The economy cannot generate enough jobs. Poverty, destitution and unemployment are closely related. Lack of skills and access to resources like land and credit worsen the situation. Therefore, employment is the only channel and exit out of poverty for this group, especially women and young people.

Uganda's population is 25 million, and the active labour force is estimated at 10 million. Eighty-eight per cent live in rural areas. A recent survey by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in 2002 on business enterprises indicated that more than half of the active population is not economically active. People need jobs, but job creation is not commensurate to job demand. We therefore need to review our efforts and develop new ideas so that we can efficiently meet the social and development challenges of our economic situation. This is the challenge in the Director-General's Report.

The two main causes of poverty in Uganda are the increased population growth rate and HIV/AIDS. The 2002 census puts our annual population growth rate at 3.4 per cent. While the incidence of HIV/AIDS has been reduced from 30 per cent to 6 per cent, its effects over the two decades has retarded our growth and development. It has tied down available national and household income to the care of the sick, switched off household earning and generated large numbers of orphans. Ten per cent of our population is orphaned, and that is about 2.5 million children, and these children are the main source of child labour and street children.

Finally, for Uganda to be able to work out of poverty, these two factors require to be addressed with the seriousness they deserve. I want to urge the Director-General to do more on these two factors, especially HIV/AIDS at the workplace.

Persistent instability in the Great Lakes region depletes further our meagre resources. Within those prevailing factors, we must keep human resource development and protection central in our minds. Human resource development and deployment is crucial in working out of poverty. If people do not produce at their maximum potential output, we cannot transform the economy. Productivity can only be as good as the labour deployed. Consequently, the development of a skilled and healthy human resource base must follow if we are to attain the competitive edge necessary for sustained economic growth in the globalized economy. My Ministry has also developed a Social Development Sector Investment Plan, to map the way forward.

In conclusion, our overarching commitment is to continue to fight poverty with renewed strength. Pov-

erty restricts the potential of our society. It denies our poor the knowledge, skills, technology, experience, attitudes and judgement, with which they can improve their productivity and achieve higher growth. It erodes their self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, our poor have little opportunity to make their voices heard. Poverty makes them powerless and helpless in the face of disasters and other natural calamities. It is for this reason that we must make strong efforts to adjust our programmes and develop new ones with a view to addressing this situation.

We must get out of poverty. The sheer scale of issues and problems it poses is very intimidating, but if we are united, genuine and committed, no problem will defeat us; not even poverty. I call upon the Director-General to step harder on the accelerator.

Original Portuguese: Mr. VAZ D'ALMEIDA (*Minister for Labour, Employment and Solidarity, Sao Tome and Principe*) — Allow me to express, on behalf of my delegation and in my own name, my warmest congratulations to the President upon his election as President of the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference. In the certainty that he will use all his wisdom, energy and experience to preside over this Conference, we wish him every success in his difficult task.

It is a pleasure for me, in my capacity as Minister of Labour, Employment and Solidarity of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, to congratulate Mr. Juan Somavia on his re-appointment as Director-General of the ILO and thank him for the detailed Report he has presented to this Conference concerning decent work, the reduction of poverty and the promotion of development.

The concerns expressed in the Report respond well to suggestions for an analysis centred mainly on the least favoured social strata. In the case of Sao Tome and Principe, poverty has greatly increased since the start of the 1980s and 53.8 per cent of the population now live below the poverty line. My country has lived through a very severe drought, which was linked, of course, to a drop in productivity. Social indicators which had significantly improved in the first few years after independence decreased throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

From the point of view of health, we had one doctor for every 2,000 inhabitants and one nurse for every 400 patients. Life expectancy had dropped from 67 to 64 years of age by 1995.

According to studies, at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s by the UNDP, poverty greatly increased during the 1990s. The study concerning the profile of poverty in Sao Tome and Principe from November 2000 to February 2001, carried out with the support of the ILO and financed by the UNDP and the African Development Bank, published in May 2001, gave us some extremely important information about the characteristics of poverty in my country, despite some limitations. The study confirmed the fact that the rural exodus has increased and that more people are moving to the cities.

Above and beyond the fact that 53.8 per cent of the people are poor, the study also showed that poverty affects a greater proportion of families headed by women (55.7 per cent) than of those headed by men (53 per cent). Extreme poverty affects 15.1 per cent of the population.

The average size of family has also changed in inverse proportion to the level of income, with 6.43 people in extremely poor families but only 3.78 people in families above the poverty line. This situation, haunted by the spectre of poverty and underdevelopment, shows that there is a very major challenge facing any government in Sao Tome and Principe. There is only one approach to this challenge: we must look with wisdom, firmness and commitment for appropriate solutions leading to positive future evolution, both for the economy of the country and for the country as a whole. Good macroeconomic development will allow the country to attain its objectives under the World Bank's initiative for heavily indebted poor countries, leading to the cancellation of more than 90 per cent of our debt, valued at \$290.5 million.

Sao Tome and Principe has, at the beginning of this new century and millennium, found itself in an unprecedentedly difficult economic, financial, social and cultural situation. In spite of having adopted specific macroeconomics corrective measures and structural adjustment programmes, and having received international support, the country has not been able to reach the stage of sustainable and durable development nor guarantee the basic necessary conditions to provide our citizens with a decent quality of life. Because of these negative factors, we have had to postpone paying our dues to international organizations, especially to the ILO. Now, in order to attempt to solve this problem, our Government, in a clear indication of its wish to meet its commitment to the Organization, is proposing a new programme allowing for payment of outstanding dues, in yearly instalments together with annual dues starting this year.

The combination of globalization and the possibility of exploiting oil in Sao Tome and Principe means that the Government represent needs to create an atmosphere conducive to social dialogue in order to build and, consequently, promote development.

We have taken an important step by setting up a National Council for Social Consultations. The interest shown by social partners, i.e. the Government, workers and employers in meetings confirms that we are on the right track. I must also mention the role played by these social partners in political, economic and social discussions and consultations held periodically in the country. An excellent example of this was the seminar held in Sao Tome on 1 and 2 March 2003 on "Training in attitudes and skills for social dialogue, negotiation and consultation," sponsored by the ILO, which showed ever more clearly the goodwill and understanding among the social partners.

I cannot close without mentioning here from this podium the difficulties my Ministry has had in applying articles 19 and 22 of the Constitution of the ILO, that is to say, sending in the reports to the ILO concerning Conventions which have been ratified and those that have not been ratified yet. In the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, 12 Conventions have already been ratified, but we have had technical difficulties and lack of trained personnel in order to implement these Conventions, de facto, so we have requested assistance from the ILO. However, we are establishing the conditions for ratification of further conventions which are adapted to our legislation including the four remaining core Conventions not already ratified, the Workers Representative Convention, 1971 (No. 135), the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), Collective

Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), which were the subject of an ILO-sponsored seminar held in Sao Tome in May.

In conclusion, we should like to thank everyone for the time given us to present this report and we wish all success to the 91st Session of the Conference.

Mr. LEATHER (*representative, Public Services International*) — Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Public Services International (PSI) worldwide.

We would like to congratulate the Director-General for his well-developed Report, *Working out of poverty*, in particular the section dealing with improving the performance of public services and formal sector enterprises. Here he makes reference to the problems faced by public sector workers in developing countries, recognizing that their pay and conditions have deteriorated badly over several years in association with structural adjustment and the debt crisis. This is an issue that PSI has brought to the attention of the Conference on several occasions. How can you expect public sector workers to deliver services for the poor if they have to spend an increasing amount of their time fighting poverty in their own lives? They would like to believe in the concept of working out of poverty, however, their experience is more related to working into poverty. At the same time, they are blamed for not delivering adequate services. They cannot win.

After years of low pay or no pay or being told that they are inefficient, those that can leave for another job do just that. It is often the more talented that leave, at huge cost to the public service that trained them and needs them. This brain drain is a colossal waste of resources for countries that can ill afford to waste anything.

This is not just a problem for the so-called developing countries, as public sector workers in many parts of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are being treated just as badly. For example, wages for health workers in Ukraine are US\$44 per month when the recognized minimum subsistence is \$70 per month. This is a country where 1,000 health workers contracted TB in carrying out their duties for patients in 2002.

A top priority for PSI is our campaign to promote quality public services. As market solutions have failed to produce the promised benefits for the world's poor, many people now understand that it is governments that can make a critical difference in providing essential services to their communities. The PSI sees these services as a responsibility to the present and an investment in the future. The provision of safe, clean water, education for all children and health and welfare services that are accessible and effective — these are the means for communities to move from poverty and injustice to participation and prosperity. The PSI is committed to promoting debate and action directed at ensuring that services to communities are accessible, effective and of high quality. We believe that including service users and workers in the design and delivery of services to the public is an essential first step to improving quality. They have much to offer in terms of experience. Our quality public service campaign will also have gender equality as a

central feature. This will include analysing how women fill the gaps when public services are lost, showing the kinds of conditions under which many women work in the public sector, and identifying examples of how public services can help give women independence and support in their dual roles. This will link to existing campaigns to get governments to ratify the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), where we are asking for national indicators on gender differences in pay.

In many countries, public services are run down and under-resourced. Rather than the simplistic response of privatization usually advocated by the international financial institutions, PSI and its affiliates will campaign to reform and rebuild services, adopting a variety of approaches appropriate to local needs. One interesting new approach promoted by PSI is the use of public-public partnerships. Pioneered in the water sector, the partnering of a successful public provider with a struggling public entity enables the development of a sound financial base, expertise and staff skills, and investment in infrastructure. Many governments need to gain sufficient strength to believe that they are in control of their destiny rather than being dependent on outside experts.

We call on the ILO to actively support the concept of quality public services as a way of eradicating poverty through decent work and providing services to the dispossessed.

While welcoming the Report on the elimination of discrimination, PSI regrets the lack of reference to discrimination against trade union members, which includes harassment and violence in some cases. We welcome the section on pay equity and proposals for guidelines for governments, and recommend further capacity building for social partners and a tripartite approach to inequality in pay and employment.

For a long time now we have raised concern about the rights of international civil servants. Why should they be expected to work without the rights enjoyed by the same workers at a national level? It is in the hands of member States to make sure that their nationals have basic rights when they work for an international organization.

The PSI is seriously concerned about the labour reforms proposed by the Government of Chile in relation to the right to bargain collectively for municipal workers. Not only would the reforms undermine national negotiations but they would replace collective bargaining rights with non-binding consultations. We fully support the rights of municipal workers to bargain collectively. Our organization has formally supported the complaint presented by its affiliate in Chile in the municipal sector, ASEMUCH, to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations earlier in June this year. We will continue to follow the developments in Chile.

The PSI notes with deep concern the persistent and serious violation of human rights in Colombia, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. We have called upon the Government of Colombia to enforce the existing legal provisions related to the Government's ratification of ILO Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151). We are convinced that given the continuing gravity of the situation in Colombia, and in order to reaffirm the legitimacy and effectiveness of the international community in the eyes of Colombian

workers, it is absolutely vital that the Conference, without further delay, agrees to establish a Commission of Inquiry or other similar mechanism.

Finally, we are still concerned about the situation in South Korea where the Government Employees' Union is being denied the basic rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, despite Government commitments to rectify the situation.

Original Spanish: Mr. HALKIN (Employers' delegate, Mexico) — On behalf of the Mexican employers I would like to congratulate the President and the Director-General on their elections.

The Director-General's Report concerns the question of *Working out of poverty*, but we are also looking at equality in the issue of equality in the workplace, a very valid subject but one that is extremely intricate and poses many difficult problems.

Concerning equality in the workplace, this is not only a question of gender, nor is it only a question of skin colour or race. It is not simply a question of religion or nationality. It is a question which is fundamentally linked to education.

Concerning the issue of working out of poverty, we believe that this in fact will come about through the generation of employment and self-employment, because poverty is found in those areas where people have no opportunity to earn a wage. It is impossible to analyse this issue in a few minutes, but I can state that discrimination is an element which contributes to poverty and generates unemployment.

The Mexican employers fully agree that it is indispensable to eliminate discrimination in the world of work, so that all human beings can develop their skills and aptitudes fully and can also develop their own vocational skills and reap the rewards.

In Mexico, we, the employers, have supported reforms to labour legislation in order to improve protection for women, combat sexual harassment and reaffirm the established constitutional principle in Mexico that outlaws any form of discrimination. We know that this legislative reform will promote social change and contribute to a solution to this problem.

Nevertheless, certain conditions in our country which are culture-sensitive, are perhaps similar to those in other countries. This requires a deeper analysis of discrimination and its impact on employment and poverty. In point of fact, for women, education and our very male-oriented tradition together generate a problem of attitude, which begins in the family. A father may demand that his wife do certain jobs while forbidding her to do others. This gives rise to a whole set of social attitudes which cannot be changed by legislation alone, but requires education. Fortunately, in Mexico we see more and more women entering the workplace at various levels of employment, and in general we can say that, especially in the urban areas, gender-based discrimination diminishes every year. This cannot be said of the rural areas, where the process is clearly much slower.

Since reality is a better motor of change than law, in Mexico we are beginning to experience a shortage of men as a result of migration. This means that it is becoming more acceptable for women to move into the traditional male preserves in the workplace, and this seems to be solving the gender issue, but solving it triggers another one which is much worse. This is the racial discrimination against Mexican migrants in

the countries where they work. For this reason, the migration issue cannot be ignored.

Another problem area stems from certain cultural attitudes, especially among the indigenous cultures. Here, young people are often not allowed to become integrated into the prevailing national culture or to speak its language. We understand that the indigenous populations must keep their own traditions but we cannot tolerate a situation in which, on the pretext of maintaining a certain identity, young people of both genders are denied access to national education and training schemes. While some people claim that the lack of opportunities for the indigenous population is due to racial discrimination, its real cause is the lack of appropriate education for today's world of work.

Therefore, we believe that although the question of equality in the workplace is fundamental, if we are to achieve greater justice and equity in national societies, at the same time, an objective analysis is required. We must see what the real causes of this inequality are, so that the governments and peoples represented here will take the appropriate measures to solve this problem. Lack of objectivity in this area may mean that potentially viable solutions are not applied effectively to solve the problem of discrimination.

We hope that we will be able to find just and effective answers to these problems in the world of work.

Original Arabic: Mr. ALTAHI (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) — I am pleased to join previous speakers in congratulating the President on his election and on the trust shown in him by the Conference. In fact, we are also congratulating ourselves because, by choosing him the Conference has chosen someone from the African countries. We are quite certain that, thanks to his wisdom and your skill, our Conference will be a success.

On behalf of our Confederation of Trade Unions, I would also like to commend Mr. Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, for the efforts he is making and to congratulate him on his re-election to a second term. I would like to thank him for his Report, which deals with a number of issues of great importance to the social partners and is entitled *Working out of poverty*. I shall also refer to the Global Report, *Time for equality at work*.

The Report deals with the phenomenon of poverty and its dangers and how it can be eradicated on both the national and international levels. This dangerous phenomenon, which threatens social peace in a number of countries, was also considered by the Copenhagen Social Summit in 1995. The Summit called for serious action to eradicate this poverty. The Report refers to the links between poverty, on the one hand, and unemployment and social exclusion, on the other. It considers that the elimination of poverty is a global objective, and that the international community must make a commitment to finding effective solutions. I believe the ILO has an important role to play in this area.

Globalization and the hegemonic policies exercised by some strong powers over the weaker developing ones, in addition to mismanagement and inequality, are the main causes of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. We agree with the points made by the Director-General in his Report on the elements to be included in any strategy for combating poverty: building skills, investing in employment and communities,

promoting enterprise, promoting development by encouraging cooperatives, fighting discrimination, ensuring better incomes and basic social security, and providing safe and decent work in order to build a new fairer international economic order.

The other Report, *Time for equality at work*, also refers to the problem of discrimination at work and the need to put into effect the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We agree with all of the points made in the Report, and think discrimination is seen at its worst in the foreign occupation under which the Palestinians and the Iraqis are now living. We call for an immediate end to this foreign occupation.

In previous ILO Conferences, we have referred to the fact that the ILO can play a bigger role in the world if it studies the experiences of different societies in order to seek solutions to the problems facing workers. We called on the ILO to study our experience in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to go beyond defending some of the marginal rights of workers and tackle more fundamental issues to put an end to exploitation and make partners in production, rather than mere wage earners, and put an end to unfair social rules.

The main objectives of the workers' struggle is to liberate them and to make them partners, so that the fruit of their labour does not go to those who exploit them.

We are certain that our experience could contribute much to the search for solutions to some of the problems like poverty, unemployment and social injustice.

The world in recent months has witnessed a number of serious challenges to the authority of the international community. Certain countries, like United States and the United Kingdom, are trying to impose their will on the Iraqi people, in order to exercise control over its oil reserves, to dominate the region and to perpetuate the occupation of Palestine. We, of course, condemn terrorism, and we support the efforts made by the international community to combat it in accordance with international resolutions. We all have to respect the authority of the international community and resolutions passed by the United Nations. We oppose the war and the occupation of Iraq and the Middle East, and we hope that we can work together to put an end to this occupation as soon as possible, so that Iraq can again be an independent country, able to use its own resources without answering to occupying powers.

I would also like to express our solidarity with the Palestinian workers, and we hope that they will be able to achieve their independent state with Al Quds as its capital.

Original French: Mr. MONGO (*Workers' delegate, Congo*) — I would like to start by conveying to all of you on behalf of the workers of the Congo, Brazzaville and on behalf of our workers' delegation, our warmest and most heartfelt greetings, and our feelings of friendship and solidarity with the workers throughout the world who are suffering, as we are, the adverse effects of the policies of multinational and transnational corporations.

As the world moves towards social progress and seeks to establish good governance for our societies, it is experiencing far-reaching social and political change, underpinned by the democratization of

nations. The Congo is one of the links in this chain. Far from standing aside from the process, we too are experiencing these changes.

At the Eighth Ordinary Congress of Trade Unions Confederation of Congo (CSC) in September 1989, delegates voted unanimously for the independence of the trade union movement, after 25 years of one-party rule and a single-union system. At the national conference, a pluralist system of political parties and trade unions was adopted, and a new political landscape created, so as to guarantee a better expression of the different political and social voices in the world of work.

After all this, the Congo unfortunately lived through a period of civil conflict which tore apart the economic and social fabric of our society and put a stop to the democratic processes which had been started. Nevertheless, with our return to a genuine peace which is a prerequisite for progress, our wish, and that of the Congo trade union movement represented by the two most representative unions, is to pursue and develop the process that has been started and to create sound foundations for a pluralist democracy in the world of work. Every year since 1999, we have had staff elections, and the two main central trade union associations, the CSC and the CSTC, have been recognized as the most representative of the country's ten trade union associations.

To promote basic rights of workers is one of the most important missions of the ILO. The commitment by Heads of State and Government at the Copenhagen Summit in 1995 to promote respect for workers' basic rights with a view to improving their quality of work and employment has of course made an enormous contribution to the work of this Organization. However, much remains to be done, given that the situation in the field has not changed in the developing countries, especially in those where there has been armed conflict.

The social and economic crisis of recent years, aggravated by the armed conflict, has led to the deterioration in the human development situation in the Congo. We now have 70 per cent of the population living in poverty, and it is particularly women, the young and those who live in the rural areas and on the edges of cities, who are worst affected. HIV/AIDS is also advancing at an alarming rate in the towns; in 1996, 7.8 per cent of the population were affected, but since 2001, the figure has grown to something like 10 to 12 per cent because of the armed conflicts.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic and malaria look as though they could become a brake on our efforts to reconstruct our country's economy. Another obstacle to development in the Congo is the burden of external debt to bilateral and multilateral partners, debt which, we would like to state once again, should be cancelled.

With regard to assistance, we plan, with the trade unions, during the period 2003-05, to implement some of the ILO's strategic objectives: to promote the fundamental principles and rights at work, to increase opportunities for men and for women to have decent work with a decent wage, to enhance and increase the cover and effectiveness of social protection for all employed workers, and to enhance tripartite social dialogue in a spirit of partnership.

As far as the fundamental rights are concerned, Congo has ratified 24 ILO Conventions, of which 20 are now in force, and these include the eight core

Conventions. Tripartite consultation mechanisms for collective bargaining and dispute settlement, both at the collective and individual level, also exist in our country, but in practice much remains to be done to make them more effective, given the frequent interference by the public authorities. That is why we continue to struggle for free negotiation, good governance and a fair distribution of national income.

The economic situation in the Congo is still very much dependent on our natural resources, particularly timber and oil. The oil sector accounts for 67 per cent of our GDP and 95 per cent of our exports. Agriculture contributes only 6 per cent to GDP, although 40 per cent of the population works in agriculture. Some 60 per cent of our territory is forested, in a country where the total population has been 3.1 million since 2001.

The international trade union movement is a very strong force within civil society and in economic policy in the contemporary world. That is why, as we set out into the twenty-first century, trade unions have a very important part to play; only they can oppose the powerful multinational corporations and other who seek to consolidate their global economic hegemony at the expense of the weak. The trade union movement is therefore facing a great challenge — the challenge to become an instrument capable of leading the working class and uniting it around a minimum platform for social justice based on demands to reverse the marginalization of workers and of the poor.

I could not end my statement without saying a few words about the prospects for the countries of Africa and Europe, America and Asia. I think it is important to continue to consolidate trade union forces both in the industrialized and in the developing and poor countries. The trade unions in industrialized countries ought to be considering how they can reinforce solidarity and indeed real cooperation with trade unions in poorer countries, and not by email, the Internet or sophisticated telephone systems, because the poorer countries simply do not have such things. So the rich countries should find other ways to help.

Original Arabic: Mr. TRABELSI (Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Tunisia) — Allow me first of all to congratulate the President of the Conference upon his election. This was a great honour for the African continent and we wish him every success in his work.

I should also like to thank and congratulate the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia for his interesting and detailed Report, *Working out of poverty*. This Report not only gives us a better understanding of the gravity of poverty, but it also gives cause for some optimism in terms of the prospects of finding a solution to this problem. It also reaffirms the determination to continue the fight against poverty and underlines the links between poverty, unemployment and labour issues.

At the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, which was chaired by Mr. Somavia himself, the link between poverty, unemployment and social exclusion was repeatedly reaffirmed, as was the idea that, without a poverty reduction strategy, we will never be able to diminish social injustice. But, since the Copenhagen Summit, the differences between countries and within societies have increased and social exclusion, marginalization,

and precarious forms of work have become more frequent phenomena. This endangers social peace and national and international peace. Such phenomena back up our conviction that Decent Work is the best way of eliminating poverty, marginalization and social exclusion. They also allow us to see the link between the fight against poverty, on the one hand, and gender equality, the establishment of a just society, the fight against epidemics and the construction of fairer international relations, on the other.

Because poverty is a global phenomena, it requires international solutions, through the coordination of international efforts at the level of civil society and the international organizations, in order to draw up appropriate strategies at the national and international level.

At the national level, we need policies that provide for the participation of all the forces of society, especially the trade unions, in order to fight against unemployment, to open up job opportunities to young people, to implement international labour standards and eliminate social differences.

By way of an example, the Tunisian Confederation of Labour is now bargaining hard with the other social partners in Tunisia. These negotiations have led to agreements in the public and private sectors and in the civil service, in order to improve salaries, this year and over the next two years, and improve the working conditions of all workers. These results, achieved in spite of the difficult international conditions and very difficult local economic situation — which was the result of four years' of drought and a fall in revenues from tourism, were the results of tripartite dialogue and collaboration between the Government and the Social partners. They also show that although an increase in the growth rate and enhanced production are important, what is needed is a fairer distribution of income.

At the international level, something must be done to diminish the gap between the North and the South, to facilitate technology transfer and find solutions to the problem of international debt so as to establish a real international partnership for development. We welcome in this regard the United Nations' decision to approve the proposal of the Tunisian President that an International Fund for Solidarity be set up. We also believe that the solution proposed by the Brazilian President, Lula Da Silva, of using some of the interest on the debt, or the revenues of a tax on the arms trade, to provide that fund with the necessary resources for the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Peace in the world is an essential condition for the elimination of poverty, because peace offers considerable material and human resources that can be invested in development rather than wasted in wars or attempts at hegemony.

The role of the ILO is extremely important for the promotion of dialogue, peace and cooperation. The Organization has proved by its various interventions that it could play this role and we hope that it will step up its efforts in order to allow us to live in a world without war, a free world; a world that no longer knows violence, exclusion, marginalization, or misery.

Original Spanish: Mr. ATANASOF (representative, Latin American Union of Municipal Workers) — First and foremost let me congratulate the Director-General for his Report to the 91st Session of the ILC. In this Report, he shows that the ILO's efforts to

promote, through tripartism and social dialogue, international labour standards and employment policies, to overcome poverty and unemployment, are bearing fruit.

Until a few days ago, I was in fact head of the Ministerial Cabinet of my country, Argentina, in the Government which faced the most serious crisis in our history, and I was in a position to appreciate that the ILO was the first international body to show solidarity with Argentina's situation, to offer us assistance and to implement one of the Organization's most important programmes as a contribution to help us to get through this difficult time. I would like to thank the ILO and the Director-General both personally and on behalf of the Government of which I was a part and the people of Argentina, for the generous attitude of solidarity they displayed towards us.

Coincidentally, I must point out that over the last year we have seen a U-turn in the documents and agreements of the IMF and the World Bank. They now recognize that social and employment policies are part and parcel of sustainable development. This has been and still is the key idea of the ILO as regards employment and labour stability, an idea which was seriously called into question by the neo-liberalism of the 90's, which believed that economic growth would spread automatically, supposedly generating more jobs and income, although this was proved wrong. The fact that the multilateral credit institutions are changing their economic, social and labour policies should be considered a great contribution on the part of the ILO.

The Latin American Union of Municipal Workers (ULAT-MUN) comprises national workers' unions from the Latin American area and the Caribbean. It was set up in 1994 and since then has actively participated in the ILC, and in meetings and specific activities on municipal labour organized by the ILO.

I would like to outline our priorities as an Organization, in line with the conclusions reached at a joint meeting with the ILO, held last May in the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina, and attended by representatives of all the countries in Latin America.

This meeting was supported by the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities, the Organization of Ibero-American States, CINTEFOR/ILO, CIOSL/ORIT and the General Confederation of Labour of the Argentine Republic. The objective was to reflect on policies for development of the informal labour sector and the social economy at local level. Fifty per cent of urban work in the region is known to be informal, so the representatives from each country shared their experience of this subject, and we reached a basic consensus on the focus of municipal workers regarding informal work in cities. At the same time, we concentrated on vocational training which could be implemented in urban areas, and on policies to regulate work in public thoroughfares.

At the meeting, each representative described the main structural problems affecting the social, political and economic realities of their country and problems impacting directly on employment. One of the key issues in the debate was the informal economy and the need for the unions to build a real strategy to fight against informal work, based on the fight against the economic model which supports it. It was initially proposed that unions must participate actively in specifying positive standards for public policy and legislation related to the informal sector. We reached

a number of substantial conclusions, based on the following: training for informal workers, policies geared towards informal work in the urban sector, and union strategies.

Concerning training for informal workers, it was established that people who are working in the informal sector should be given skills and training in advocacy and how to set up cooperatives and associations, along with technical skills to work in the productive sector, and should participate in the planning, management and implementation of such training. At the same time, so that unionism can operate in this field, we have to educate people in trade union skills so that they, in turn, can train others.

Turning to policies related to the informal sector in cities, we looked at workers in public thoroughfares, and we agreed on the necessity of defining a specific policy within consultative groups and executive bodies in areas where this phenomenon occurs, so that it can be regulated. It was also agreed that the municipalities should ensure that the organizations representing people working in public thoroughfares are really representing the people for whom such work is their main source of family income, excluding business who use these thoroughfares to complement their normal outlets.

In relation to this point, ULAT-MUN expressed its concern about situations which had been denounced by municipal workers in some countries, e.g. Panama, where the national Government has stipulated that local authorities no longer have the right to collect the tax on the installation of public billboards, which is in fact a setback to the decentralization policies introduced in 1995. In Chile, some local authorities have begun a new wave of privatization, tertiarization and management of public spaces by giving some of them over to private activity, which the municipal workers have in fact flatly rejected by presenting a complaint against the violation of the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151). The unions must also keep a watchful eye on the emergence of new organizations for workers in this field, which may be taking the place of previously established organizations in channelling workers' participation in municipal policy. For example, this takes place in Paraguay and Chile, where a number of bodies have made use of the fact that there is a weak union culture among informal workers to disseminate their anti-union policy. ULAT-MUN has been developing its activities on the basis of the common characteristics of the socio-economic realities in Latin America. The impact of the latest generation of neo-liberal policies and adjustment has impacted directly on the precariousness of employment conditions. Unemployment was a key theme running through all the presentations. The general experience at this forum was such that we not only compared notes, as it were, on the reality in our countries, but we also had a key opportunity to establish common positions with a view to consolidating a strategy to defend the individual and collective rights of municipal workers in the region.

Original Arabic: Mr. DJEMAM (*representative, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions*) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! I should like to congratulate the President on election to preside over this session and also thank the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, for all the effort which he has put in to his Report and to all the other

documents we have been given—all of which deal with vital matters.

The subject of poverty is urgent because it affects the lives of so many people and is the source of all the inequalities, injustices and marginalization of so many people within our societies.

The gulf between the rich and poor is continuing to grow. Many efforts are being made — but not enough to tackle this problem successfully. All these ideas are set forth in resolutions but, as ever, these resolutions are not actually being implemented. This is partly due to the failure of social and political policies to show the kind of justice and responsibility that is needed. The ILO is not a financial organization; but it should be proving the type of assistance required — technical assistance, in order to re-establish a balance within our society and try to put right the negative effects of globalization.

Discrimination is always a bad thing, be it discrimination against women, children or whole nations. There are whole nations in today's world who are victims of the clash of civilizations and who are accused of terrorism. The situation must change.

What is happening today in Iraq, for instance, is a clear-cut case of discrimination against a nation in its extremity. And is contrary to all international moral precepts and legality.

Iraq is an occupied country. This Organization and the whole international community should dedicate their efforts to putting an end to this occupation. That is why a mission should be sent as soon as possible to Iraq to see what the needs of the Iraqi people are and what kind of help they require.

Further, everyone should be allowed to go back to work in Iraq with a guaranteed salary.

What is more, we need to ensure that the oil resources of Iraq are to be used by the Iraqis — and only the Iraqis.

Finally, all Iraqis must enjoy freedom of association.

The ILO should be playing a vital role in this respect, by guaranteeing the protection workers and trade union values and organizations, especially in the Arab region where trade unions are having a particularly difficult time. Arab workers are deprived of their right of association and the poor are forced to make their children work. Whole swathes of people lack international protection, social protection and health care.

At this point, I would like to stress the important role played by the Regional Office in Beirut. The ILO's Regional Office is working together with us, despite the considerable difficulties it faces; it covers a very large geographical area with very limited resources. It is very important, therefore, that account should be taken of the needs of the Arab workers in all the Arab countries and other countries. In spite of the difficulties which are being faced, the Arab trade union movement continues to grow and lends its support to the noble mission of the ILO.

It expresses its solidarity with the world trade union movement with the firm hope that it will continue to protect workers' rights and acquired rights.

Original Arabic: Mr. JRAD (*representative, Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb*) — In the Name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful! Allow me, on behalf of the trade unions of Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, known

as the Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb, to congratulate the President on his election. I am certain that, under his presidency, the Conference will be very successful.

The Report of the Director-General, *Working out of poverty*, is a very important document, since it gives us an in-depth analysis of poverty; it is rich in important information and proposals for a solution to the problem. Of merit is the fact that the Report does not carry out a socio-economic and philosophical analysis of poverty, with an evaluation of the results, but that it attempts to explain that poverty is a social problem and requires social solutions.

To find these solutions means making courageous and fair choices.

Of course, one has to remember that the poor have not chosen to be poor, and that they are rather the victims of inappropriate economic and social choices that have destroyed the social and economic fabric of the countries of the South, increased their foreign debt and destroyed their balance of trade. At the same time, with globalization, these countries have been forced to open their borders and have collapsed beneath the weight of imported goods when they could have profited from income from customs duties to fund social services such as health and education and thereby improve the lives of their citizens.

We are, unfortunately, seeing an increase in unemployment and a growing number of people are being dismissed and marginalized. The imbalance on the labour market between supply and demand has imposed tougher working conditions in favour of capital, the reduction of trade union freedoms and non-respect for international labour standards.

This situation and these conditions are deteriorating all the time, and will continue to pose a major threat for peace and international security. The establishment of a unipolar international order, and the marginalization of the international organizations, especially the United Nations, also poses a threat to coexistence and understanding between peoples. The ILO, the United Nations and the other international organizations must try to help the peoples of the world. Experience has shown that it is always the workers who pay the price of war and conflict, as the tragic situation of Iraq shows. Here, a clear international position that will end the occupations and protect Iraqi unity is needed. It is important for the Iraqi people to be able to exploit their own resources and have full sovereignty.

With regard to the trade union situation in Iraq, the ILO has a very important role to play in the reconstruction of the trade unions, with the help of the ICFTU and the Arab trade unions, in order to ensure respect for international labour standards and promote conditions that are conducive to the establishment of free and independent trade unions, without any foreign interference.

Allow me, on behalf of all of the workers of the Arab Maghreb, and especially my brothers in the Union of Algerian Workers, to thank all the countries, all the trade union organizations, all the institutions, which have shown their sympathy to the people of Algeria following the terrible earthquake which resulted in so many deaths, so many injured and homeless people. We greatly appreciated their help and solidarity. The world today needs such solidarity to promote dialogue between cultures. Through it, we will be able to create a world of peace,

freedom and justice, in which discrimination and domination have no place.

Mr. UPADHAYAYA (*Workers' delegate, Nepal*) — It is my honour and privilege to convey my own greetings and the congratulations of the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) to the President on his unanimous election to preside over this 91st Session of the International Labour Conference. In this connection, may I congratulate the Director-General and his team for the Report, *Working out of poverty*, and express sincere thanks on behalf of my own Confederation and all of the recognized National Trade Union Centres of Nepal, including the Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC), for this opportunity to address this august plenary.

At present, our country, Nepal, is passing through a crisis in national life. Our peace is endangered by ultra-left extremism and our democracy is heavily attacked and questioned by the traditional, unelected, ultra-right force. The need to ensure a peaceful working life for the working masses and to ensure uninterrupted democracy in practical life has therefore become the urgent need of the day in Nepal. Without peace, and with a prevalent threat to democracy, how could a nation dream of a decent working life? In such a situation, which has never been witnessed before, closures of enterprises and a slackening off in economic activities have become a common phenomenon. Unemployment has thus been aggravated, and hence the poverty reduction strategy has become weaker.

Our labour market is characterized by exploitative labour practices, in the form of the use of child labour, forced and bonded labour, severe discrimination against women workers, and very poor working conditions, with long working hours and extremely low wages. The non-implementation of the provisions of labour laws and weak labour administration has restricted our labour market from working in favour of the workers. The average national wage is less than US\$1 per day and the minimum wage is also below the poverty level. Entire working masses have been forced to accept, regardless of what job they have, to continue under poverty-led wage conditions, rather than move in the direction of a living wage. Thus, the unskilled workers even working in the formal sector do not get minimum wages high enough to lift them out of poverty. In such a situation, the working population in the informal economy, which equates to almost 92 per cent of the total workforce, is naturally facing extreme hardship. The issue of social protection has become the most relevant issue. Equally significant is the issue of occupational safety and health. The low level of awareness on occupational safety and health issues and the prevalence of occupational diseases, as well as a high number of accidents, are quite visible in our workplaces and in the working community. As the country is one of the least developed countries, achievements are few and adversities are innumerable.

As one of the responsible social partners in Nepal, we are continually working for sound industrial relations in the formal sector and reliable and worker-friendly employment relations in the informal sector. We are committed to creating a single voice for the working masses and are making some progress. Few living examples are with us — a high level task force composed of GEFONT and NTUC, the two largest

confederations in Nepal, is working to gain unification, slowly but with complete determination. A common platform launched by all of the recognized federations and confederations in Nepal, known as the Trade Union Committee for Gender Equality and Promotion (TUC-GEP), which is unique in character in our sub-continent, has been mainstreaming gender issues in our world of work. A process led by the ILO Office and South Asia Advisory Team (ILO/SAAT) last year identified ten common agenda items of priorities of the trade unions in Nepal, which has further narrowed down the gaps between the unions and paved the path to a rethink, for a new dimension in collaboration. Furthermore, we are proud of our unions having common positions on issues of labour law reform and of our common agreement with employers' organizations, on seven points for further discussion, aiming to address the anomalies of labour laws in order to create a conducive atmosphere in the world of work. These moves, we believe, will certainly lead our movement in the direction of single unionism and towards reducing poverty.

On this auspicious occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to decent work and ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The trade union movement in Nepal is moving ahead with hopes, commitments and endeavours for a better life for the working masses. We are grateful for the solidarity of the working class and the international community for us and expect such support to be continued in the years to come.

Mr. SILABAN (*Workers' delegate, Indonesia*) — It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of Indonesian workers at this important meeting. Let me associate myself with the previous speakers in congratulating the President on his election to preside over this 91st Session. I wish him success in his work.

I appreciate very much and welcome the Report of the Director-General, which includes many important issues regarding current situations faced by workers all over the world.

I come from a country which is still struggling to overcome huge economic problems, combined with an unstable political climate, followed by a series of economic crises, which spread through the Asian region a few years ago.

Even though we succeeded in overthrowing the Government dictator at that time, we suffered the consequences of an unexpected economic crisis and its impact on labour, where workers are still facing unjust dismissals, paid low wages, have insufficient protection and are confronted with continuous unemployment.

We hail the Government's efforts to ratify all ILO core labour standards and to carry out a serious review of labour laws, which aims to establish a good industrial relations system and decent work in the country. But we insist on the fact that the Government must implement all laws in practice, particularly on setting up the national tripartite body, which aims to

tackle massive unemployment and create a good industrial climate.

Taking into account the current situation, where there is a continuation of industrial relocation, huge foreign debt, a slow down of economic growth and other related problems, sometimes we think that it is impossible to create decent work and combat poverty. But we always hold onto our courage by knowing the endless worldwide news of workers struggling in many countries and who are killed, imprisoned or lose their jobs as a result of their willingness to present a better life for workers. We also appreciate other civil society groups which, hand in hand with trade unions, keep on protesting against in an equitable national and international income distribution patterns and globalization practices, which are incapable of preventing unemployment growth and any decline in poverty.

Structural adjustment programmes carried out by the IMF and the World Bank in Indonesia, by imposing on Indonesia a series of privatizations of public enterprises, have led to expanding massive unemployment. Likewise, cutting basic needs' subsidies and dismantling social and labour rights has become another story of contradiction of the ILO vis-à-vis the Bretton Woods institutions in tackling poverty and preserving decent work, because the ILO devotes itself to eradicating poverty but, at the same time, international financial institutions are still spreading the level of poverty in Indonesia through their policies.

My own union, the Indonesia Prosperity Trade Union (SBSI), which just conducted its fourth congress last April, passed a resolution that we will continue to associate our strength with other civil society groups to fight in reforming the IMF and the World Bank so that they also take the responsibility of creating decent jobs and do not only maintain the macroeconomic-based balance by restrictive social labour policies.

Repeating my previous remark, Indonesia is currently in the process of reforming a series of labour laws. We call upon the ILO to continue its technical support for Indonesia, especially in the field of introducing a modern labour settlement dispute system and providing training to strengthen the existence of the tripartite body. According to what the Director-General states in his Report, "tripartism is probably the single most important development instrument that countries can utilize to ensure ownership of poverty reduction strategies ... and permit people to have a decent living".

We also want to insist that our Government continues its efforts to facilitate unions in finding the way to determine the workers' representativeness, so that the establishment of national and local tripartite bodies can be considerably accepted by all parties, because we do believe that without social dialogue it will be difficult to have collective action.

(The Conference adjourned at 11.40 a.m.)

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Sixteenth sitting</i>	
Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discus- sion (<i>cont.</i>)	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Ms. Zahi, Mr. Van Vuuren, Ms. Bakoko Bakoru, Mr. Vaz d'Almeida, Mr. Leather, Mr. Halkin, Mr. Altahi, Mr. Mongo, Mr. Trabelsi, Mr. Atanasof, Mr. Djemam, Mr. Jrad, Mr. Upadhayaya, Mr. Silaban	